

The Perfection of Wisdom in Eight Thousand Lines, and its Verse Summary,
translated by Edward Conze

reformatted in verse form for ease of reading and recitation

Chapter I

The Practice of the Knowledge of All Modes

1. Introduction

Thus have I heard at one time.
 The Lord dwelt at Rajagriha,
 on the Vulture Peak,
 together with a great gathering of monks,
 with 1,250 monks,
 all of them Arhats,
 their outflows dried up,
 undefiled,
 fully controlled,
 quite freed in their hearts,
 well freed and wise,
 thoroughbreds,
 great Serpents,

 their work done,
 their task accomplished,
 their burden laid down,
 their own weal accomplished,
 with the fetters that bound them to becoming extinguished,
 their hearts well freed by right understanding,
 in perfect control of their whole minds
 – with the exception of one single person,
 the Venerable Ananda.

The Lord said to the Venerable Subhuti,
 the Elder:

Make it clear now, Subhuti,
 to the Bodhisattvas,
 the great beings,
 starting from perfect wisdom,
 how the Bodhisattvas,
 the great beings,

go forth into perfect wisdom!

Thereupon the Venerable Sariputra
thought to himself:

Will that Venerable Subhuti,
the Elder,
expound perfect wisdom of himself,
through the operation and force of his own power of revealing wisdom,
or through the Buddha's might?

The Venerable Subhuti,
who knew,
through the Buddha's might,
that the Venerable Sariputra
was in such wise discoursing in his heart,
said to the Venerable Sariputra:

Whatever, Venerable Sariputra,
the Lord's Disciples teach,
all that is to be known as the Tathagata's work.
For in the dharma demonstrated by the Tathagata
they train themselves,
they realise its true nature,
they hold it in mind.
Thereafter nothing that they teach
contradicts the true nature of dharma.
It is just an outpouring
of the Tathagata's demonstration of Dharma.

Whatever those sons of good family may expound
as the nature of dharma,
that they do not bring into contradiction
with the actual nature of dharma.

2. The Extinction of Self

Thereupon the Venerable Subhuti,
by the Buddha's might,

said to the Lord:

The Lord has said,
 ‘Make it clear now, Subhuti,
 to the Bodhisattvas,
 the great beings,
 starting from perfect wisdom,
 how the Bodhisattvas,
 the great beings
 go forth into perfect wisdom!’

When one speaks of a ‘Bodhisattva,’
 what dharma does that word ‘Bodhisattva’ denote?

I do not O Lord,
 see that dharma ‘Bodhisattva’,
 nor a dharma called ‘perfect wisdom.’
 Since I neither find,
 nor apprehend,
 nor see a dharma ‘Bodhisattva,’
 nor a ‘perfect wisdom,’
 what Bodhisattva shall I instruct
 and admonish
 in what perfect wisdom?

And yet, O Lord, if,
 when this is pointed out,
 a Bodhisattva’s heart does not become cowed,
 nor stolid,
 does not despair nor despond,
 if he does not turn away or become dejected,
 does not tremble,
 is not frightened or terrified,
 it is just this Bodhisattva,
 this great being,
 who should be instructed in perfect wisdom.

It is precisely this
 that should be recognized
 as the perfect wisdom of that Bodhisattva,

as his instruction in perfect wisdom.

When he thus stands firm,
that is his instruction and admonition.

Moreover, when a Bodhisattva courses in perfect wisdom
and develops it,
he should so train himself
that he does not pride himself
on that thought of enlightenment
[with which he has begun his career].
That thought is no thought,
since in its essential original nature
thought is transparently luminous.

Sariputra: That thought which is no thought,
is that something which is?

Subhuti: Does there exist,
or can one apprehend
in this state of absence of thought
either a 'there is' or a 'there is not'?

Sariputra: No, not that.

Subhuti: Was it then a suitable question
when the Venerable Sariputra asked whether that thought
which is no thought
is something which is?

Sariputra: What then
is this state of absence of thought?

Subhuti: It is without modification
or discrimination.

Sariputra: Well do you expound this, Subhuti,
you whom the Lord has declared
to be the foremost of those
who dwell in Peace.

And for that reason,
 because he does not pride himself
 on that thought of enlightenment]
 should a Bodhisattva be considered
 as incapable of turning away
 from full enlightenment,
 and as one who will never cease
 from taking perfect wisdom to heart.

Whether one wants to train
 on the level of Disciple,
 or Pratyekabuddha,
 or Bodhisattva,
 - one should listen to this perfection of wisdom,
 take it up, bear it in mind,
 recite it, study it,
 spread it among others,
 and in this very perfection of wisdom
 should one be trained and exert oneself.

In this very perfection of wisdom
 should one
 endowed with skill in means,
 exert himself,
 with the aim of procuring all the dharmas
 which constitute a Bodhisattva.

In just this perfection of wisdom
 all the dharmas which constitute a Bodhisattva,
 and in which he should be trained
 and exert
 himself,
 are indicated in full detail.

He who wants to train for full enlightenment
 should also listen, etc.,
 to this perfection of wisdom.

One who is endowed with skill in means

should exert himself in just this perfection of wisdom,
with the aim of procuring all the dharmas
which constitute a Buddha.

Subhuti: I who do not find anything to correspond
to the word ‘Bodhisattva,’
or the words ‘perfect wisdom,’
– which Bodhisattva should I then instruct
and admonish in which perfect wisdom?

It would surely be regrettable if I,
unable to find the thing itself,
should merely in words
cause a Bodhisattva to arise
and to pass away.

Moreover, what is thus designated
is not continuous
nor not-continuous,
not discontinuous
or not-discontinuous.
And why?
Because it does not exist.
That is why it is not continuous
nor not-continuous,
not discontinuous,
or not-discontinuous.

A Bodhisattva who does not become afraid
when this deep and perfect wisdom is being taught
should be recognized as not lacking
in perfect wisdom,
as standing at the irreversible stage
of a Bodhisattva,
standing firmly,
in consequence of not taking his stand anywhere.

Moreover,
a Bodhisattva who courses in perfect wisdom and develops it,
should not stand in form, etc.

Because, when he stands in form, etc.,
 he courses in its formative influences,
 and not in perfect wisdom,
 for, while he courses in formative influences,
 he cannot gain perfect wisdom,
 nor exert himself upon it,
 nor fulfill it.

When he does not fulfill perfect wisdom,
 he cannot go forth to all-knowledge,
 so long as he remains one
 who tries to appropriate the essentially elusive.

For in perfect wisdom
 form is not appropriated.
 But the non-appropriation of form, etc.,
 is not form, etc.
 And perfect wisdom also cannot be appropriated.

It is thus that a Bodhisattva
 should course in this perfect wisdom.

This concentrated insight of a Bodhisattva
 is called
 ‘the non-appropriation of all dharmas.’
 It is vast,
 noble,
 unlimited and steady,
 not shared by any of the Disciples
 or Pratyekabuddhas.

The state of all-knowledge itself
 cannot be taken hold of,
 because it cannot be seized through a sign.
 If it could be seized through a sign,
 then Srenika,
 the Wanderer,
 would not have gained faith
 in this our religion.

Srenika,
 the Wanderer,
 believed resolutely in this cognition
 of the all-knowing,
 and as a 'faith-follower',
 he entered on a cognition
 with a limited scope.

He did not take hold of form, etc.
 Nor did he review that cognition
 with joyful zest and pleasure.
 He viewed it neither as inside form, etc.,
 nor as outside,
 nor as both inside and outside,
 nor as other than form, etc.

In this scripture passage,
 Srenika, the Wanderer,
 as one who always resolutely believes
 in this cognition of the all-knowing,
 is called a faith-follower.

He took the true nature of dharmas
 as his standard,
 and resolutely believed in the signless,
 so that he did not take hold of any dharma,
 nor apprehend any dharma,
 which he could have appropriated
 or released.
 He did not even care about Nirvana.

This also should be known as a Bodhisattva's perfect wisdom,
 that he does not take hold of form, etc.,
 and that he does not enter Nirvana midway
 before he has realized the ten powers of a Tathagata,
 his four grounds of self-confidence,
 and the eighteen dharmas
 peculiar to a Buddha.

Therefore this too should be known

as a Bodhisattva's perfect wisdom.

Further, a Bodhisattva who courses in perfect wisdom
and develops it,
should consider and meditate on what that perfect wisdom is,
on him who has it,
and on this perfect wisdom as a dharma
which does not exist,
which cannot be apprehended.

When these considerations
do not make him afraid,
then he is to be known as a Bodhisattva
who possesses perfect wisdom.

Sariputra: How can a Bodhisattva
be known as possessing perfect wisdom,
when the very form does not possess the own-being of form, etc.;
when perfect wisdom does not possess
the own-being of perfect wisdom;
when the very all-knowledge
does not possess the own-being of all-knowledge

Subhuti: It is so, Sariputra.
Form itself does not possess the own-being of form, etc.
Perfect wisdom does not possess the mark (of being) 'perfect wisdom.'
A mark does not possess the own-being of a mark.
The marked does not possess the own-being of being marked,
and own-being does not possess the mark of [being] own-being.

Sariputra: Nevertheless, the Bodhisattva who trains in this
will go forth to all-knowledge?

Subhuti: He will.
Because all dharmas are unborn,
and do not go forth.
When he courses thus,
a Bodhisattva comes near to all-knowledge.

To the extent that he comes near to all-knowledge,

his body, thought and marks shall become perfectly pure,
for the sake of maturing beings,
and he shall meet with the Buddhas.

It is thus that a Bodhisattva
who courses in perfect wisdom
comes near to all-knowledge.

Subhuti said further
concerning the Bodhisattva:
He courses in a sign
when he courses in form, etc.,
or in the sign of form, etc.,

or in the idea that
'form is a sign,'
or in the production of form,
or in the stopping or destruction of form,
or in the idea that 'form is empty,'

or 'I course,'
or 'I am a Bodhisattva.'
For he actually courses in the idea
'I am a Bodhisattva' as a basis.

Or, when it occurs to him
'he who courses thus,
courses in perfect wisdom and develops it,'
– he courses only in a sign.

Such a Bodhisattva
should be known as unskilled in means.

Sariputra: How then must a Bodhisattva course
if he is to course in perfect wisdom?

Subhuti: He should not course
in the skandhas,
nor in their sign,
nor in the idea that

‘the skandhas are signs,’

nor in the production of the skandhas,
in their stopping or destruction,

nor in the idea that
‘the skandhas are empty,’

or ‘I course,’
or ‘I am a Bodhisattva.’

And it should not occur to him,
‘he who courses thus,
courses in perfect wisdom and develops it.’

He courses,
but he does not entertain such ideas as
‘I course,’
‘I do not course,’

‘I course and I do not course,’
‘I neither course nor do I not course,’

and the same [four] with ‘I will course.’

He does not go near any dharma at all,
because all dharmas are unapproachable
and unappropriable.

The Bodhisattva then has the concentrated insight
‘Not grasping at any dharma’ by name,
vast, noble,
unlimited and steady,
not shared by any of the Disciples
or Pratyekabuddhas.

When he dwells in this concentrated insight,
a Bodhisattva will quickly win the full enlightenment
which the Tathagatas of the past have predicted for him.

But when he dwells in that concentration,
 he does not review it,
 nor think
 ‘I am collected,’

‘I will enter into concentration,’
 ‘I am entering into concentration,’
 ‘I have entered into concentration.’

All that
 in each and every way
 does not exist for him.

Sariputra: Can one show forth
 that concentration?

Subhuti: No, Sariputra.
 Because that son of good family
 neither knows
 or perceives it.

Sariputra: You say
 that he neither knows
 nor perceives it?

Subhuti: I do,
 for that concentration
 does not exist.

The Lord: Well said, Subhuti.
 And thus should a Bodhisattva
 train therein,
 because then he trains
 in perfect wisdom.

Sariputra: When he thus trains,
 he trains in perfect wisdom?

The Lord: When he thus trains,
 he trains in perfect wisdom.

Sariputra: When he thus trains,
which dharmas does he train in?

The Lord: He does not train in any dharma at all.
Because the dharmas do not exist
in such a way as foolish, untaught,
common people
are accustomed to suppose.

Sariputra: How then do they exist?

The Lord: As they do not exist,
so they exist.
And so, since they do not exist [avidyamana],
they are called [the result of] ignorance [avidya].

Foolish, untaught,
common people
have settled down in them.
Although they do not exist,
they have constructed all the dharmas.

Having constructed them,
attached to the two extremes,
they do not know or see those dharmas
[in their true reality].
So they construct all dharmas
which yet do not exist.

Having constructed them,
they settle down in the two extremes.
They then depend on that link
as a basic fact,
and construct past,
future and present dharmas.

After they have constructed,
they settle down in name and form.
They have constructed all dharmas

which yet do not exist,
 but while they construct all dharmas,
 which yet do not exist,
 they neither know nor see the path
 which is that which truly is.

In consequence they do not go forth
 from the triple world,
 and do not wake up to the reality limit.
 For that reason they come to be styled 'fools.'
 They have no faith in the true dharma.

But a Bodhisattva does not settle down
 in any dharma.

Sariputra: When he trains thus,
 is a Bodhisattva trained in all-knowledge?

The Lord: When he thus trains himself,
 a Bodhisattva is not even trained
 in all-knowledge,
 and yet he is trained in all dharmas.

When he thus trains himself,
 a Bodhisattva is trained in all-knowledge,
 comes near to it,
 goes forth to it.

Subhuti: If, O Lord,
 someone should ask,
 - 'Will this illusory man
 be trained in all-knowledge,
 will he come near it,
 will he go forth to it?'
 - How should one explain it?

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

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

The Lord: What do you think, Subhuti,
is form, etc., one thing,
and illusion another?

Subhuti: No Lord.
Because it is not so
that illusion is one thing,
and form, etc., another;

the very form is illusion,
the very illusion is form.

The Lord: What do you think, Subhuti,
is that notion ‘Bodhisattva,’
that denomination,
that concept,
that conventional expression,
- in the five grasping skandhas?

Subhuti: Yes, it is.
Because a Bodhisattva who trains himself
in perfect wisdom
should train himself like an illusory man
for full enlightenment.

For one should bear in mind
that the five grasping aggregates
are like an illusory man.

Because the Lord has said that form
is like an illusion.

And what is true of form,
is true also of the six sense organs,
and of the five [grasping] aggregates.

Subhuti: Will not Bodhisattvas
who have newly set out in the vehicle
tremble when they hear this exposition?

The Lord: They will tremble
if they get into the hands of bad friends,
but not if they get into the hands of good friends.

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

The Lord: Those who instruct
and admonish him in the perfections.

Those who point out to him
the deeds of Mara,
saying 'this is how the faults and deeds
of Mara should be recognized.

These are the faults and deeds of Mara.
You should get rid of them
after you have recognized them.'

These should be known
as the good friends of a Bodhisattva,
a great being,
who is armed with the great armor,
who has set out in the great vehicle,
who has mounted on the great vehicle.

3. The Meaning of 'Bodhisattva'

Subhuti: With regard to what the Lord has said,
in speaking of 'Bodhisattva,'
– what is meant by the word
'Bodhisattva'?

The Lord: Nothing real is meant by the word ‘Bodhisattva.’
 Because a Bodhisattva trains himself
 in non-attachment to all dharmas.
 For the Bodhisattva, the great being,
 awakes in non-attachment to full enlightenment
 in the sense that he understands all dharmas.

Because he has enlightenment as his aim,
 an ‘enlightenment-being’
 [Bodhisattva],
 a great being, is so called.

4. The Meaning of ‘Great Being’

Subhuti: Again,
 when the Lord speaks of a Bodhisattva as ‘a great being,’ –
 for what reason is a Bodhisattva called
 a ‘great being’?

The Lord: A Bodhisattva is called ‘a great being’
 in the sense that he will cause a great mass
 and collection of beings to achieve the highest.

Sariputra: It is clear also to me
 in what sense a Bodhisattva
 is called a ‘great being.’

The Lord: Then make it clear
 what you think now!

Sariputra: A Bodhisattva is called
 a ‘great being’
 in the sense that he will demonstrate dharma
 so that the great errors should be forsaken,
 - such erroneous views
 as the assumption of a self,
 a being,

a living soul,
 a person,

of becoming,
of not-becoming,
of annihilation,
of eternity,
of individuality, etc.

Subhuti: It is clear also to me
in what sense a Bodhisattva is called
a ‘great being.’

The Lord: Then make it clear
what you think now!

Subhuti: A Bodhisattva is called
a ‘great being,’
if he remains unattached to,
and uninvolved in,
the thought of enlightenment,
the thought of all-knowledge,
the thought without outflows,

the unequalled thought,
the thought which equals the unequalled,
unshared by any of the Disciples
or Pratyekabuddhas.
Because that thought of all-knowledge
is [itself] without outflows,
and uninvolved [in the empirical world].

And in respect of that thought
of all-knowledge,
which is without outflows and uninvolved,
he remains unattached and uninvolved.

In that sense does a Bodhisattva
come to be styled a ‘great being.’

Sariputra: For what reason
is he unattached even to that thought,
and uninvolved in it?

Subhuti: Because it is no thought.

Sariputra: Is that thought,
which is no thought,
something which is?

Subhuti: Does there exist,
or can one apprehend,
in this state of absence of thought
either a 'there is'
or a 'there is not'?

Sariputra: No, not that.

Subhuti: How then can the Venerable Sariputra say,
'is that thought,
which is no thought,
something which is'?

Sariputra: Well do you expound this,
you whom the Lord has announced
as the foremost of those who dwell in Peace.

Thereupon the Venerable Purna,
son of Maitrayani,
said to the Lord:
'Great being,'
one who is so called,
armed with the great armour is that being,
he sets out in the great vehicle,
is mounted on the great vehicle.
That is why he comes to be styled
a 'great being.'

Subhuti: How great is that
which entitles him to be called
'armed with the great armour'?

The Lord: Here the Bodhisattva,

the great being, thinks thus:
 ‘countless beings should I lead to Nirvana
 and yet there are none who lead to Nirvana,
 or who should be led to it.’

However many beings
 he may lead to Nirvana,
 yet there is not any being
 that has been led to Nirvana,
 nor that had led others to it.
 For such is the true nature of dharmas,
 seeing that their nature is illusory.

Just as if, Subhuti,
 a clever magician,
 or magician’s apprentice,
 were to conjure up at the crossroads
 a great crowd of people,
 and then make them vanish again.
 What do you think, Subhuti,
 was anyone killed by anyone,
 or murdered,
 or destroyed,
 or made to vanish?

Subhuti: No indeed, Lord.

The Lord: Even so,
 a Bodhisattva,
 a great being,
 leads countless beings to Nirvana,
 and yet there is not any being
 that has been led to Nirvana,
 nor that has led others to it.

To hear this exposition
 without fear,
 that is the great thing
 which entitles the Bodhisattva to be known as
 ‘armed with the great armour.’

Subhuti: As I understand the meaning
of the Lord's teaching,
as certainly not armed with an armour
should this Bodhisattva,
this great being,
be known.

The Lord: So it is.
For all-knowledge is not made,
not unmade,
not effected.

Those beings also
for whose sake he is armed with the great armour
are not made,
not unmade,
not effected.

Subhuti: So it is.
For form, etc.,
is neither bound
nor freed.

And that is true also
of the Suchness of form,
the Suchness of feeling, etc.

Purna: But what then is that form
of which you say
that is neither bound nor freed,
and what is that Suchness of form, etc.?

Subhuti: The form of an illusory man
is neither bound nor freed.
The Suchness of the form
of an illusory man
is neither bound nor freed.
Because in reality
it is not there at all,

because it is isolated,
because it is unproduced.

This is the great armour,
the great non-armour of a Bodhisattva,
a great being,
who is armed with the great armour,
who has set out in the great vehicle,
who has mounted on the great vehicle.

After these words the Venerable Purna
was silent.

5. The Meaning of 'Great Vehicle'

Subhuti: It is thus, O Lord,
that a Bodhisattva, a great being
is armed with the great armour,
and becomes one
who has set out in the great vehicle,
who has mounted on the great vehicle.

But what is that great vehicle?
How should one know the one
who has set out in it?
From whence will it go forth
and whither?

Who has set out in it?
Where will it stand?
Who will go forth
by means of this great vehicle?

The Lord: 'Great vehicle,'
that is a synonym of immeasurableness.
'Immeasurable' means infinitude.

By means of the perfections
has a Bodhisattva set out in it.

From the triple world it will go forth.
 It has set out
 to where there is no objective support.

It will be a Bodhisattva,
 a great being
 who will go forth,
 -but he will not go forth to anywhere.

Nor has anyone set out in it.
 It will not stand anywhere,
 but it will stand on all-knowledge,
 by way of taking its stand nowhere.

[And finally],
 by means of this great vehicle no one goes forth,
 no one has gone forth,
 no one will go forth.

Because neither of these dharmas,
 - he who would go forth,
 and that by which he would go forth
 – exist,
 nor can they be got at.

Since all dharmas do not exist,
 what dharma could go forth
 by what dharma?

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

Subhuti: The Lord speaks
 of the ‘great vehicle.’
 Surpassing the world with its Gods,
 men and Asuras
 that vehicle will go forth.

For it is the same as space,
and exceedingly great.

As in space,
so in this vehicle
there is room for immeasurable
and incalculable beings.

So is this
the great vehicle of the Bodhisattvas,
the great beings.

One cannot see its coming,
or going,
and its abiding does not exist.

Thus one cannot get at the beginning
of this great vehicle,
nor at its end,
nor at its middle.
But it is self-identical everywhere.
Therefore one speaks of a 'great vehicle.'

The Lord: Well said, Subhuti.
So it is.
It is thus,
that this is the great vehicle of the Bodhisattvas,
the great beings.

Trained therein,
Bodhisattvas do reach all-knowledge,
have reached it,
will reach it.

Purna: This Elder Subhuti,
when asked about perfect wisdom,
fancies that the great vehicle
is something that can be pointed out.

Subhuti: Have I, O Lord,
spoken of the great vehicle
without transgressing against perfect wisdom?

The Lord: You have.
In agreement with perfect wisdom
you point out the great vehicle.

6. Attainment

Subhuti: Through the Buddha's might,
O Lord.

Moreover, O Lord,
a Bodhisattva [who sets out on his journey]
does not approach [the goal of full Bodhisattvahood]
from where it begins,
nor where it ends,
nor in the middle either.
Because a Bodhisattva is
as boundless as form, etc., is boundless.

He does not approach the idea that
'a Bodhisattva is form,' etc.
That also does not exist,
and is not apprehended.

Thus in each and every way
I do not get at any of the dharmas
which constitute a Bodhisattva.
I do not see that dharma
which the word 'Bodhisattva' denotes.

Perfect wisdom also
I neither see nor get at.

All-knowledge also
I neither see nor get at.

Since in each and every way
 I neither apprehend nor see that dharma,
 -what dharma should I instruct and admonish through what dharma
 in what dharma?

‘Buddha,’
 Bodhisattva,
 ‘perfect wisdom,’
 all these are mere words.
 And what they denote
 is something uncreated.

It is as with the self.
 Although we speak of a ‘self,’
 yet absolutely
 the self is something uncreated.

Since therefore all dharmas
 are without own-being,
 what is that form, etc.,
 which cannot be seized,
 and which is something uncreated?

Thus the fact that all dharmas
 are without own-being
 is the same as the fact
 that they are uncreated.

But the non-creation of all dharmas
 differs from those dharmas [themselves].

How shall I instruct
 and admonish
 a non-creation
 in a perfect wisdom
 which is also a non-creation?

And yet,
 one cannot apprehend

as other than uncreated
 all the dharmas,
 be they those which constitute a Buddha,
 or a Bodhisattva,
 or him who marches to enlightenment.

If a Bodhisattva,
 when this is being taught,
 is not afraid,
 then one should know that
 ‘this Bodhisattva,
 this great being,
 courses in perfect wisdom,
 develops it,
 investigates it,
 and mediates on it.’

Because at the time a Bodhisattva
 investigates these dharmas in perfect wisdom,
 at that time he does not approach form, etc., nor go to it.

Nor does he review the production of
 form, etc.,
 nor its stopping.

For the non-production of form, etc.,
 is not form, etc.
 The non-passing-away of form, etc.,
 is not form, etc.

Non-production and form
 are therefore not two
 nor divided.

Not passing-away and form, etc.,
 are therefore not two
 not divided

Inasmuch as one calls it ‘form,’ etc.,
 one makes a count

of what is not two.

Thus the Bodhisattva investigates
in perfect wisdom
all dharmas
in all their modes,
and at that time
he does not approach form, etc.

Sariputra: As I understand the teaching of the Venerable Subhuti,
a Bodhisattva also is a non-production.
But if a Bodhisattva is a non-production,
how then does he go on the difficult pilgrimage,
and how can he possibly endure the experience of those sufferings
[which he is said to undergo] for the sake of beings?

Subhuti: I do not look for a Bodhisattva
who goes on the difficult pilgrimage.

In any case, one who courses in the perception of difficulties
is not a Bodhisattva.
Because one who has generated a perception of difficulties
is unable to work the weal of countless beings.

On the contrary,
he forms the notion of ease,
he forms that notion that all beings,
whether men or women,
are his parents and children,
and thus he goes
on the pilgrimage of a Bodhisattva.

A Bodhisattva should therefore
identify all beings with his parents or children,
yes, even with his own self,
like this:
‘As I myself want to be quite free from all sufferings,
just so all beings want to be quite free from all sufferings.’

In addition

with regard to all beings
 one should form the notion:
 ‘I ought not to desert all these beings.
 I ought to set them free
 from the quite measureless heap
 of sufferings!

And I should not produce
 towards them
 a thought of hate,
 even though I might be dismembered a hundred times!’

It is thus
 that a Bodhisattva should lift up his heart.

When he dwells as one whose heart is such,
 then he will neither course nor dwell
 as one who perceives difficulties.

And further
 a Bodhisattva should produce the thought that
 ‘as in each and every way
 a self does not exist,
 and is not got at,
 so in each and every way
 all dharmas do not exist,
 and are not got at.’

He should apply this notion to all dharmas,
 inside and outside.

When he dwells as one whose heart is such
 then he will neither course,
 nor dwell,
 as one who perceives difficulties.

But when the Venerable Sariputra said
 that ‘a non-production
 is the Bodhisattva,’
 indeed, it is so,

‘a non-production
is the Bodhisattva.’

Sariputra: Further,
is just a Bodhisattva
a non-production,
or the dharmas also
which constitute him?

Subhuti: The dharmas which constitute a Bodhisattva
are also a nonproduction.

Sariputra: Are just the dharmas which constitute a Bodhisattva
a nonproduction,
or also the state of all-knowledge?

Subhuti: The state of all-knowledge
is also a non-production.

Sariputra: Is just the state of all-knowledge
a non-production,
or also the dharmas which constitute it?

Subhuti: The dharmas which constitute all-knowledge
are also a nonproduction.

Sariputra: Are just the dharmas which constitute all-knowledge
a nonproduction,
or also the common people?

Subhuti: The common people
are also a non-production.

Sariputra: Are just the common people
a non-production,
or also the dharmas which constitute them?

Subhuti: The dharmas which constitute the common people
are also a nonproduction.

Sariputra: If, venerable Subhuti,
the Bodhisattva is a non-production
and also the dharmas which constitute him,
and also the state of all-knowledge,

and also the dharmas which constitute it,
and also the common people,
and also the dharmas which constitute them,
-then, surely,
the state of all-knowledge is reached
by a Bodhisattva without any exertion?

Subhuti: I do not wish for the attainment
of an unproduced dharma,
nor for reunion with one.

Further, does one attain an unproduced attainment
through an unproduced dharma?

Sariputra: Is then an unproduced attainment
attained through an unproduced dharma,
or through a produced dharma?

Subhuti: Is then an unproduced dharma produced,
or is it unproduced?

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

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

Sariputra: To talk of non-production
is also not intelligible.

Subhuti: Non-production is just talk.

Non-production just appears before the mind's eye.
 Non-production is just a flash in the mind.
 Absolutely it is nothing more than that.

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

Subhuti: This is the Lord's Absolute,
 the essence of the Disciples
 who are without any support,
 so that, in whatever way they are questioned,
 they find a way out,
 do not contradict the true nature of dharmas,
 nor depart from it.

And that
 because they do not rely on any dharmas.

Sariputra: Well said, Subhuti.
 And what is that perfection of the Bodhisattvas
 which [allows them not to] lean on any dharmas?

Subhuti: The perfection of wisdom,
 beneficial to all the [three] vehicles,
 is also the perfection which
 [allows them not to] lean on any dharma,
 because [it shows that] all dharmas
 have no support
 [and can therefore give none].

For, if a Bodhisattva,
 when this deep perfection of wisdom is being taught,
 remains unafraid,
 then one should know

that he had adjusted himself
to the perfection of wisdom,
and that he is not lacking in this attention
[to the true facts about dharmas].

Sariputra: How is it
that a Bodhisattva
does not lack in attention
when he is adjusted to perfect wisdom?

For if a Bodhisattva
is not lacking in attention,
then he should [automatically] lack in adjustment
to the perfection of wisdom.
And if he does not lack in adjustment
to the perfection of wisdom,
then he would be lacking in attention.

But if [in] a Bodhisattva
the two facts
that he is not lacking in attention,
and that he is not lacking
in dwelling in the perfection of wisdom,
belong together,

then all beings also
will not be lacking
in dwelling in the perfection of wisdom.
Because they also dwell
not lacking in attention.

Subhuti: Well said,
and yet I must reprove you,
although the Venerable Sariputra
has taken hold of the matter correctly
as far as the words are concerned.

Because one should know
that attention is without own-being
in the same way in which beings

are without own-being;

that attention has no real existence
in the same way in which beings
have no real existence;

that attention is isolated
in the same way in which beings
are isolated;

that attention is unthinkable
in the same way in which beings
are unthinkable;

that acts of mental attention
do not undergo the process
which leads to enlightenment
in the same way in which beings
do not undergo that process;

that acts of attention
do not in any real sense
undergo the process
which leads to enlightenment,
any more than beings do.

It is through an attention
of such a character
that I wish that a Bodhisattva,
a great being,
may dwell in this dwelling.

Chapter II

Sakra

1. Preamble

At that time again,
 many Gods came to that assembly,
 and took their seats:
 Sakra, Chief of Gods,
 with forty thousand Gods of the Thirty-three;
 the four world-guardians,
 with twenty thousand Gods
 belonging to the retinue of the four
 Great Kings;

Brahma, ruler of this world system,
 with ten thousand Gods
 belonging to the company of Brahma;
 and five thousand Gods of the Pure Abode.

But the might of the Buddha,
 his majesty and authority
 surpassed even the splendour of the Gods,
 a reward for the deeds they had done in the past.

Sakra: These many thousands of Gods, Subhuti,
 have come to this assembly,
 and taken their seats,
 because they want to hear about perfect wisdom
 from the Holy Subhuti,
 and to listen to his advice to the Bodhisattvas,
 to his instruction and admonition.

How then should a Bodhisattva
 stand in perfect wisdom,
 how train in it,
 how devote himself to it?

Subhuti: Let me then explain it to you,
through the Buddha's might,
majesty and authority.

Those Gods,
who have not yet aspired to full enlightenment
should do so.

Those, however,
who are certain that they have got safely out of this world
[i.e., the Arhats who have reached their last birth,
and think they have done with it all]
are unfit for full enlightenment
because they are not willing to go,
from compassion,
back into birth-and-death.

And why?
The flood of birth and death
hems them in.
Incapable of repeated rebirths,
they are unable to aspire to full enlightenment.
And yet,
if they also will aspire to full
enlightenment,
I confirm them also.
I shall not obstruct their wholesome root.
For one should uphold the most distinguished dharmas
above all others.

The Lord: Well said, Subhuti.
You do well
to encourage the Bodhisattvas.

Subhuti then said to the Lord:
We should be grateful to the Lord,
and not ungrateful.
For in the past
the Lord has,
in the presence of the Tathagatas of the past,
led, for our sake,

the holy life
with enlightenment as his aim.

Even after he had definitely become a Bodhisattva
[a being dedicated to enlightenment],
disciples still instructed and admonished him in the perfections,
and by his coursing therein
he has produced the utmost cognition.

Even so also we should help,
champion, aid and sustain the Bodhisattvas.
Because the Bodhisattvas,
if we help, champion,
aid and sustain them,
will soon know full enlightenment.

2. How to Stand in Emptiness, or the Perfection of Wisdom

Subhuti then said to Sakra:
Now, Kausika,
listen and attend well.
I will teach you how a Bodhisattva
should stand in perfect wisdom.
Through standing in emptiness,
should he stand in perfect wisdom.

Armed with the great armour,
the Bodhisattva should so develop
that he does not take his stand
on any of these:
not on form,
feeling,
perception,
impulses,
consciousness;

not on eye,
ear,
nose,

tongue,
body,
mind;

not on forms,
sounds,
smells,
tastes,
touchables,
mind-objects;

not on eye-consciousness, etc.,
until we come to;
not on mind consciousness;
etc.,
until we come to:
not on the elements,
i.e., earth, water, fire,
wind, ether, consciousness;

not on the pillars of mindfulness,
right efforts,
roads to psychic power,
faculties,
powers,
limbs of enlightenment,
limbs of the Path;

not on the fruits of Streamwinner,
Once-Returner,
Never-Returner,
or Arhatship;

not on Pratyekabuddhahood,
nor on Buddhahood.

He should not take his stand
on the idea that
'this is form,'
'this is feeling,' etc., to:

‘this is Buddhahood.’

He should not take his stand
on the ideas that ‘form, etc.,
is permanent, [or]
impermanent’;

that ‘form is ease or ill’;
that ‘form is the self, or not the self,’
that ‘form is lovely or repulsive,’
that ‘form is empty,
or apprehended as something.’

He should not take his stand
on the notion that the fruits of the holy life
derive their dignity
from the Unconditioned.
Or that a Streamwinner
is worthy of gifts,
and will be reborn seven times
at the most.

Or that a Once-Returner
is worthy of gifts,
and will,
as he has not yet quite won through to the end,
make an end of ill
after he has once more
come into this world.

Or that a Never-Returner
is worthy of gifts,
and will,
without once more returning to this world,
win Nirvana elsewhere.

Or that an Arhat is worthy of gifts,
and will just here in this very existence
win Nirvana
in the realm of Nirvana that leaves nothing behind.

Or that a Pratyekabuddha
 is worthy of gifts,
 and will win Nirvana
 after rising above the level of a Disciple,
 but without having attained
 the level of a Buddha.

That a Buddha is worthy of gifts,
 and will win Nirvana
 in the Buddha-Nirvana,
 in the realm of Nirvana
 that leaves nothing behind,
 after he has risen
 above the levels of a common man,
 of a Disciple,
 and of a Pratyekabuddha,

wrought the weal of countless beings,
 led to Nirvana
 countless hundreds of thousands
 of niyutas of kotis of beings,
 assured countless beings
 of Discipleship,
 Pratyekabuddhahood
 and full Buddhahood,

stood on the stage of a Buddha
 and done a Buddha's work,

-even thereon
 a Bodhisattva should not take his stand.

Thereupon the Venerable Sariputra thought to himself:
 If even there on
 one should not take one's stand,
 how then should one stand,
 and train oneself?

The Venerable Subhuti,

through the Buddha's might,
read his thoughts
and said:

What do you think, Sariputra,
where did the Tathagata stand?

Sariputra:
Nowhere did the Tathagata stand,
because his mind sought no support.

He stood neither in what is conditioned,
nor in what is unconditioned,
nor did he emerge from them.

Subhuti: Even so
should a Bodhisattva
stand and train himself.

He should decide that
'as the Tathagata
does not stand anywhere,
nor not stand,
nor stand apart,
nor not stand apart,
so will I stand.'

Just so
should he train himself
'as the Tathagata is stationed,
so will I stand, and train myself.'

Just so
should he train himself.
'As the Tathagata is stationed,
so will I stand,
well placed
because without a place to stand on.'

Even so

should a Bodhisattva
stand and train himself.

When he trains thus,
he adjusts himself to perfect wisdom,
and will never cease
from taking it to heart.

3. The Saints and Their Goal are Illusions

Thereupon the thought came
to some of the Gods in that assembly:
What the fairies talk and murmur,
that we understand
though mumbled.

What Subhuti has just told us,
that we do not understand.

Subhuti read their thoughts,
and said:
There is nothing to understand,
nothing at all to understand.
For nothing in particular
has been indicated,
nothing in particular
has been explained.

Thereupon the Gods thought:
May the Holy Subhuti enlarge on this!
May the Holy Subhuti enlarge on this!
What the Holy Subhuti here explores,
demonstrates and teaches,
that is remoter than the remote,
subtler than the subtle,
deeper than the deep.

Subhuti read their thoughts,
and said:

No one can attain
 any of the fruits of the holy life,
 or keep it,
 - from the Streamwinner's fruit
 to full enlightenment –
 unless he patiently accepts
 the elusiveness of the dharma.

Then those Gods thought:
 What should one wish those to be like
 who are worthy to listen to the doctrine from the Holy Subhuti?

Subhuti read their thoughts,
 and said:
 Those who learn the doctrine from me
 one should wish to be
 like an illusory magical creation,
 for they will neither hear my words,
 nor experience the facts
 which they express.

Gods: Beings that are like a magical illusion,
 are they not just an illusion?

Subhuti: Like a magical illusion are those beings,
 like a dream.
 For not two different things are magical illusion and beings,
 are dreams and beings.
 All objective facts also are like a magical illusion,
 like a dream.

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

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

Buddhahood also,
 you say,
 is like a magical illusion,
 is like a dream?

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

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

Subhuti: Even if, perchance,
 there could be
 anything more distinguished,
 of that too I would say that is
 like an illusion,
 like a dream.

For not two different things
 are illusion and Nirvana,
 are dreams and Nirvana.

Thereupon the Venerable Sariputra,
 the Venerable Purna,
 son of Maitrayani,
 the Venerable Mahakoshthila,

the Venerable Mahakatyayana,
 the Venerable Mahakashyapa,

and the other Great Disciples,
 together with many thousands of Bodhisattvas, said:

Who, Subhuti,
 will be those who grasp

this perfect wisdom as here explained?

Thereupon the Venerable Ananda
said to those Elders:
Bodhisattvas who cannot fall back
will grasp it,
or persons who have reached sound views,
or Arhats in whom the outflows have dried up.

Subhuti: No one will grasp
this perfect wisdom as here explained
[i.e. explained in such a way
that there is really no explanation at all].
For no dharma at all has been indicated,
lit up,
or communicated.
So there will be no one
who can grasp it.

4. Sakra's Flowers

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

Sakra then conjured up flowers,
and scattered them over the Venerable Subhuti.

The Venerable Subhuti thought to himself
by the way of reply:
These flowers which [now] appear among the Gods of Thirty-three
I had not noticed before.
These flowers,
which Sakra has scattered,

are magical creations.
They have not issued from trees,
shrubs or creepers.

These flowers,
which Sakra has scattered,
are mind made.

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

Subhuti then said to him:
As you say, Kausika,
‘these flowers did not issue forth at all,
neither from mind,
nor from trees shrubs or creepers’ –
because that which has never issued forth is not a flower.

5. Training in Perfect Wisdom

Then the thought came to Sakra,
Chief of Gods:
Profoundly wise, surely,
is the Holy Subhuti,
in that he explains this merely nominal existence
[of all separate things],
does not bring it into conflict
[with the norm of truth],
but enlarges on it
and simply expounds it.

He then said to the Venerable Subhuti:
So it is.
The Bodhisattva should so train himself therein

[in this insight]
as the Holy Subhuti points out.

Subhuti: So he should.
When he thus trains himself,
he does not train himself
in the fruit of a Streamwinner,
nor in the other fruits of the holy life,
up to Buddhahood.

When one trains oneself on those stages,
one trains oneself in Buddhahood,
or the state of all-knowledge;
and thereby
in the immeasurable and incalculable Buddha-dharmas.

Thereby one trains oneself
neither for the increase of form,
feeling, etc.,
nor yet for their decrease;

neither to appropriate form, etc.,
nor to let them go.

Nor does one train oneself
to get hold of any other dharma,
even of all-knowledge,
nor to produce one,
or make one disappear.

When he trains thus,
a Bodhisattva trains in all-knowledge,
and he shall go forth to all knowledge.

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

Subhuti: He will.

Sakra then said to Sariputra:
Where should a Bodhisattva
search for perfect wisdom?

Sariputra: In the exposition of the Venerable Subhuti.

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

Sariputra: Through the Tathagata's might,
and on his authority.

Subhuti: It is indeed the Tathagata's might, Sakra,
by which I teach perfect wisdom.

And when you ask,
'Where should a Bodhisattva
search for perfect wisdom?',
the answer is:
He should not search for it
in form,
nor in any other skandha;

nor in what which is other than form,

or other than any other skandha.
Because perfect wisdom
is not one of the skandhas,
nor yet other than they.

6. The Infinitude of Perfect Wisdom

Sakra: This perfection of wisdom, Subhuti,
is a great perfection,
unlimited,

measureless,
infinite.

Subhuti: So it is.
And why?
Perfect wisdom is great,
unlimited,
measureless
and infinite
because form,
feelings, etc.,
are so.

Hence one does not settle down
in the conviction that
this is a 'great perfection,'
an 'unlimited perfection,'
a 'measureless perfection,'
an 'infinite perfection.'

That is why perfect wisdom
is a great perfection,
unlimited,
measureless
and infinite.

Perfect wisdom
is an infinite perfection
because objects
as well as [individual] beings
are infinite.

Perfect wisdom
is an infinite perfection
because one cannot get at the beginning, middle,
or end of any objective fact
[since as a dharma it has no own-being].

Moreover,
perfect wisdom

is an infinite perfection
because all objective facts
are endless and boundless,

and their beginning,
middle,
or end are
not apprehended.

For one cannot apprehend the beginning,
middle and end of
form, etc.

In that way
perfect wisdom
is an infinite perfection
by reason of the infinitude of objects.

And further again,
a being is endless
and boundless
because one cannot get at its beginning,
middle or end.

Therefore
perfect wisdom
is an infinite perfection
by reason of the infinitude of beings.

Sakra: How is it, Holy Subhuti,
that perfect wisdom
is an infinite perfection
by reason of the infinitude of beings?

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

Sakra: How then, Holy Subhuti,
is perfect wisdom an infinite perfection
by reason of the infinitude of beings?

Subhuti: What factual entity
does the word 'being' denote?

Sakra: The word 'being'
denotes no dharma or non-dharma.

It is a term that has been added on
[to what is really there]
as something adventitious,
groundless,
as nothing in itself,
unfounded in objective fact.

Subhuti: Has thereby
[i.e., by uttering the word 'being']
any being been shown up
[as an ultimate fact]?

Sakra: No indeed, Holy Subhuti!

Subhuti: When no being at all
has been shown up,
how can there be
an infinitude of them?

If a Tathagata,
with his voice of infinite range,
with the deep thunder of his voice,
should pronounce, for aeons
countless as the sands of the Ganges,
the word 'being,' 'being,' –
would he thereby produce,
or stop,
any being whatsoever,
either in the past,
future or present?

Sakra: No indeed,
Holy Subhuti!

Because a being is pure
from the very beginning,
perfectly pure.

Subhuti: In this way also
perfect wisdom
is an infinite perfection
by reason of the infinitude of beings.

In this manner also
the infinitude
of perfect wisdom
should be known
from the infinitude of beings.

7. Confirmation

Thereupon the Gods around Indra, Brahma and Prajapati,
and the hosts of men and women
around the Rishis
thrice shouted forth in triumph:
Hail the Dharma!
Hail the Dharma!
Hail the Dharmahood of Dharma!

And they added:
Beautifully has Subhuti the Elder
just now indicated,
demonstrated,
shown and clarified
how a Tathagata comes to be manifest.

As a potential Tathagata
we shall henceforth regard
that Bodhisattva
who possesses the fullness
of this perfection of wisdom
and who dwells in it.

The Lord then said: So it is, O Gods!
 So did I,
 when I met the Tathagata Dipankara
 in the bazaar of Dipavati,
 the royal city,
 possess the fullness
 of this perfection of wisdom,
 so that Dipankara,
 the Tathagata
 predicted that one day
 I should be fully enlightened,
 and said to me:

“You, young Brahmin,
 shall, in a future period,
 after incalculable aeons,
 became a Tathagata,
 Sakyamuni by name,
 endowed with knowledge and virtue,
 Well-Gone,

a world-knower, unsurpassed,
 tamer of men to be tamed,
 teacher of Gods and men,
 a Buddha,
 a Blessed Lord!”

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

Chapter III

Reverence for the Receptacle of the Perfections, Which Holds Immeasurable Good Qualities

1. Worldly Advantages of Perfect Wisdom

The Lord saw that the Gods
 were assembled and seated,
 and that the monks, nuns,
 laymen and laywomen
 were assembled and seated,
 and he spoke thus to the Gods:

Mara and his hosts
 will be unable to harm those
 who take up this perfection of wisdom,
 who bear it in mind,
 preach, study and spread it.

Men and ghosts alike
 will be unable to harm them.
 Nor will they die an untimely death.

Those deities
 who have set out for full enlightenment,
 but who have not yet got hold of this perfection of wisdom,
 will approach a person who has done so,
 listen to him,
 and will also take up, etc.,
 this perfection of wisdom.

A person who is devoted
 to this perfection of wisdom
 will certainly experience no fear,
 he will certainly never be stiff with fright,
 whether he be in a forest,
 at the foot of a tree,
 or in an empty shed,

or an open place,
 or a road, or a highway,
 or the woods,
 or on the ocean.

The Four Great Kings:
 It is wonderful, O Lord,
 that those who take up, etc.,
 this perfection of wisdom
 should discipline beings in the three vehicles,
 and yet not perceive any being.
 We, O Lord, will protect such a person.

Sakra, Brahman and other Gods
 likewise promised
 to protect the follower of perfect wisdom.

Sakra: It is wonderful, O Lord,
 that by taking up etc.,
 this perfection of wisdom,
 one should gain so many advantages
 even here and now.

Does one,
 when taking up the perfection of wisdom,
 take up all the six perfections?

The Lord: Yes.
 And further, by taking up, etc.,
 the perfection of wisdom,
 one gains advantages even here and now.

Listen attentively,
 I will teach you which ones they are.

So be it, Lord, replied the Gods.

The Lord: The quarrels, contentions
 and contradictions of those
 who oppose my dharma

will simply vanish away;
the intentions of the opponents
will remain unfulfilled.
Because it is a fact
that for the followers of perfect wisdom
those disputes will simply vanish away,
and will not abide.

This is one advantage
even here and now.

There is a herb, Maghi by name,
a cure for all poison.
Suppose a viper, famished,
were to see a creature,
and pursue it, following the scent,
in order to eat it;
but if that creature went to a patch
of that herb and stood there,
then the smell of that herb
would cause the snake to turn back.
Because the healing quality of that herb
is so powerful
that it overpowers the viper's poison.

Just so will the quarrels, contentions
and contradictions
to which the follower
of perfect wisdom is exposed,
be stilled,
be appeased,
through the piercing flame
of perfect wisdom,
through its power,
its strength,
through impregnation with its power.

They will vanish, and not grow,
nor abide.
And why?

Because it is perfect wisdom
 which appeases all evil,
 - from [ordinary] greed
 to seizing on Nirvana –
 and does not increase it.

And the Gods and all the Buddhas,
 and all the Bodhisattvas,
 will protect this follower of perfect wisdom.

This will be an advantage even here and now.

And further,
 the speech of the follower of perfect wisdom
 will become acceptable,
 soft,
 measured and adequate.

Wrath and conceit will not overpower him.
 Because perfect wisdom tames and transforms him.
 Wrath and conceit does not increase.
 Neither enmity nor ill will
 take hold of him,
 not even a tendency towards them.

He will be mindful and friendly.
 He reflects:
 ‘If I foster ill will in myself,
 my faculties will go to pieces,
 my features will be consumed,
 and it is,
 in any case,
 quite illogical that I,
 who have set out for full enlightenment,
 and who want to train myself for it,
 should come under the sway of wrath.’

In this way
 he will quickly regain his mindfulness.

This will be another advantage even here and now.

Sakra: It is wonderful
how this perfection of wisdom
has been set up for the control
and training of the Bodhisattvas.

The Lord: And further, Kausika,
if a follower of perfect wisdom
were to go into battle,
to the very front of it,
he could not possibly lose his life in it.

It is impossible that he should lose his life
from the attack of somebody else.

If someone strikes him,
with sword, or stick,
or clod of earth,
or anything else –
his body cannot be hit.

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

Because when one trains oneself in this lore,
then one is intent neither
on disturbing one's own peace,
nor that of others.

The Bodhisattva, the great being
who is trained in this lore,
will reach full enlightenment,
will gain the gnosis of the all-knowing.

Once fully enlightened,
 he will read the thoughts of all beings,
 because to the Bodhisattvas,
 the great beings who are trained in this lore,
 nothing remains unattained,
 unknown,
 unrealized.
 That is why one speaks
 of the gnosis of the all-knowing.

This is another advantage here and now.

Further, where this perfection of wisdom
 has been written down in a book,
 and has been put up and worshipped,
 where it has been taken up, etc.,
 there men and ghosts can do no harm,
 except as a punishment for past deeds.

This is another advantage
 even here and now.

Just, Kausika,
 as those men and ghosts
 who have gone
 to the terrace of enlightenment,
 or to its neighbourhood,
 or its interior,
 or to the foot of the tree of enlightenment,
 cannot be hurt by men or ghosts,
 or be injured by them,
 or taken possession of,
 even with the help of evil animal beings,
 except as a punishment for former deeds.

Because in it
 the past, future,
 and present Tathagatas
 win their enlightenment,
 they who promote in all beings

and who reveal to them
 fearlessness,
 lack of hostility,
 lack of fright.

Just so Kausika,
 the place in which one takes up, etc.,
 this perfection of wisdom,
 in it
 beings cannot be hurt by men or ghosts.

Because this perfection of wisdom
 makes the spot of earth where it is
 into a true shrine for beings, -
 worthy of being worshipped
 and adored,
 into a shelter for beings who come to it,
 a refuge,
 a place of rest and final relief.

This is another advantage here and now.

2. The Cult of Perfect Wisdom Compared with the Cult of the Buddhas

Sakra: Suppose that there are two persons.
 One of the two,
 a son or daughter of good family,
 has written down this perfection of wisdom,
 made a copy of it;
 he would then put it up,
 and would honour, revere,
 worship, and adore it
 with heavenly flowers,
 incense, perfumes,
 wreaths, unguents,
 aromatic powders,
 strips of cloth,
 parasols, banners,
 bells, flags,

with rows of lamps all round,
and with manifold kinds of worship.

The other would deposit in Stupas
the relics of the Tathagata
who has gone to Parinirvana;
he would take hold of them
and preserve them;
he would honor,
worship and adore them
with heavenly flowers,
incense, etc., as before.

Which one of the two,
O Lord,
would beget the greater merit?

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

The Tathagata,
when he had acquired
and known full enlightenment
or all-knowledge,
in which practices did he train
the all-knowledge personality
which he had brought forth?

Sakra: It is because the Lord
has trained himself
in just this perfection of wisdom
that the Tathagata has acquired
and known full enlightenment
or all-knowledge.

The Lord: Therefore the Tathagata
does not derive his name
from the fact
that he has acquired this physical personality,
but from the fact
that he has acquired all-knowledge.

And this all-knowledge of the Tathagata
has come forth
from the perfection of wisdom.

The physical personality of the Tathagata,
on the other hand,
is the result of the skill in means
of the perfection of wisdom.
And that becomes a sure foundation
for the [acquisition of the] cognition
of the all-knowing [by others].

Supported by this foundation
the revelation
of the cognition
of the all-knowing takes place,
the revelation of the Buddha-body,
of the Dharmabody,
of the Samghabody.

The acquisition of the physical personality
is thus the cause
of the cognition of the all-knowing.
As the sure foundation
of that cognition it has,
for all beings,
become a true shrine,
worthy of being saluted respectfully,
of being honoured,
revered and adored.

After I have gone to Parinirvana,
my relics also will be worshipped.

It is for this reason
that the person who would copy
and worship the perfection of wisdom
would beget the greater merit.
For, in doing so,
he would worship

the cognition of the all-knowing.

The son or daughter of good family
 who has made a copy
 of the perfection of wisdom,
 and who worships it,
 would beget the greater merit.
 For by worshipping
 the perfection of wisdom
 he worships the cognition
 of the all-knowing.

Sakra: How can it be
 that those men of Jambudvipa,
 who do not copy this perfection of wisdom,
 nor take it up,
 nor study it,
 nor worship it,
 do not know
 that the Lord has taught
 that the cult of the perfection of wisdom
 is greatly profitable!

How is it that they are not aware
 that the Lord has taught
 that the cult of the perfection of wisdom
 brings great advantages,
 fruits and rewards!

But they do not know this,
 they are not aware of this!
 They have no faith in it!

The Lord: What do you think, Kausika,
 how many of those men
 of Jambudvipa
 are endowed with perfect faith
 in the Buddha,
 the Dharma,
 and the Samgha?

Sakra: Only a few.

The Lord: So it is, Kausika.
 Only a few men of Jambudvipa
 are endowed with perfect faith
 in the Buddha,
 the Dharma
 and the Samgha.

Fewer than those few
 are those who attain
 the fruits of a Streamwinner,
 and, after that,
 the fruit of a Once-Returner,
 or of a Never-Returner.

Fewer still are those who attain
 Arhatship.

Fewer still realise
 Pratyekabuddha-enlightenment.

Fewer still raise their thoughts
 to full enlightenment.

Fewer still are those who,
 having raised their thoughts
 to full enlightenment,
 strengthen that thought.

Fewer still those who,
 having raised their thoughts
 to full enlightenment,
 and strengthened that thought,
 in addition dwell with vigor exerted.

Fewer still those
 who pursue meditation
 on the perfection of wisdom.

Fewer still those
 who course
 in the perfection of wisdom.

Fewer still those who,
 coursing and striving
 in the perfection of wisdom,
 abide on the irreversible Bodhisattva-stage.

Fewer still, coursing and striving
 in the perfection of wisdom,
 will know full enlightenment.

Fewer still, coursing and striving
 in the perfection of wisdom,
 do know full enlightenment.

Now, those Bodhisattvas
 who have stood
 on the irreversible Bodhisattva-stage,
 and who have known full enlightenment,
 they expound the perfection of wisdom
 to other sons and daughters of good family
 who are earnestly intent,
 who train themselves,
 and strive,
 in the perfection of wisdom.

And they, in their turn,
 take up the perfection of wisdom,
 study and worship it.

There are, on the other hand,
 countless beings
 who raise their thought to enlightenment,
 who strengthened that thought of enlightenment,
 who course towards enlightenment,
 -- and perhaps just one or two of them
 can abide

on the irreversible Bodhisattva-stage!

For full enlightenment
is hard to come up to
if one has inferior vigor,
is slothful,
an inferior being,
has inferior thoughts,
notions,
intentions
and wisdom.

So then,
if someone wants quickly to know full enlightenment,
he should indefatigably and continually hear and study
this very perfection of wisdom.

For he will understand that in the past,
when he was a Bodhisattva,
the Tathagata trained in the perfection of wisdom;
that also he should train in it;
that she is his Teacher.

In any case,
when the Tathagata has disappeared
into final Nirvana,
the Bodhisattvas should run back
to this very perfection of wisdom.

Therefore then, Kausika,
if someone would build,
for the worship of the Tathagata
who has disappeared into the final Nirvana,
many kotis of Stupas
made of the seven precious things,
enshrining therein the relics of the Tathagatas,
and all his life
honor them with flowers, etc.,
would he then,
on the strength of that,

beget a great deal of merit?

Sakra: He would, O Lord.

The Lord: Greater would be the merit
of someone who would truly believe
in this perfection of wisdom;
who would, trustingly,
confiding in it,
resolutely intent on it,
serene in his faith,
his thoughts raised to enlightenment,
in earnest intent,

hear it, learn it,
bear it in mind,
recite and study it,
spread, demonstrate,
explain, expound and repeat it,
illuminate it in detail to others,
uncover its meaning,
investigate it with his mind;

who, using his wisdom the fullest extent,
would thoroughly examine it;
who would copy it,
and preserve and store away the copy

so that the good dharma might last long,
so that the guide of the Buddhas
might not be annihilated,
so that the good dharma
might not disappear,
so that the Bodhisattvas,
the great beings
might continue to be assisted,
since their guide will not give out,

and who,
finally,

would honour and worship
this perfection of wisdom.

Greater would be the merit
of the devotee of the perfection of wisdom
compared not only with that of a person
who would build many kotis of Stupas
made of the seven precious things,
enshrining the relics of the Tathagata.
It would be greater that the merit
of one who would completely fill
the entire Jambudvipa with such Stupas.

It would be greater than the merit
produced by all beings
in a four-continent world system
if each single one of them
were to build such a Stupa.

Or, equally, if all the beings
in a small chiliocosm,
or in a medium dichiliocosm,
or in a great trichiliocosm
were to do likewise.

Or, if,
to put an imaginary case,
all beings in a great trichiliocosm
should simultaneously
become human beings,
and each one of them build such a Stupa;
and if each one of them
should build all those Stupas,
and honor them for an aeon
or the remainder of an aeon;

still the devotee of the perfection of wisdom
would have greater merit
than that which results from the effect
of the meritorious deeds of all those beings

who erect and worship those countless Stupas.

Sakra: So it is, O Lord.
 For the person who honours
 the perfection of wisdom,
 in an absolute sense
 he honours the past,
 future and present Buddhas
 in all the world systems,
 which can be comprehended
 only by the cognition of a Buddha.

His merit will be greater even
 than that of all beings
 in great trichiliocosms
 countless like the sands of the Ganges,
 if each single being in them
 would build a Stupa,
 and if each one of them
 would build all those Stupas,
 and honor them for an aeon
 or the remainder of an aeon.

3. Perfect Wisdom A Great Spell

The Lord: So it is, Kausika.
 The merit of the devotee
 of the perfection of wisdom
 is greater than that;
 it is immeasurable, incalculable,
 inconceivable, incomparable,
 illimitable.

Because from the perfection of wisdom
 the all-knowledge of the Tathagatas
 has come forth;
 from all-knowledge has come forth
 the cult of the relics of the Tathagata.

Therefore the accumulation of merit
of the devotee of the perfection of wisdom
bears no proportion at all
to the accumulation of merit
born from building Stupas,
made of the seven precious things,
enshrining the relics of the Tathagata.

Thereupon those forty thousand gods
in the assembly
said to Sakra,
the Chief of Gods:

Sir!
Do take up the perfection of wisdom!
The perfection of wisdom,
Sir,
should be taken up, recited,
studied and explained!

The Lord: Kausika,
do take up the perfection of wisdom,
recite,
study and explain it!

For if the Asuras form the idea
of having a fight
with the Gods of the Thirty-three,
and if you, Kausika,
bring to mind and repeat
this perfection of wisdom,
then the Asuras will drop that idea again.

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

The Lord: So it is, Kausika.
 For thanks to this lore,
 i.e. the perfection of wisdom,
 the Buddhas of the past
 have known full enlightenment.
 Thanks to it
 the Buddhas of the future will know it.
 Thanks to it,
 the Buddhas of the present do know it.
 Thanks to it,
 I have known it.

Thanks to just this lore
 do the ten wholesome ways of acting
 become manifest in the world,
 the four trances associated with the limbs of enlightenment,
 the four Unlimited associated with the limbs of enlightenment,
 the four formless attainments upheld by the limbs of enlightenment,
 the six super-knowledges associated with the limbs of enlightenment,
 the thirty seven dharmas which constitute the limbs of enlightenment

in short
 the eighty-four thousand articles of dharma,
 the cognition of the Buddha,
 the cognition of the Self-existent,
 the inconceivable cognition.

But when there are no Tathagatas
 in the world,
 then it is the Bodhisattvas,
 endowed with skill in means
 as a result of hearing the outpouring
 of the perfection of wisdom in the past
 (when there were Buddhas),
 full of pity for beings,
 come into this world out of pity,

who foster in the world
 the ten wholesome ways of acting,

the four trances
 as dissociated from the limbs of
 enlightenment, etc.
 to: the five super-knowledges
 as dissociated from the limbs
 of enlightenment.

Just as
 thanks to the disk of the moon
 all the herbs, stars and constellations
 are illuminated according to their power and strength,
 so,
 after the Tathagata has passed away
 and His good dharma has disappeared,
 in the absence of the Tathagatas,
 whatever righteous, upright,
 outstanding, or wholesome life is conceived
 and manifested in the world,
 all that has come forth from the Bodhisattva,
 has been brought forth by him,
 has spread from his skill in means.

But the skill in means of the Bodhisattvas should be known
 as having come forth from the perfection of wisdom.

Moreover, those who are devoted
 to the perfection of wisdom,
 should expect therefrom
 many advantages here and now.

Sakra: Which are those advantages?

The Lord: Those devotees
 will not die an untimely death,
 nor from poison, or sword,
 or fire, or water,
 or staff, or violence.

When they bring to mind
 and repeat this perfection of wisdom,

the calamities which threaten them
 from kings and princes,
 from king's counsellors
 and king's ministers,
 will not take place.

If kings, etc.,
 would try to do harm to those
 who again and again
 bring to mind and repeat
 the perfection of wisdom
 they will not succeed;
 because the perfection of wisdom
 upholds them.

Although kings, etc.,
 may approach them with harmful intent,
 they will instead decide to greet them,
 to converse with them,
 to be polite and friendly to them.

For this perfection of wisdom entails
 an attitude of friendliness
 and compassion towards all beings.

Therefore, even though the devotee
 of the perfection of wisdom
 may be in the middle of a wilderness
 infested with venomous vipers,
 neither men nor ghosts can harm them,
 except as a punishment for past deeds.

Thereupon one hundred Wanderers
 of other sects
 approached the Lord with hostile intent.
 Sakra, Chief of Gods,
 perceived those Wanderers from afar,
 and he reflected:

Surely,

those Wanderers of other sects
 are approaching the Lord with hostile intent.
 Let me then recall
 as much of this perfection of wisdom
 as I have learned from the Lord,
 bring it to mind,
 repeat and spread it,
 so that those Wanderers
 cannot approach the Lord,
 and the preaching of this perfection of wisdom
 may not be interrupted.

Thereupon Sakra, Chief of Gods,
 recalled as much of this perfection of wisdom
 as he had learned from the Lord,
 brought it to mind,
 repeated and spread it.
 Those Wanderers of other sects
 thereupon reverently saluted the Lord
 from afar,
 and went off on their way.

Thereupon it occurred to the Venerable Sariputra:
 For what reason
 have those heretical Wanderers
 reverently saluted the Lord from afar,
 and then departed on their way?

The Lord: When Sakra, Chief of Gods,
 perceived the thoughts of those hostile Wanderers of other sects,
 he recalled this perfection of wisdom,
 brought it to mind,
 repeated it and spread it,
 with the object of turning back
 those Wanderers of other sects
 who wanted to quarrel,
 dispute and obstruct,
 and of preventing them from approaching the place where
 the perfection of wisdom is being taught.

And I have granted permission to Indra, Chief of Gods.
 Because I saw not even one pure dharma in those Wanderers.
 They all wanted to approach with hostile intent,
 with thoughts of enmity.

Thereupon it occurred to Mara,
 the Evil One:
 The four assemblies of the Tathagata
 are assembled,
 and seated face to face with the Tathagata.
 Face to face [with the Tathagata]
 those Gods of the realm of sense-desire
 and of the realm of form
 are sure to be predicted in that assembly
 as Bodhisattvas to full enlightenment.
 Let me now approach to blind them.

Thereupon Mara conjured up
 a fourfold army,
 and moved towards the place
 where the Lord was.

Thereupon it occurred to Sakra,
 chief of gods:
 Surely, this is Mara,
 the Evil One, who,
 having conjured up a fourfold army,
 moves towards the place where the Lord is.

But the array of this army
 is not the array of King Bimbisara's army,
 not of King Prasenajit's army,
 not of the army of the Sakyas
 or of the Licchavins.

For a long time Mara the Evil One
 has pursued the Lord,
 looking for a chance to enter,
 searching for a chance to enter,
 intent on hurting beings.

I will now recall this perfection of wisdom,
bring it to mind,
repeat and spread it.

Thereupon Sakra recalled
just this perfection of wisdom,
brought it to mind,
repeated and spread it.
Immediately Mara, the Evil One,
turned back again,
and went on his way.

Thereupon the Gods of the Thirty-three
conjured up heavenly Mandarava flowers,
flew through the air,
and scattered them over the Lord.
And in triumph they cried:
“For a long time surely
has this perfection of wisdom
come to the men of Jambudvipa!”

Seizing more Mandarava flowers,
they scattered and strewed them
over the Lord, and said:
“Mara and his host
will have no chance to enter those beings
who preach and develop the perfection of wisdom,
or who course in it.

Those beings who hear and study
the perfection of wisdom
will be endowed
with no small wholesome root.

Those who come to hear
of this perfection of wisdom
have fulfilled their duties
under the Jinas of the past.
How much more so those who will study and repeat it,
who will be trained in Thusness, progress to it,

make endeavours about it;
 they will be people
 who have honoured the Tathagatas.

For it is in this perfection of wisdom
 that one should search
 for all-knowledge.

Just as all jewels
 are brought forth by the great ocean,
 and should be searched for through it,
 just so
 the great jewel
 of the all-knowledge of the Tathagatas
 should be searched for through the great ocean
 of the perfection of wisdom.”

The Lord: So it is, Kausika.
 It is from the great ocean
 of the perfection of wisdom
 that the great jewel
 of the all-knowledge of the Tathagatas
 has come forth.

4. Perfect Wisdom, and the Other Perfections

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

The Lord: So it is, Ananda.
 For the perfection of wisdom
 controls the five perfections.

What do you think, Ananda,

can giving
 undedicated to all-knowledge
 be called perfect giving?

Ananda: No, Lord.

The Lord: The same is true
 of the other perfections.

What do you think, Ananda,
 is that wisdom inconceivable
 which turns over the wholesome roots
 by dedicating them to all-knowledge?

Ananda: Yes, it is inconceivable,
 completely inconceivable.

The Lord: The perfection of wisdom therefore gets its name
 from its supreme excellence
 [paramatvat].

Through it the wholesome roots,
 dedicated to all-knowledge,
 get the name of 'perfections.'
 It is therefore because
 it has dedicated the wholesome roots
 to all-knowledge
 that the perfection of wisdom
 controls, guides
 and leads the five perfections.

The five perfections are
 in this manner
 contained in the perfection of wisdom,
 and the term 'perfection of wisdom'
 is just a synonym
 for the fulfillment of the six perfections.

In consequence,
 when the perfection of wisdom is proclaimed,

all the six perfections
are proclaimed.

Just as gems,
scattered about in the great earth,
grow when all conditions are favourable;
and the great earth is their support,
and they grow supported by the great earth;
even so,
embodied in the perfection of wisdom,
the five perfections rest in all-knowledge,
they grow supported by the perfection of wisdom;
and as upheld by the perfection of wisdom
do they get the name of 'perfections.'

So it is just the perfection of Wisdom
that controls,
guides
and leads the five perfections.

5. Further Advantages From Perfect Wisdom

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

The Lord: So it is, Kausika.
Moreover, not only one who has learned
studied
and repeated
the perfection of wisdom,

will have those qualities,
 but also one who worships a copy of it,
 he also,
 I teach,
 will have those advantages here and now.

Sakra: I also will protect one
 who worships a copy
 of the perfection of wisdom,
 and still more so one who in addition
 learns,
 studies
 and repeats it.

The Lord: Well said, Kausika.
 Moreover, when someone repeats
 this perfection of wisdom,
 many hundreds of Gods will come near,
 many thousands,
 many hundreds of thousands of Gods,
 so as to listen to the dharma.

And, when they hear the dharma,
 those Gods will want to induce
 a readiness to speak
 in that preacher of dharma.
 Even when he is not willing to talk,
 the Gods still expect that,
 through their respect for dharma,
 a readiness to speak will be induced in him,
 and that he will feel urged to teach.

This again is another quality
 which someone acquires just here and now when learning,
 studying,
 and repeating the perfection of wisdom.

Moreover, the minds of those
 who teach this perfection of wisdom
 will remain uncowed

in front of the four assemblies.
 They will have no fear
 of being plied with questions
 by hostile persons.
 For the perfection of wisdom protects them.

Immersed in the perfection of wisdom
 one does not see the hostility,
 nor those who act with hostility,
 nor those who want to be hostile.

In that way
 upheld by the perfection of wisdom,
 one remains unaffected
 by censure and fear.

These qualities also
 someone acquires
 just here and now
 when learning,
 studying
 and repeating the perfection of wisdom.

In addition,
 he will be dear to his mother and father,
 to friends, relatives and kinsmen,
 to Sramanas and Brahmanas.

Competent he will be
 and capable of refuting,
 in accordance with dharma,
 any counter-arguments that may arise,
 and be able to deal
 with counter-questions.

These qualities also
 someone acquires
 just here and now
 when learning,
 studying

and repeating the perfection of wisdom.

Moreover, Kausika,
 among the Gods of the Four Great Kings
 those Gods who have set out for full enlightenment
 will make up their minds
 to come to the place
 where someone has put up a copy
 of the perfection of wisdom,
 and worships it.
 They will come,
 look upon the copy
 of this perfection of wisdom,
 salute it respectfully,
 pay homage to it,
 learn,
 study and repeat it.
 Then they will depart again.
 And that applies to all the Gods,
 up to the Highest Gods.

And that son or daughter of a good family
 should wish that the Gods,
 Nagas, Yakshas,
 Gandharvas, Asuras,
 Garudas, Kinnaras,
 Mahoragas,
 men and ghosts,
 in the ten directions
 in countless world systems,
 should,
 with the help of this book,
 see the perfection of wisdom,
 salute it respectfully,
 pay homage to it,
 learn,
 study and repeat it;

that then they should return
 to their respective worlds;

and that he should be able
to give them
just this gift of dharma.

You should not however think, Kausika,
that only in this four continent world
the Gods of the realm of sense-desire
and of the realm of form,
who have set out for full enlightenment,
will decide to come to that place.
Not so, Kausika, should you view it!
No, all the Gods in the great trichiliocosm,
who have set out for full enlightenment,
will decide to come to that place.

They will come,
look upon the copy
of this perfection of wisdom,
salute it respectfully,
pay homage to it,
learn,
study and repeat it.

Moreover, the house, room
or palace of the devotee
of the perfection of wisdom
will be well guarded.
No one will harm him,
except as a punishment for past deeds.

This is another quality
which one acquires just here and now.

For very powerful Gods,
and other supernatural beings,
will decide to come to that place.

Sakra: How does one know that Gods,
or other supernatural beings,
have come to that place

to hear, etc.,
the perfection of wisdom?

The Lord: When one perceives somewhere
a sublime radiance
or smells a superhuman odour
not smelled before,
then one should know for certain
that a God,
or other supernatural being,
has come,
has come near.

Further, clean and pure habits
will attract those Gods, etc.,
and will make them enraptured,
overjoyed,
full of zest and gladness.

But the divinities of minor power,
who had before occupied that place,
they will decide to leave it.
For they cannot endure the splendour,
majesty and dignity
of those very powerful Gods, etc.

And as those very powerful Gods, etc.,
will decide to come to him repeatedly,
that devotee of the perfection of wisdom
will gain an abundance of serene faith.

This is another quality
which that son or daughter of a good family
will acquire just here and now.

Further on,
one should not form
any unclean or impure habits
within the circumference
of that abode of the guide to Dharma;

otherwise one's deep respect
for it would remain incomplete.

Moreover,
the devotee of the perfection of wisdom
will not be fatigued in either body or mind.

At ease he lies down,
at ease he walks about.
In his sleep he will see no evil dreams.
When he sees anything in his dreams,
he will just see the Tathagatas,
or Stupas,
or Bodhisattvas,
or Disciples of the Tathagata.

When he hears sounds,
he will hear the sound of the perfections
and of the wings to enlightenment.
He will just see the trees of enlightenment;
and underneath them the Tathagatas,
while they wake up to full enlightenment.

And likewise he will see
how the fully Enlightened
turn the wheel of dharma.
And many Bodhisattvas he will see,
chanting just this perfection of wisdom,
delighted by its chorus,
which proclaims
how all-knowledge should be gained,
how the Buddha-field should be purified.

He is shown the skill in means.
He hears the sublime sound
of the full enlightenment of the Buddhas,
the Lords:
'In this direction, in this part of the world,
in this world system, under this name,
a Tathagata demonstrates dharma,

surrounded and accompanied
 by many thousands of Bodhisattvas and Disciples,
 nay by many hundreds of thousands
 of niyutas of kotis of Bodhisattvas
 and Disciples.’

When he has such dreams,
 he will sleep at ease,
 he will wake up at ease.

Even when food is thrown into it,
 his body will still feel at ease
 and exceedingly light.
 No trend of thought will arise in him
 from excessive eagerness for food.
 He will take only a mild interest in food.

A devotee of the perfection of wisdom
 has no strong desire for food,
 and only a mild interest in it,
 even as a monk,
 who practices Yoga,
 and who has emerged from trance,
 because his thoughts overflow
 with other interests.

For to the extent that he has given himself up to devotion
 to the development of the perfection of wisdom,
 to that extent heavenly beings
 will provide him with heavenly food.

These qualities also does one acquire
 even here and now.

But again, Kausika,
 if someone has a made a copy
 of the perfection of wisdom,
 and worships it,
 but does not learn,
 study and repeat it;

and if someone else truly believes
in the perfection of wisdom,
trustingly confides in it,
and,
resolutely intent on it,
serene in his faith,
his thoughts raised to enlightenment,
in earnest intent,

hears it,
learns it,
bears it in mind,
recites and studies it,
spreads,
demonstrates,
explains,
expounds and repeats it,

illuminates it in detail for others,
uncovers its meaning,
investigates it with his mind,
and,
using his wisdom to the fullest,
thoroughly examines it;

copies it,
and preserves and stores away the copy,

so that the good dharma might last long,
so that the guide of the Tathagatas
might not be annihilated,
so that the good dharma
might not disappear,

so that the Bodhisattvas,
the great beings,
might continue to be assisted,
since their guide will not fail,
and finally,

honours and worships
this perfection of wisdom;
then the latter begets the greater merit.

He should be imitated by those
who want to acquire
these distinguished qualities
here and now,
and they should truly believe
in the perfection of wisdom, etc.,
to: because their guide will not fail.

He will resolve to share it
with those who desire it.
So the great eye
of the Guide of the Buddhas will not fail,
either for him,
or for others who are in quest of virtue.

In addition,
the perfection of wisdom
should at all times
be honoured and worshipped.

Chapter IV

The Proclamation of Qualities

1. Relative Value of Tathagata-Relics and of Perfect Wisdom

The Lord: If, Kausika,
 on the one hand
 you were given this Jambudvipa
 filled up to the top with relics of the Tathagatas;
 and if,
 on the other hand,
 you could share in a written copy of this perfection of wisdom;
 and if now you had to choose between the two,
 which one would you take?

Sakra: Just this perfection of wisdom.
 Because of my esteem for the Guide of the Tathagatas.
 Because in a true sense
 this is the body of the Tathagatas.

As the Lord has said:
 “The Dharma-bodies are the Buddhas,
 the Lords.
 But, monks,
 you should not think
 that this individual body is my body.

Monks, you should see Me
 from the accomplishment of the Dharma-body.”

But that Tathagata-body
 should be seen as brought about
 by the reality-limit,
 i.e. by the perfection of wisdom.

It is not, O Lord,
 that I lack in respect for the relics of the Tathagata.
 On the contrary,
 I have a real respect for them.

As come forth from this perfection of wisdom
 are the relics of the Tathagata worshipped,
 and therefore,
 when one worships just this perfection of wisdom,
 then also the worship of the relics of the Tathagata
 is brought to fulfillment.
 For the relics of the Tathagata
 have come forth from the perfection of wisdom.

It is
 as with my own godly seat in Sudharma,
 the hall of the Gods.
 When I am seated on it,
 the Gods come to wait on me.
 But when I am not,
 the Gods,
 out of respect for me,
 pay their respect to my seat,
 circumambulate it,
 and go away again.
 For they recall that,
 seated on this seat,
 Sakra,
 the Chief of Gods,
 demonstrates Dharma
 to the Gods of the Thirty-three.

In the same way,
 the perfection of wisdom
 is the real eminent cause and condition which feeds
 the all-knowledge of the Tathagata.

The relics of the Tathagata,
 on the other hand,
 are true deposits of all-knowledge,
 but they are not true conditions,
 or reasons,
 for the production of that cognition.

As the cause of the cognition

of the all-knowing
 the perfection of wisdom is also worshipped
 through relics of the Tathagata.

For this reason,
 of the two lots mentioned before,
 I would choose
 just this perfection of wisdom.
 But it is not because I lack
 in respect for the relics of the Tathagata.
 [In choosing thus]
 I have real respect for them,
 for those relics are worshipped
 because pervaded
 by the perfection of wisdom.

And,
 if I had to choose
 between a copy of the perfection of wisdom on the one side,
 and even a great trichiliocosm
 filled to the top
 with relics of the Tathagata on the other,
 I would still choose
 just this perfection of wisdom,
 for the same reasons.

For the relics of the Tathagata
 are true deposits of the cognition
 of the all-knowing,
 but that cognition itself
 has come forth
 from the perfection of wisdom.

Therefore then,
 of those two lots
 I would choose
 just this perfection of wisdom.
 But it is not that I lack
 in respect for the relics of the Tathagata.
 [In choosing thus]

I have real respect for them.
 They, however,
 are worshipped
 because they have come forth
 from the perfection of wisdom,
 and are pervaded by it.

2. Simile of the Wishing Jewel

It is like a priceless jewel
 which has the property
 of preventing men and ghosts
 from entering the place where it is put.

If someone were possessed by a ghost,
 one would only have to introduce this jewel,
 and that ghost would depart.

If someone were oppressed by the wind,
 and would apply this jewel
 when his body is inflated,
 he would hold back that wind,
 would prevent it from getting worse,
 would appease it.

It would have a similar effect
 when applied
 to a body burning with bile,
 choked with phlegm,
 or painful as a result of a disease
 arising from a disorder of the humours.

It would illuminate
 the blackest darkness of night.

In the heat
 it would cool the spot of earth
 where it is placed.

In the cold
it would warm it.

Its presence
drives vipers
and other noxious animals
from districts which they have infested.

If a woman or man
were bitten by a viper,
one need only show them that jewel;
and its sight will counteract that poison,
and make it depart.

Such are the qualities of this jewel.

If one had a boil in the eye,
or clouded eyesight,
or a disease in the eye,
or a cataract,
one need only place that jewel on the eyes,
and its mere presence
will remove and appease those afflictions.

Such are its qualities.

Placed in water,
it dyes the water all through
with its own colour.

Wrapped in a white cloth,
and thrown into water,
it makes the water white.

Equally,
when wrapped or bound
in a black-blue,
or yellow,
or red,
or crimson cloth,

or into cloth of any other color,
it would dye that water
into which it were thrown
with the colour of the cloth.

It would also clear up any turbidity
there might be in the water.

Endowed with such qualities
would that jewel be.

Ananda: Do these jewels, Kausika,
belong to the world of the Gods,
or to the men of Jambudvipa?

Sakra: They are found among the Gods.
The jewels found among the men
of Jambudvipa,
on the other hand,
are rather coarse and small,
and not endowed with such qualities.

They are infinitely inferior
to those heavenly jewels.
But those among the Gods
are fine
and full of all possible qualities.

If that jewel
were now put into a basket,
or placed upon it,
then that basket
would still be desirable
after the jewel
had again been taken out.

The basket,
through the qualities of the jewel,
would become an object
of supreme longing.

In the same way, O Lord,
 the qualities
 of the cognition
 of the all-knowing
 are derived
 from the perfection of wisdom.

On account of it
 the relics of the Tathagata
 who has gone to Parinirvana
 are worshipped.
 For they are the true repositories
 of the cognition
 of the all-knowing.

And as the demonstration of dharma
 by the Buddhas and Lords
 in all world systems
 should be worshipped,
 because it come forth
 from the perfection of wisdom,
 so also the dharma-preacher's
 demonstration of dharma.

As a king should be worshipped,
 because his royal might
 gives courage to a great body of people,
 so also the preacher of dharma,
 because,
 through the might of the Dharma-body,
 he gives courage to a great body of people.

But the relics of the Tathagata
 are worshipped
 for the same reason that one worships
 the demonstration of dharma,
 and the preacher of dharma.

3. Supreme Value of the Perfection of Wisdom

Therefore then, O Lord,
 if there were two lots;
 and if not only this great trichiliocosm,
 but if all the world systems,
 countless as the sands of the Ganges,
 filled with the relics of the Tathagata,
 were put down as the first lot;
 and a copy of the perfection of wisdom
 as the second.
 If I were invited to choose either,
 and to take it,
 I would take just this perfection of wisdom.

It is not, O Lord, that I lack respect
 for the relics of the Tathagata.
 My respect for them
 is a real one.
 But it is the perfection of wisdom
 which pervades all-knowledge,
 and the relics of the Tathagata
 are worshipped
 because they have come forth
 from all-knowledge.

In consequence
 the worship of the perfection of wisdom
 is in effect
 a worship of the Buddhas and Lords,
 past, future and present.

Moreover, O Lord,
 someone who wants to see,
 in accordance with dharma,
 the Buddha and Lords
 who just now exist
 in immeasurable and incalculable world systems,
 should course in the perfection of wisdom,
 make endeavours in it,

develop it.

The Lord: So it is, Kausika.
All the Tathagatas owe their enlightenment
to just this perfection of wisdom,
whether they live in the past,
future, or present.

I also, Kausika,
just now a Tathagata,
owe my enlightenment
to just this perfection of wisdom.

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

The Lord: So it is, Kausika.
It is because a Bodhisattva courses
for a long time in this perfection of wisdom
that he rightly knows
and beholds the thoughts and doings of all beings.

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

The Lord: He courses in all the six perfections.
But it is the perfection of wisdom
which controls the Bodhisattva
when he gives a gift,
or guards morality,
or perfects himself in patience,
or exerts vigour,
or enters into trance,
or has insight into dharmas.

One cannot get at a distinction
or difference
between these six perfections,

all of them upheld by skill in means,
 dedicated to the perfection of wisdom,
 dedicated to all-knowledge.

Just as no distinction or difference is conceived
 between the shadows cast by different trees in Jambudvipa,
 though their colors may differ,
 and their shapes,
 and their leaves,
 flowers and fruits,
 and their height and circumference
 – but they are all just called ‘shadows’;
 even so,
 one cannot get at a distinction or difference
 between these six perfections,

all of them upheld by skill in means,
 dedicated to the perfection of wisdom,
 dedicated to all-knowledge.

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

Chapter V

The Revolution of Merit

1. The Perfection of Wisdom A Source of Great Merit

Sakra: Let us again
consider two people.

The one
truly believes in the perfection of wisdom,
trustingly confides in it, etc.,
to: since their guide will not fail

And when he has heard this exposition,
he will resolve
that he will never abandon
this perfection of wisdom,
surely so greatly profitable,
so great an advantage,
so great a fruit,
so great a reward,
endowed with so great qualities!
that he will guard and preserve it,
because it is exceedingly hard to get.

And he himself would honour,
worship and adore it.

The other person
would first venerate it,
and then give a copy of it
to another son or daughter of a good family,
who, desirous of it and eager,
asks for it.

Which one of these two persons
begets the greater merit,
the one who intends to give it away,
or the one who does not?

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

If one person
by himself
were to honour
the relics of the Tathagata
after his Pairinirvana,
minister to them and preserve them;

and if another
were not only himself
to honour the relics of the Tathagata,
minister to them and revere them,
but in addition
reveal them to others,
give them away,
and share them,
in the hope
that the worship of the relics
would become widespread,
from pity for beings;

then which one of these two persons
would beget the greater merit:

The one who,
while worshipping them himself,
reveals,
gives and shares
with others,
or the one who
by himself,
singly, worships them?

Sakra: The one who shares with others.

The Lord: So it is, Kausika.
The person who would give

this perfection of wisdom to others,
 who helps others,
 who intends to give it away,
 he would
 on the strength of that
 beget the greater merit.

If in addition
 he would go
 to where there are persons
 who have become fit vessels
 for this perfection of wisdom,
 and would share it with them,
 then he would beget
 still more merit.

Moreover, Kausika,
 great would be the merit
 of someone who would instigate
 all beings in Jambudvipa
 to observe
 the ten ways of wholesome action,
 and would establish them in them.

Sakra: Great it would be.

The Lord: Greater would be
 the merit of someone
 who would make a copy
 of this perfection of wisdom,
 would believe in it
 and have faith in it,
 faith serene and firm;

who would raise his thought
 to enlightenment,
 and with earnest intention
 would give this perfection of wisdom
 to another Bodhisattva
 who had raised his thought

to enlightenment;

would first of all
perfect himself by tireless writing
and reciting;

then after much zealous labour,
he would persuade the other Bodhisattva,
explain this perfection of wisdom to him, instigate to it,
fill with enthusiasm for it,
make him rejoice in it,

would, by his words,
lead him to it,
educate him in it,
illuminate its benefits to him,
cleanse his thought
and remove his doubts;

and who would address him as follows:

“Come here,
son of a good family,
do train yourself
in just this Path of the Bodhisattvas,
for as a result of this training,
this coursing,
this struggling,
you will surely quickly awake
to full enlightenment.

After that
you will educate
an infinite number of beings
in the complete extinction
of the substratum
of rebirth,
in other words,
in the revelation
of the reality-limit.”

Because he intends to give away,
therefore
his merit is the greater.

And this is true
even if it is compared
with the merit of someone
who establishes in the observation
of the ten wholesome ways of acting
all the beings
in world systems of any size,
even in all the world systems that there are,
numerous as the sands of the Ganges River.

Or if it is compared
with that of someone
who would establish others
in the four trances,
the four Unlimited,
the four formless attainments,
the five superknowledges,
in any number of world systems.

In each case
a person who would not only write
this perfection of wisdom
and recite it by himself,
but would write it for others
and give it away to them,
would easily beget the greater merit.

Moreover, Kausika,
someone would also beget
a greater merit
if they were conversant with the meaning
when reciting this perfection of wisdom;
and having written it for others,
would give it away,
expound and light it up,
both the meaning and the letter.

2. The Counterfeit Perfection of Wisdom

Sakra: Can one then
expound this perfection of wisdom?

The Lord: Yes,
one should expound it to someone
who does not understand it.
For in the future
a counterfeit of the perfection of wisdom will arise.
When he hears it,
a person who does not understand
should beware of making obeisance to it,
if he wants to win full enlightenment.

Sakra: How should he recognize
in the future
if and when
the counterfeit perfection of wisdom
is expounded?

The Lord: In the future
there will be some monks
whose bodies are undeveloped,
whose moral conduct,
thought and wisdom are undeveloped,
who are stupid,
dumb like sheep,
without wisdom.

When they announce
that they will expound
the perfection of wisdom,
they will actually expound its counterfeit.

They will expound
the counterfeit perfection of wisdom
by teaching that
the impermanence of form, etc.,

is to be interpreted as
the destruction of form, etc.

To strive for that insight, that,
according to them,
will be the coursing
in the perfection of wisdom.

But on the contrary,
one should not view
the impermanence of form, etc.,
as the destruction of form, etc.
For to view things in that way
means to course
in the counterfeit perfection of wisdom.

For that reason, Kausika,
should one expound
the meaning of the perfection of wisdom.

By expounding it
one would beget the greater merit.

3. The Perfection of Wisdom Greater than Any Other Spiritual Gift

And that merit would be greater
than if one were to establish beings
in any number of world systems
in the fruit of a Streamwinner.

And that holds good also
of the fruit of a Once-Returner,
of a Never-Returner,
and of an Arhat.

For it is the perfection of wisdom
which brings about
the fruit of a Once-Returner,
of a Never-Returner,

and of an Arhat.

And the Bodhisattva
will increase his endurance
by the reflection that
by training himself in the perfection of wisdom,
he will by and by
become one who obtains
the dharmas which constitute a Buddha,
and will get near to full enlightenment.

For he knows that
by training himself in this training,
coursing in it,
struggling in it,
he will bring forth
all the fruits of the holy life,
from that of a Streamwinner
to Buddhahood.

The merit of the person
who shares the perfection of wisdom
will also be greater
than that of one who
establishes in Pratyekabuddhahood
any number of beings
in any number of world systems.

Moreover, Kausika,
if someone were
to raise to full enlightenment
the hearts of as many beings
as there are in Jambudvipa;
and if someone else were
not only to raise their hearts to full enlightenment,
but would also
in addition
give them a copy
of this perfection of wisdom;

or,
 if he would present a copy
 of this perfection of wisdom
 to an irreversible Bodhisattva,
 in the hope that he will let himself
 be trained in it,
 make endeavours about it,
 develop it,
 and as a result of the growth,
 increase,
 and abundance of the perfection of wisdom,
 fulfill the Buddha-dharmas;

then,
 compared with that former person,
 he will beget the greater merit,
 for certainly he will,
 once he has awoken to full enlightenment,
 end the sufferings of beings.

And his merit will be greater,
 even if the other person
 raises to full enlightenment the hearts
 of any number of beings
 in any number of world systems.

Or,
 let us again compare two persons:
 The first would present
 a copy of this perfection of wisdom
 to any number of beings
 in any number of world systems
 who have become irreversible
 from full enlightenment,
 who have definitely set out for it;
 the second would
 in addition
 expound it to them
 according to the meaning
 and according to the letter.

Would he not
on the strength of that
beget much merit?

Sakra: His merit would indeed be great.
One could not easily
even calculate that heap of merit,
or count it,
or find anything that it is similar to,
that it resembles,
or that it can be compared with.

The Lord: Still greater would
be the merit of someone
who in addition
would instruct and admonish
in this perfection of wisdom
those irreversible Bodhisattvas
who want more quickly
to win full enlightenment.

And further,
still another Bodhisattva would arise,
who would say that he would win
full enlightenment more quickly than they.
If someone would instruct and admonish
in the perfection of wisdom
that Bodhisattva of quicker understanding,
he would beget a still greater merit.

Sakra: To the extent that a Bodhisattva
comes nearer to full enlightenment,
to that extent he should
be instructed and admonished
in the perfection of wisdom,
for that brings him
nearer and nearer to Suchness.

When he comes nearer to Suchness,

he confers many fruits
 and advantages on those
 who have done him services,
 i.e., on those through whom
 he enjoys his robes,
 alms-bowl,
 lodging,
 and medicinal appliances for sickness.

His merit now becomes still larger,
 in consequence of the fact
 that he comes nearer
 to full enlightenment.

Subhuti: Well said, Kausika.
 You fortify those
 who belong to the Bodhisattva-vehicle,
 help them,
 stand by them.
 Even so should you act.

A holy disciple
 who wants to give help to all beings,
 he fortifies the Bodhisattvas
 in their attitude to full enlightenment,
 helps them,
 stands by them.
 It is so that one should act.

For begotten
 from the perfection of wisdom
 is the full enlightenment
 of the Bodhisattvas.

Because,
 if the Bodhisattvas
 would not produce that thought
 of enlightenment,
 they would not train themselves
 in full enlightenment,

nor in
the six perfections,
and in consequence
they would not awake
to full enlightenment.

But because the Bodhisattvas
train themselves
in the Bodhisattva training,
in these six perfections,
therefore do they produce
this thought of enlightenment,
therefore do they awake
to full enlightenment.

Chapter VI

Dedication and Jubilation

1. Supreme Merit of Dedication and Jubilation

Maitreya: On the one side we have,
 on the part of a Bodhisattva,
 the meritorious work which is founded
 on his rejoicing at the merit of others,
 and on his dedication of that merit
 to the utmost enlightenment of all beings;

on the other side there is,
 on the part of all beings,
 the meritorious work
 founded on giving,
 on morality,
 on meditational development.

Among these
 the meritorious work of a Bodhisattva
 founded on jubilation and dedication
 is declared to be the best,
 the most excellent and sublime,
 the highest and supreme,
 with none above it,
 unequalled,
 equaling the unequalled.

2. The Range of Jubilation

Subhuti: A Bodhisattva,
 a great being,
 considers the world
 with its ten directions,
 in every direction,
 extending everywhere.

He considers the world systems,
 quite immeasurable,
 quite beyond reckoning,
 quite measureless,
 quite inconceivable,
 infinite and boundless.

He considers in the past period,
 in each single direction,
 in each single world
 system,
 the Tathagatas,
 quite immeasurable,
 quite beyond reckoning,
 quite measureless,
 quite inconceivable,
 infinite and boundless,
 who have won final Nirvana
 in the realm of Nirvana
 which leaves nothing behind,

their tracks cut off,
 their course cut off,
 their obstacles annulled,
 guides through [the world of] becoming,
 their tears dried up,
 with all their impediments crushed,

their own burdens laid down,
 with their own weal reached,

in whom the fetters of becoming
 are extinguished,
 whose thoughts are well freed
 by right understanding,
 and who have attained
 to the highest perfection
 in the control of their entire hearts.

He considers them,

from where they began
with the production of the
thought of enlightenment,

proceeding to the time
when they won full enlightenment,
until they finally entered Nirvana
in the realm of Nirvana
which leaves nothing behind,
and the whole span of time
up to the vanishing
of the good Dharma
[as preached by each one of these Tathagatas].

He considers the mass of morality,
the mass of concentration,
the mass of wisdom,
the mass of emancipation,
the mass of the vision
and cognition of emancipation
of those Buddha and Lords.

In addition,
he considers the store of merit
associated with the six perfections,
with the achievement
of the qualities of a Buddha,

and with the perfections of self-confidence
and of the powers;
and also those associated with
the perfection of the superknowledges,
of comprehension,
of the vows;

and the store of merit associated
with the accomplishment
of the cognition
of the all-knowing,

with the solicitude for beings,
 the great friendliness
 and the great compassion,
 and the immeasurable
 and incalculable Buddha-qualities.

And he also considers the full enlightenment
 and its happiness,
 and the perfection of the sovereignty
 over all dharmas,
 and the accomplishment
 of the measureless and unconquered
 supreme wonderworking power
 which has conquered all,

and the power of the Tathagata's cognition
 of what is truly real,
 which is without covering,
 attachment or obstruction,
 unequalled,
 equal to the unequalled,
 incomparable,
 without measure,

and the power of the Buddha-cognition
 preeminent among the powers,
 the obtainment of that supreme ease
 which results
 from the four grounds of self-confidence,

and the vision and cognition of a Buddha,
 the perfection of the ten powers,
 the obtainment of that supreme ease
 which results from
 the four grounds of self confidence,

and the obtainment of Dharma
 through the realization
 of the ultimate reality of all dharmas.

He also considers
 the turning of the wheel of Dharma,
 the carrying of the torch of Dharma,
 the beating of the drum of Dharma,
 the filling up the conch shell of Dharma,

the wielding of the sword of Dharma,
 the pouring down of the rain of Dharma,
 and the refreshment of all beings
 through the gift of Dharma,
 through its presentation to them.

He further considers the store of merit
 of all those who are educated and trained
 by those demonstrations of Dharma,

whether they concern
 the dharmas of Buddhas,
 or those of Pratyekabuddhas,
 or of Disciples, - who believe in them,
 who are fixed on them,
 who are bound to end up
 in full enlightenment.

He also considers the store of merit,
 associated with the six perfections,
 of all those Bodhisattvas
 of whom those Buddhas and Lords
 have predicted full enlightenment.

He considers the store of merit
 of all those persons
 who belong to the Pratyekabuddha vehicle,
 and of whom
 the enlightenment of a Pratyekabuddha
 has been predicted.

He considers the meritorious work
 founded on giving,
 morality,

and meditational development,
of the four assemblies
of those Buddhas and Lords,
i.e. of the monks and nuns,
the laymen and laywomen.

He considers the roots of good
planted during all that time by Gods,
Nagas, Yakshas,
Gandharvas, Asuras,
Garudas, Kinnaras and Mahoragas,

by men and ghosts,
and also by animals,
at the time when those Buddhas and Lords
demonstrated the Dharma,
and when they entered Pairinirvana,
and when they had entered
Parinirvana

thanks to the Buddha, the Lord,
thanks to the Dharma,
thanks to the Samgha,
and thanks to persons of right mind-culture.

[In his meditation
the Bodhisattva] piles up the roots of good of all those,
all that quantity of merit without exception or remainder,
rolls it into one lump,
weighs it,
and rejoices over it
with the most excellent and sublime jubilation,
the highest and utmost jubilation,
with none above it,
unequaled,
equaling the unequalled.

Having thus rejoiced,
he utters the remark:
“I turn over into full enlightenment

the meritorious work founded on jubilation.
 May it feed the full enlightenment
 [of myself and of all beings]!”

3. A Metaphysical Problem

Now, as concerns these foundations
 through which the person
 belonging to the Bodhisattva-vehicle has rejoiced,
 concerning those objective supports
 and points of view
 through which he has raised that thought –

would those foundations,
 objective supports and points of view
 be apprehended in such a way
 that they would be treated as signs?

Maitreya: No, they would not.

Subhuti: If he treated
 as an objective support
 or as a sign
 that foundation which does not exist,
 and that objective support
 which does not exist,
 would he then not have
 a perverted perception,
 perverted thought,
 perverted views?

For in a greedy person also,
 when he has discriminated
 a nonexisting entity
 [foundation]
 and pondered on it –
 thinking that there is
 permanence in the impermanent,
 ease in suffering,

the self in what is not the self,
 loveliness in what is repulsive –
 there arises a perverted perception,
 perverted thought,
 perverted view.

And as the foundation [entity],
 the objective support,
 the point of view [are non-existent],
 so is enlightenment,
 so is the thought [of enlightenment]
 and so all dharmas,
 all elements.

But then on which foundations,
 by which objective supports,
 or points of view
 does he turn over
 what thought into full enlightenment,
 or what meritorious work
 founded on jubilation
 does he turn over
 into what utmost,
 right and perfect enlightenment?

Maitreya: This should not be taught
 or expounded
 in front of a Bodhisattva
 who has newly set out in the vehicle.
 For he would lose that little faith,
 which is his,
 that little affection,
 serenity and respect which are his.

In front of an irreversible Bodhisattva
 should this be taught and expounded.

Alternatively,
 a Bodhisattva who is propped up
 by a good friend

would thereby not be cowed,
 nor become stolid,
 nor cast down,
 nor depressed,
 would not turn his mind away from it,
 nor have his back broken,
 nor tremble,
 be frightened,
 be terrified.

And thus should the Bodhisattva
 turn over
 into all-knowledge
 the meritorious work founded on jubilation.

Subhuti: The thought
 by which one has rejoiced and turned over,
 or dedicated
 that [wholesome root
 connected with jubilation],
 that thought of [rejoicing]
 is [at the time of turning over]
 extinct,
 stopped,
 departed,
 reversed.

Therefore, what is that thought
 by which one turns over
 to full enlightenment?
 Or what is that thought
 which turns over
 into full enlightenment
 the meritorious work founded on jubilation?

Or, if no two thoughts can ever meet,
 how can one
 by thought
 turn over,
 or dedicate, thought?

Nor is it possible to turn over
 [or to overturn, to transform]
 that thought
 as far as its own being is concerned.

Sakra: The Bodhisattvas who have
 newly set out in the vehicle
 should beware of being afraid
 when they have heard this exposition.

How then should a Bodhisattva
 turn that meritorious work
 founded on jubilation
 over into full enlightenment?

And how does someone
 who takes hold of the meritorious work
 founded on jubilation succeed
 in taking hold of that thought
 connected with jubilation,
 and how does one who turns over
 the thought connected with jubilation
 succeed in turning it over?

Thereupon, the Venerable Subhuti
 turned his mind to the Bodhisattva Maitreya,
 concentrated his mind on him,
 and spoke thus:

Here the Bodhisattva considers the merit connected
 with the past Buddhas and Lords,
 in the way we described before.

He piles up the wholesome roots
 of all those,
 all that quantity of wholesome roots
 without exception and remainder,
 rolls it into one lump,
 weighs it,
 and rejoices over it.

He then turns the meritorious work
founded on jubilation
over to full enlightenment.

How can the Bodhisattva
when he turns over,
be without perverted perception,
perverted thought,
perverted view?

4. How Perverted Views Can Be Avoided

Maitreya: The Bodhisattva must not,
as a result of the thought
by which he turns that over,
become one who perceives a thought.

It is thus that the meritorious work
founded on jubilation
becomes something
which is turned over into full enlightenment.

If he does not perceive that thought,
[identifying it] as ‘this is that thought,’
then a Bodhisattva has no perverted perception,
thought or view.

But if he perceives the thought
by which he turns that over,
[identifying it] as ‘this is that thought,’
then he becomes one who perceives thought.
As a result he has a perverted perception,
thought and view.

But a Bodhisattva turns over rightly,
not wrongly,
when he perceives and brings to mind
the thought which turns over
in such a way that he regards it as

‘just extinct, extinct,’
 as ‘stopped,
 departed, reversed’;

and when he reflects that
 what is extinct
 that cannot be turned over;
 and that this
 [extinctness, etc]
 is the very dharmic nature also
 of that thought by which one turns over,

and also of the dharmas
 through which one turns over,
 as well as of the dharmas
 to which one turns over.

It is thus that the Bodhisattva
 should turn over.

He should consider the future Buddhas,
 the present Buddhas,
 the past,
 future and present Buddhas
 in the same way
 in which he considered the past Buddhas.

Under which circumstances
 is he without perverted perception,
 thought or views?

If, while he turns over,
 he brings to mind
 those dharmas as extinct,
 stopped,
 departed,
 reversed,
 and that dharma
 into which it is turned over
 as inextinguishable,

then it
 [the wholesome root]
 becomes something
 which has been turned over
 into full enlightenment.

For he does not settle down
 in that process of dedication.

If further
 he considers that
 no dharma can be turned over into a dharma,
 then also it becomes something
 which has been turned over
 into full enlightenment.

It is thus that the Bodhisattva
 who turns over
 is without perverted perception,
 thought or view.

For he does not settle down
 in that process of dedication.

If further he perceives that
 thought cannot cognize thought,
 nor can dharma cognize dharma,
 then also it becomes something
 which has been turned over
 into full enlightenment.

This is the supreme maturity
 of the Bodhisattva.

But if, on the other hand,
 a Bodhisattva perceives that accumulation of merit,
 then he cannot turn it over
 into full enlightenment.
 Because he settles down
 in that process of dedication.

If further he reflects that also
 this accumulation of merit
 is isolated and quietly calm,
 that also the meritorious work
 founded on jubilation
 is isolated and quietly calm,
 then he turns over into full enlightenment.

If in addition he does not even perceive
 that all conditioned events
 are calmly quiet and isolated,
 then that is the perfection of wisdom
 of that Bodhisattva.

But he does not turn over
 into full enlightenment
 if he perceives that
 this here is the wholesome root
 of the Buddhas, the Lords
 who have gone to Parinirvana;

that that wholesome root
 is just as [illusory]
 as that process of dedication;
 and that also that [thought]
 by which it is turned over
 is of the same kind,
 has the same mark,
 belongs to the same class,
 has the same own-being.

For the Buddhas and Lords
 do not allow a dedication
 to take place through a sign.

He does not bring to mind
 nor turn over [that wholesome root]
 to full enlightenment
 if he brings about a sign

by reflecting that
 what is past is extinct,
 stopped,
 departed,
 reversed;

that what is future
 has not yet arrived;
 and that of the present
 no stability is got at,
 and that that which is not got at
 has no sign or range.

On the other hand
 he also does not turn over
 to full enlightenment
 if he fails to bring about a sign
 or to bring to mind
 as a result of sheer inattentiveness,
 if he fails to attend
 as a result of lack of mindfulness,
 or of lack of understanding.

But that wholesome root
 becomes something
 which has been turned over
 into full enlightenment
 on condition that he brings to mind that sign,
 but does not treat it as a sign.

It is thus that the Bodhisattva
 should train himself therein.
 This should be known
 as his skill in means.

When, through that skill in means,
 he turns over a wholesome root,
 then he is near to all-knowledge.
 The Bodhisattva who wants to train himself
 in this skill in means should,

however,
 constantly hear
 just this perfection of wisdom,
 study it and ask questions about it.
 For without the help
 of the perfection of wisdom
 one untaught
 cannot enter on the work of dedication
 by means of the perfection of wisdom.

But one should not make a statement
 to the effect that
 thanks to the perfection of wisdom
 it is possible to transform
 that meritorious work
 into full enlightenment.
 For stopped are those personal lives,
 stopped are those karma-formations,
 calmly quiet, isolated,
 lacking in basis.

Moreover, that person
 has brought about a sign,
 and made a discrimination,
 he perceives what is truly real
 in what is not truly real
 as if it were truly real,
 and he would transform a basis
 into what is without basis.

The Buddhas, the Lords
 do not allow his wholesome roots
 to become something which is in this way
 transformed into full enlightenment.
 For they become to him a great basis.

Even the Parinirvana of Buddhas,
 the Lords
 he treats as sign and discriminates,
 he gets at Nirvana from a viewpoint,

and it is not the dedication
 carried out by one who perceives a basis
 which the Tathagatas have called
 a source of great welfare.

For this process of dedication
 is not without poison,
 not without thorn.

It is just as with food that seems excellent,
 but is really poisonous.

Its colour, smell,
 taste and touch seem desirable,
 but nevertheless,
 as poisonous it should be shunned
 and not eaten by circumspect people.

Although fools and stupid people
 might think that it should be eaten.
 The colour, smell,
 taste and touch of that food
 promise happiness,
 but its transformation
 in a man who would eat it
 would lead to a painful conclusion.
 As a result he would incur death,
 or deadly pain.

Just so
 some [perceivers of a basis]
 who seize badly
 the meaning of what is well taught,
 badly distinguish it,
 badly master it,
 and misunderstand it,
 not understanding the meaning
 as it really is,
 they will instruct and admonish others
 to consider the mass of merit

of the past, future and present
 Buddhas and Lords,
 in the way described before,
 to rejoice at it,
 and to turn over into full enlightenment
 the meritorious work founded on jubilation.

Thus
 that turning over,
 since it is being carried out
 by means of a sign,
 is turned into poisonousness.
 It is just like the poisonous food
 mentioned before.

There can be no turning over
 for someone who perceives a basis.
 For a basis is poisonous
 [has a range].

Therefore a person
 who belongs to the vehicle of the Bodhisattvas
 should not train himself thus.

How then should he train himself?
 How should he take hold
 of the wholesome root of the past,
 future and present Buddhas and Lords?

And how does that which is taken hold of
 become something
 which is successfully taken hold of?

How should he turn over?
 And how does it become something
 which has been successfully turned over
 into the supreme enlightenment?

Here the son or daughter of a good family
 who belongs to the vehicle

of the Bodhisattvas,
 and who does not want
 to calumniate the Tathagata,
 should thus rejoice
 over all that wholesome root,
 should thus turn it over:

“I rejoice in that wholesome root
 considered as the Tathagatas
 with their Buddha-cognition
 and their Buddha-eye know and see it,

its kind such as it is,
 its class such as it is,
 its quality such as it is,
 its own-being such as it is,
 its mark such as it is,
 and its mode of existence such as it is.

And I turn it over in such a way
 that those Tathagatas
 can allow that wholesome root
 to be turned over
 into full enlightenment.”

When he thus rejoices,
 thus turns over,
 a Bodhisattva becomes free from guilt.
 The righteousness of the Buddhas,
 the Lords,
 is rejoiced in.

That wholesome root
 becomes something
 that has been turned over
 into full enlightenment.
 And he does not
 calumniate those Tathagatas.

In this way his turning over becomes

a non-poisonous turning over,
 a great turning over,
 a turning over into the dharma-element;

it becomes perfect,
 quite perfect,
 through the earnest intention
 and the resolve
 of him who turns over.

Moreover, someone who belongs
 to the vehicle of the Bodhisattvas
 should turn over with the understanding that all morality,
 concentration,
 wisdom,
 emancipation,
 vision and cognition of emancipation,
 are unincluded in the world of sense-desire, t
 he world of form,
 the formless world,
 and that they are not past,
 future, or present.

For everything that is in
 the three periods of time
 or in the triple world
 is unincluded [in ultimate reality].

In consequence
 the turning over
 is also unincluded,
 and so is the dharma [i.e. Buddhahood]
 into which that process of transformation
 is being turned,
 if only he firmly believes that.

When a Bodhisattva turns over
 in such a way,
 he can never again lose the turning over,
 and it becomes unincluded,

non-poisonous,
 a great turning over,
 a turning over of the dharma-element, perfect,
 quite perfect.

But, on the other hand,
 when he settles down in what he turns over,
 and treats it as a sign,
 then he turns it over wrongly.

A Bodhisattva, however,
 turns over with the idea that
 it is through this turning over
 into the dharma-element,
 as the Buddhas, the Lords
 know and permit it,
 that that wholesome root
 becomes something
 which has been turned over
 into full enlightenment,
 successfully turned over.

This is the right method of turning it over.
 And in this way
 it becomes something that has been turned
 over into supreme enlightenment,
 successfully turned over.

The Lord: Well said, Subhuti, well said.
 You perform the office
 of the Teacher
 when you demonstrate Dharma
 to the Bodhisattvas.
 For it is this turning over,
 which is the turning over
 of the dharma-element,
 that is the turning over
 of a Bodhisattva.

He thinks:

“As the Buddhas and Lords know
and see that wholesome root
in this dharmahood,

its kind such as it is,
its class such as it is,
its quality such as it is,
its own-being such as it is,

its mark such as it is,
its mode of existence such as it is,

so I rejoice in it.
And as they grant permission,
so I turn it over.”

5. Considerations of Merit

This heap of merit
of a Bodhisattva,
which is born from his turning over
of the Dharma-element,
that is declared to be superior
to the accumulation of merit
on the part of someone who would
instigate to,
and establish
in the ten wholesome ways of action
all the beings in the great trichiliocosms
which are countless
as the sands of the Ganges.

And it remains superior also
if those beings would all gain
the four trances,
or the four Unlimited,
or the four formless attainments,

or the five superknowledges;

or equally
 if they would become
 Streamwinners, etc.,
 to: Pratyekabuddhas.

This is not all.

If all beings in all world systems
 had set out for the supreme enlightenment;
 and if, Subhuti,
 each single Bodhisattva were to furnish,
 for aeons
 countless like the sands of the Ganges,
 all those beings in the various
 great trichiliocosms,
 countless as the sands of the Ganges,
 with all they might need;
 but they would give that gift
 while perceiving a basis.

And if,
 proceeding in this manner,
 we imagine that all those beings
 are a single one,
 and if each single Bodhisattva
 would
 for aeons
 countless as the sands of Ganges
 furnish all those Bodhisattvas
 with all they might need,
 and treat them with respect;
 if thus each single one
 of all those Bodhisattvas,
 if they all together would give that gift,
 would now those Bodhisattvas
 on the strength of that
 beget a great deal of merit?

Subhuti: A great deal indeed, O Lord.
 That heap of merit

would even defy calculation.
 If it were a material thing,
 it could not find room
 in even the great trichiliocosms
 countless as the sands of the Ganges.

The Lord: So it is, Subhuti.
 And yet,
 this accumulation of merit,
 due to giving on the part of the Bodhisattvas
 who perceive a basis,
 is infinitesimal
 compared with the merit
 begotten by someone who belongs
 to the vehicle of the Bodhisattvas,
 and who,
 taken hold of by perfection of wisdom
 and by skill in means,
 turns that wholesome root over
 into full enlightenment
 by means of this turning over
 of the dharma-element.

For although the basis-perceiving
 Bodhisattvas
 have given a good many gifts,
 they have also reckoned them up as
 ‘good many.’

Thereupon
 twenty thousand Gods
 of the Four Great Kings,
 with folded hands
 paid homage to the Lord,
 and said:

“This transformation into all-knowledge
 of wholesome roots
 by those who have been taken hold of
 by the perfection of wisdom

and by skill in means,
 is a great transformation
 of the Bodhisattvas.
 Because it surpasses
 the accumulation of merit,
 derived from giving,
 of those Bodhisattvas
 who are based on something,
 however great it may be.”

Thereupon again
 one hundred thousand Gods
 of the Thirty-three
 rained down on the Lord heavenly flowers,
 incense,
 perfumes,
 wreaths,
 ointments,
 aromatic powders,
 jewels and garments.

They worshipped the Lord
 with heavenly parasols,
 banners,
 bells,
 flags,
 and with rows of lamps all around,
 and with manifold kinds of worship.

They played on heavenly musical instruments
 [in honour of the Lord]
 and they said:

“This transformation of the dharma element
 is surely a great transformation
 of the Bodhisattva.
 Because it surpasses
 the heap of accumulated merit
 resulting from the gifts
 of the Bodhisattvas

who have a basis in something,
just because that great transformation
has been taken hold of
by the perfection of wisdom
and by skill in means.”

All the other classes of Gods
appeared on the scene,
worshipped the Lord,
and raised their voices.

They said:

“It is wonderful, O Lord,
to what an extent
this transformation of a wholesome root
by the Bodhisattvas
who have been taken hold of
by the perfection of wisdom
and by skill in means
surpasses the heap of merit
of those Bodhisattvas
who have a basis in something,
although it has accumulated
for such a long time,
and was procured
by such manifold exertions.”

Thereupon the Lord said to those Gods,
from the gods belonging to the Pure Abode downwards:

“Let us leave the case
of the accumulation of the merit
of all beings
in countless world systems
who have definitely set out
for full enlightenment,
and who have given gifts
for the sake of gaining
full enlightenment.

Let us,
 in the same manner,
 consider the case of all beings
 in countless world systems who,
 having made a vow
 to gain full enlightenment,
 and having raised their thoughts
 to enlightenment,
 would give gifts
 on the extensive scale described before.

On the other hand
 we consider a Bodhisattva,
 taken hold of by the perfection of wisdom
 and by skill in means,
 who takes hold of the wholesome roots
 of all the Buddhas, Bodhisattvas,
 Pratyekabuddhas and Disciples,
 and of all other beings also

the wholesome roots
 which have been planted,
 will be planted,
 and are being planted,
 and who rejoices
 over them all
 in the way described above.

Then
 infinitesimal will be
 the accumulation of merit
 on the part of the former Bodhisattvas
 who give gifts while perceiving a basis
 just because they perceive a basis.

Subhuti: The Lord has described
 the jubilation over the wholesome roots
 of all beings
 as a most excellent jubilation.

For what reason is this jubilation
a most excellent one?

The Lord: If a person who belongs
to the vehicle of the Bodhisattvas
does not seize on past,
future
and present dharmas,
does not mind them,
does not get at them,
does not construct,
nor discriminate them,
does not see
nor review them,

if he considers them
with the conviction that
all dharmas
are fabricated by thought construction,
unborn,
not come forth,
not come,
not gone,

and that
no dharma is ever produced
or stopped in the past,
future or present;

if he considers those dharmas in such a way,
then his jubilation
is in accordance
with the true nature of those dharmas,
and so is his transformation
[of the merit]
into full enlightenment.

This is the first reason
why the jubilation of the Bodhisattva
is a most excellent one.

The meritorious work founded on giving
 on the part of Bodhisattvas
 who perceive a basis,
 who have a basis in view,
 is infinitesimal
 compared with the transformation
 of the wholesome root
 by that Bodhisattva.

Moreover, Subhuti,
 someone who belongs
 to the vehicle of the Bodhisattvas,
 and who wants to rejoice
 in the wholesome roots
 of all the Buddhas and Lords,
 should rejoice in such a way:

As emancipation
 [is unoriginated,
 since the obstacles from defilements
 and from the cognizable have ceased],
 so the gift;
 so the morality, etc.;
 so the jubilation,
 so the meritorious work
 founded on jubilation;

as the emancipation,
 so the transformation,
 so the Buddhas and Lords,
 and the Pratyekabuddhas
 and the Disciples
 who have entered Parinirvana;

as the emancipation,
 so are the dharmas which are past,
 or stopped;
 and likewise the dharmas which are future,
 or not yet produced;

and the dharmas which are present,
or proceeding just now;

as the emancipation
so are all the past,
future and present Buddhas and Lords.

Thus, I rejoice
with the most excellent jubilation
in the true nature of those dharmas,
which are unbound,
unfreed,
unattached.

Thereafter
I turn that meritorious work
founded on jubilation
over into full enlightenment;
but really no turning over takes place,
because nothing is passed on,
nothing destroyed.

This is the second reason
why the jubilation of the Bodhisattva
is a most excellent one.

But to return to the question of merit.

Let us now consider the case
where all the beings
in countless world systems
have definitely set out
for full enlightenment,
and where,
in order to advance to full enlightenment,
they would
for countless aeons
undertake the obligation
of observing morality,
i.e. good conduct of body,

speech and mind,
but while perceiving a basis.

Nevertheless their accumulation of merit
is infinitesimal
compared with that of a Bodhisattva's merit
derived from jubilation,
just because they perceive a basis.

And the same would be true,
if all those beings would
for countless aeons
practice patience,
although they were ever so much abused,
struck and reviled;

or if they would practice vigour,
and
under no circumstances
would be cast down,

or conquered by sloth and torpor;
or,
finally,
if they would enter the trances.

As long as they carry out those practices
while perceiving a basis,
their merit will be infinitesimal
compared with that of a Bodhisattva
who rejoices
over the wholesome roots of all beings
with the most excellent jubilation,
and transforms this wholesome root
into the supreme enlightenment.

Chapter VII Hell

1. Hymn to The Perfection of Wisdom

Sariputra: The perfection of wisdom,
 O Lord,
 is the accomplishment
 of the cognition
 of the all-knowing.
 The perfection of wisdom
 is the state of all-knowledge.

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

Sariputra: The perfection of wisdom
 gives light,
 O Lord.
 I pay homage to the perfection of wisdom!

She is worthy of homage.

She is unstained,
 the entire world cannot stain her.

She is a source of light,
 and from everyone in the triple world
 she removes darkness,
 and she leads away
 from the blinding darkness
 caused by the defilements
 and by wrong views.

In her we can find shelter.

Most excellent are her works.

She makes us seek the safety
 of the wings of enlightenment.

She brings light to the blind,

she brings light so that
all fear and distress may be forsaken.

She has gained the five eyes,
and she shows the path to all beings.

She herself is an organ of vision.

She disperses the gloom
and darkness of delusion.

She does nothing about all dharmas.

She guides to the path
those who have strayed on to a bad road.

She is identical with all-knowledge.

She never produces any dharma,
because she has forsaken the residues
relating to both kinds of coverings,
those produced by defilement
and those produced by the cognizable.

She does not stop any dharma.
Herself unstopped and unproduced
is the perfection of wisdom.

She is the mother of the Bodhisattvas,
on account of the emptiness of own marks.

As the donor of the jewel
of all the Buddha-dharmas
she brings about the ten powers
(of a Buddha).

She cannot be crushed.

She protects the unprotected,
with the help

of the four grounds of self-confidence.

She is the antidote to birth-and-death.

She has a clear knowledge
of the own-being of all dharmas,
for she does not stray away from it.

The perfection of wisdom of the Buddhas,
the Lords,
sets in motion the wheel of the Dharma.

2. Predominance of Perfect Wisdom Over the Other Perfections

How should a Bodhisattva
stand in the perfection of wisdom,
how attend
and pay homage to it?

The Lord: In every way
the perfection of wisdom
should be treated like the Teacher himself.

Sakra then asked Sariputra:
Wherefrom,
and for what reason
has this question of the holy Sariputra arisen?

Sariputra: It arose
because I heard it said that
“a Bodhisattva who,
taken hold of by perfection of wisdom
and skill in means,
transforms into all-knowledge
the meritorious work founded on jubilation,
surpasses the entire meritorious work
founded on giving,
morality, patience,
vigour, and trance

of all the Bodhisattvas who observe a basis.”

It is just the perfection of wisdom
which directs the five perfections
in their ascent
on the path to all-knowledge.

Just as, Kausika,
people born blind,
one hundred,
or one thousand,
or one hundred thousand of them,
cannot,
without a leader,
go along a path and get to a village,
town or city;

just so,
Giving, Morality,
Patience, Vigour
and Trance
cannot by themselves
be called ‘perfections,’
for without the perfection of wisdom
they are as if born blind,
without their leader
unable to ascend the path to all-knowledge,
and still less can they reach all-knowledge.

When, however,
Giving, Morality,
Patience, Vigour
and Trance are taken hold of
by the perfection of wisdom,
then
they are termed ‘perfections,’
for then
these five perfections
acquire an organ of vision
which allows them to ascend

the path to all-knowledge,
and to reach all-knowledge.

3. Nothing Procured by Perfect Wisdom

Sariputra said to the Lord:
How should a Bodhisattva consummate
the perfection of wisdom?

The Lord: He should view
the non-consummation of form, etc.
The nonconsummation of the five skandhas,
that is called the 'consummation'
of the perfection of wisdom.'

In this way,
because nothing is effected,
the consummation of the five skandhas
is called the consummation
of the perfection of wisdom.

Sariputra: When the perfection of wisdom
has been consummated
by such a consummation,
what dharma does it procure?

The Lord: When consummated
in such a way,
the perfection of wisdom
does not procure any dharma,
and in consequence of that fact
she comes to be styled
'perfection of wisdom.'

Sakra: Then, O Lord,
this perfection of wisdom
does not even procure all-knowledge?

The Lord: It does not procure it
as if it were a basis,

or a mental process,
or a volitional act.

Sakra: How then does it procure?

The Lord: In so far as it does not procure,
to that extent it procures.

Sakra: It is wonderful, O Lord,
to see the extent to which
this perfection of wisdom
neither produces
nor stops any dharma.

For the purpose of the nonproduction
and of the non-stopping of all dharmas
has the perfection of wisdom
been set up,
without, however,
being really present.

Subhuti: If a Bodhisattva
should perceive this also,
then he will keep far way
from this perfection of wisdom,
treat it as worthless and insignificant,
and fail to act on it.

The Lord: This is quite true.
For where the perfection of wisdom is lit up,
there form does not become lit up,
nor the other skandhas,
nor the fruits of the holy life,
up to Buddhahood.

Subhuti: This perfection of wisdom
is a great perfection, O Lord!

4. Why The Perfection of Wisdom is Great

The Lord: What do you think, Subhuti,
in what manner
is this perfection of wisdom
a great perfection?

Subhuti: It does not make form, etc.,
greater or smaller,
and it does not assemble nor disperse form, etc.

It also does not strengthen
or weaken the powers of a Tathagata,
nor does it assemble or disperse them.

It does not even make that all-knowledge
greater or smaller,
nor does it assemble or disperse it.
For all-knowledge is unassembled [uncollected]
and undispersed
[undisturbed].

If the Bodhisattva perceives even this,
then he courses not
in the perfection of wisdom,
how much more so if he forms the notion:

‘Thus will I,
endowed with the cognition
of the all-knowing,
demonstrate dharma to beings,
thus will I lead those beings
to final Nirvana.’

For this apprehension of beings
as a basic fact,
when he says,
“I will lead those beings to final Nirvana,”
cannot be an outcome
of perfection of wisdom.

This would indeed be
a great basis of apprehension
on his part.

For the absence of own-being in beings
should be known
as belonging to the very essence
of the perfection of wisdom.

One should know that
the perfection of wisdom
is without own-being
because
[or: in the same way in which]
beings are without own-being;

that the perfection of wisdom is isolated,
because beings are isolated;

that the perfection of wisdom is unthinkable,
because beings are;

that the perfection of wisdom
has an indestructible nature
because beings have;

that the perfection of wisdom
does not actually undergo the process
which leads to enlightenment
because beings do not

that the perfection of wisdom
taken as it really is,
does not undergo the process
which leads to enlightenment
because beings,
as they really are,
do not undergo that process;

that the way in which

the Tathagata arrives
 at the full possession of his powers
 should be understood
 after the way in which beings arrive
 at the full possession of their power.

It is in this manner that
 the perfection of wisdom
 is a great perfection.

5. Causes of Belief in the Perfection of Wisdom

Sariputra: Bodhisattvas who are reborn here,
 and who will here
 resolutely believe
 in this deep perfection of wisdom,

without hesitation,
 doubt or stupefaction,
 where have they deceased
 and for how long have they practiced,

they who will follow the doctrine
 of this perfection of wisdom,
 understand its meaning,
 and instruct others in it
 both by the method
 which shows the meaning
 and by the method
 which shows the doctrine?

The Lord: One should know
 that such a Bodhisattva is reborn here
 after he has deceased in other world systems
 where he has honoured
 and questioned the Buddhas, the Lords.

Any Bodhisattva who,
 after he has deceased in other world systems

where he has honoured
and questioned the Buddhas, the Lords,
is reborn here,

would,
when he hears this
deep perfection of wisdom being taught,
identify this perfection of wisdom
with the Teacher,
and be convinced
that he is face to face with the Teacher,
that he has seen the Teacher.

When the perfection of wisdom
is being taught,
he listens attentively,
pays respect to it before he hears it,
and does not cut the story short.

Such a Bodhisattva
should be known
as one who has practiced for long,
who has honoured many Buddhas.

Subhuti: It is at all possible
to hear the perfection of wisdom,
to distinguish and consider her,
to make statements and to reflect about her?

Can one explain,
or learn,
that because of certain attributes,
tokens or signs
this is the perfection of wisdom,

or that
here
this is the perfection of wisdom,
or that
there

that is the perfection of wisdom?

The Lord: No indeed, Subhuti.
This perfection of wisdom
cannot be expounded,

or learned,
or distinguished,
or considered,
or stated,

or reflected upon by means of the skandhas,
or by means of the elements,
or by means of the sense-fields.

This is a consequence of the fact
that all dharmas are isolated,
absolutely isolated.

Nor can the perfection of wisdom
be understood otherwise
that by the skandhas,
elements
or sense-fields.

For just the very skandhas,
elements,
and sense-fields are empty,
isolated and calmly quiet.

It is thus that the perfection of wisdom
and the skandhas,
elements
and sense-fields are not two,
nor divided.

As a result of their emptiness,
isolatedness and quietude
they cannot be apprehended.

The lack of a basis of apprehension
in all dharmas,
that is called 'perfect wisdom.'

Where there is no perception,
appellation,
conception,
or conventional expression,
there one speaks
of 'perfection of wisdom.'

Subhuti: As one who has practiced
for how long
should that Bodhisattva be known
who makes endeavours
about this deep perfection of wisdom?

The Lord: One must make a distinction
in this,
owing to the unequal endowment
of different Bodhisattvas.

6. Causes and Consequences of Disbelief

It is quite possible
that some Bodhisattvas,
although they have seen many hundreds,
many thousands,
many hundreds of thousands of Buddhas,

and have led the holy life in their presence, might,
nevertheless
have no faith in the perfection of wisdom.

The reason is that
in the past also
they have had no respect
for this deep perfection of wisdom
when, in the presence

of those Buddhas and Lords,
it was taught.

Because they lacked in respect for it,
they had no desire to learn more about it,
did not honour it,
were unwilling to ask questions,
and lacked in faith.

Lacking in faith
they thereupon walked out
of the assemblies.

It is because in the past
they have produced,
accumulated,
piled up
and collected karma
conducive to the ruin of dharma
that also at present they walk out
when this deep perfection of wisdom
is being taught.

From the lack of respect
without faith and firm belief
in the perfection of wisdom,
they have no concord either
in their bodies or in their thoughts.

Devoid of concord they do not know,
see,
recognize,
or make known this perfection of wisdom.

First they do not believe,
then they do not hear,
then they do not see,
then they do not recognize it,
and thus they produce,
accumulate,

pile up
and collect karma
conducive to the ruin of dharma.

This in its turn
will bring about karma conducive
to weakness in wisdom.

That in its turn
will make them refuse,
reject and revile
this perfection of wisdom
when it is being taught,
and,
having rejected it,
they will walk out.

But by
rejecting this perfection of wisdom
they reject the all-knowledge
of the Buddhas and Lords,
past, future and present.

Not content with having vitiated
their own continuities,
they will,
as if all aflame,
deter,
dissuade,
turn away others also,

persons of small intelligence,
wisdom,
merit and wholesome roots,
endowed with but a little faith,
affection,
serenity,
and desire-to-do,

beginners,

essentially unqualified,

trying to take away even that little faith,
affection,
serenity
and desire-to-do.

They will say that one should not train in it, t
hey will declare
that it is not the Buddha's word.

They first vitiate
and estrange
their own communities,
and then those of others.
Thereby they will calumniate
the perfection of wisdom.

To calumniate the perfection of wisdom
means to calumniate all-knowledge,
and therewith the past,
future and present Buddhas.

They will be removed
from the presence of the Buddhas and Lords,
deprived of the Dharma,
expelled from the Samgha.

In each and every way
they will be shut out from the Triple Jewel.
Their activities cut down the welfare
and happiness of beings,
and they will collect from them
karma conducive to the great hells.

Because they have raised
these karma-formations,
they will be reborn in the great hells,
for many hundreds of years, etc.
to: for many hundreds

of thousands
 of niyutas
 of kotis of aeons.

From one great hell they will pass on
 to another.

After a good long time
 their world will be consumed by fire.
 They will then be hurled
 into the great hells
 in another world system,
 where again they will pass on
 from great hell to great hell.

When also that world is consumed by fire,
 they will again be hurled into the great hells
 in another world system,
 where again they will pass on
 from great hell to great hell.

When also that world is consumed by fire,
 this karma of theirs will still be unexhausted,
 will still have some residue of efficacy

and,
 deceased there,
 they will again be hurled
 into this world system.
 Here again,
 they will be reborn in the great hells,
 and experience great sufferings in them,
 until the time
 when this world
 is once more consumed by fire.

They will therefore,
 as we see,
 experience a karma which involves
 many painful feelings.

And why?
Because their teachings are so bad.

Sariputra: Even the aftereffect
of the five deadly sins
bears no proportion
to this misconduct of mind and speech?

The Lord: It does not.
All those who oppose
this perfection of wisdom
and dissuade others from it
are persons to whom
I do not grant any vision.
How can one become intimate with them,
how can they gain wealth,
honor and position?

As a matter of fact
they should be regarded
as defamers of dharma,
as mere rubbish,
as blackguards,
as mere vipers.

They are persons
who bring misfortune,
they will ruin those who listen to them.
For those who defame
the perfection of wisdom
should be regarded
as persons who defame Dharma.

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

The Lord: Leave that alone, Sariputra.
If this were announced
those who hear it would have to beware

lest hot blood spurt out of their mouths,

lest they incur death or deadly pain,
lest harsh oppression weigh them down,
lest the dart of grief enter their hearts,

lest they drop down with a big fall,
lest they shrivel up and wither away,
lest they be overpowered by a great fright.

So the Lord refused to answer
the Venerable Sariputra's question.
For a second time,
for a third time
the Venerable Sariputra spoke thus
to the Lord:

Tell me, O Lord,
the length of that person's sojourn in hell,
as a guidance for future generations.

The Lord: Because he has brought about,
accumulated,
piled up
and collected this karma
of mind and speech
he must sojourn for a long while
in the great hells.

Just so much guidance will be given
to future generations,
that he will,
in consequence of the
unwholesome karma-formations
of this misconduct
of speech and mind,
experience pain for just so long.

The mere announcement
of the measureless and magnitude

of his pain
 will be a sufficient source of anxiety
 to virtuous sons and daughters
 of good family.

It will turn them away from activities
 conducive to the ruin of dharma,
 they will cause the formation of merit,
 and they will not reject the good dharma,
 even to save their lives,
 for they do not wish to meet with such pains.

Subhuti: Such a person should become
 well-restrained in the deeds
 of his body, speech or mind.
 For so great a heap of demerit
 is begotten by such false teaching.
 Which, O Lord,
 is the deed that begets
 so great a heap of demerit?

The Lord: Such false teachings do.
 Just here
 there will be deluded men,
 persons who have left the world
 for the well-taught Dharma-Vinaya,

who will decide to defame,
 to reject,
 to oppose this deep perfection of wisdom.
 But to oppose the perfection of wisdom
 is to oppose the enlightenment
 of the Buddhas and Lords.

And that means
 that one opposes the all-knowledge
 of the Buddhas and Lords in past,
 future and present.
 To oppose all-knowledge means
 to oppose the good dharma.

To oppose the good dharma means
to oppose the community of the Disciples
of the Tathagata.

And when one opposes also
the community of the Disciples
of the Tathagata,
then one is shut out
in each and every way
from the Triple Jewel.

One has then managed to acquire
an unwholesome karma-formation
which is greater than immeasurable
and incalculable.

Subhuti: For what reason do these people
believe that they should oppose
this perfection of wisdom?

The Lord: Such a person is beset by Mara.
His karma is conducive
to weakness in wisdom,
and so he has no faith
or serene confidence
in deep dharmas.

Endowed with those two evil dharmas
he will oppose
this perfection of wisdom.

Moreover, Subhuti,
that person will be one
who is in the hands of bad friends;
or he may be one who has not practiced;
or one
who has settled down in the skandhas;
or one who exalts himself
and deprecates others,
looking out for faults.

Endowed also with these four attributes
will be that person
who believes
that this perfection of wisdom
should be opposed when it is being taught.

Chapter VIII Purity

1. Depth and Purity of Perfect Wisdom

Subhuti: It is hard to gain confidence
in the perfection of wisdom
if one is unpractised,
lacks in wholesome roots,
and is in the hands of a bad friend.

The Lord: So it is, Subhuti.
It is hard to gain confidence
in the perfection of wisdom
if one is unpractised,

has only diminutive wholesome roots,
is dull-witted,
does not care,
has learned little,

has an inferior kind of wisdom,
relies on bad friends,
is not eager to learn,

unwilling to ask questions
and
unpractised in wholesome dharmas.

Subhuti: How deep then
is this perfection of wisdom,
since it is so hard
to gain confidence in it?

The Lord: Form is neither bound nor freed,
because form has no own-being.

The past starting point of a material process,
form,
is neither bound nor freed,

because the past starting point
of a material process
is without own-being.

The end of a material process
in the future,
is neither bound,
nor freed,
because the future end
of a material process
is without own-being.

A present material process
is without own being
because the fact of being present
is not a part
of the own-being of a present form.

And so for the remaining skandhas.

Subhuti: It is hard,
it is exceedingly hard
to gain confidence
in the perfection of wisdom,
if one is unpractised,

has planted no wholesome roots,
is in the hands of a bad friend,
has come under the sway of Mara,

is lazy,
of small vigour,
robbed of mindfulness
and stupid.

The Lord: So it is, Subhuti.
Because the purity of form
is identical with the purity of the fruit,

and the purity of the fruit

is identical with the purity of form.

It is thus that the purity of form
and the purity of the fruit
are not two,
nor divided,
are not broken apart,
nor cut apart.

It is thus that the purity of form
comes from the purity of the fruit,
and the purity of the fruit
from the purity of form.

And the same identity exists
between the purity of form
and the purity of all-knowledge.

The same applies to the other skandhas.

Sariputra: Deep, O Lord,
is the perfection of wisdom!

The Lord: From purity.

Sariputra: A source of illumination
is the perfection of wisdom

The Lord: From purity.

Sariputra: A light is perfect wisdom.

The Lord: From purity.

Sariputra: Not subject to rebirth
is perfect wisdom.

The Lord: From purity.

Sariputra: Free from defilement

is perfect wisdom.

The Lord: From purity.

Sariputra: There is no attainment
or reunion
in perfect wisdom.

The Lord: From purity.

Sariputra: Perfect wisdom
does not reproduce herself.

The Lord: From purity.

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

The Lord: From purity.

Sariputra: Perfect wisdom
neither knows
nor perceives.

The Lord: From purity.

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

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

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

The Lord: From purity.

Sariputra: Perfect wisdom
neither gains
nor abandons any dharma.

The Lord: From purity.

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

The Lord: Because it is absolutely pure.

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

The Lord: Because of its absolute purity.

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

The Lord: Because of its absolute purity.

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

The Lord: Because of its absolute purity.

Subhuti: A Bodhisattva who understands it thus,
he has perfect wisdom.

The Lord: Because of his absolute purity.

Subhuti: Moreover,
this perfection of wisdom
does not stand on the shore
this side,

nor on the shore beyond,
nor athwart the two.

The Lord: Because of its absolute purity.

Subhuti: A Bodhisattva who treats
even that [insight]
as an object of perception,
will thereby part
from this perfection of wisdom,
and get far away from it.

2. Attachments

The Lord: Well said, Subhuti.
For also
names and signs
are sources of attachment.

Subhuti: It is wonderful, O Lord,
to see the extent to which
this perfection of wisdom
has been well taught,
well explained,
well rounded off.

The Lord even announces
these sources of attachment.

Sariputra: Which, Subhuti,
are these attachments?

Subhuti: It is an attachment
if one perceives that the skandhas are empty,
that past dharmas are past dharmas,
future dharmas are future dharmas,
and present dharmas are present dharmas.

It is an attachment

if one forms the notion
 that someone who belongs
 to the vehicle of the Bodhisattvas
 begets so great a heap of merit
 through his first production
 of the thought of enlightenment.

Sakra: In which manner, Subhuti,
 does the thought of enlightenment
 become a source of attachment?

Subhuti: One becomes attached
 when one perceives
 this thought of enlightenment as
 ‘this is the first thought of enlightenment,’

and if one converts it
 into full enlightenment
 while conscious that one does so.

For it is quite impossible
 to turn over
 the essential original nature of thought.

One should therefore keep in agreement with true reality
 when one makes others see the highest,
 and rouses them
 to win supreme enlightenment.

In that way
 one does not waste one’s self away,
 and the manner which one rouses others
 to win the highest
 has the sanction of the Buddhas.
 And one succeeds in abandoning
 all those points of attachment.

The Lord: Well said, Subhuti,
 you make the Bodhisattvas aware
 of these points of attachment.

I will now announce other,
 more subtle, attachments.
 Listen to them well,
 and pay good attention.
 I will teach them to you.

“Well said, O Lord,”
 and the Venerable Subhuti
 listened in silence.

The Lord: Here Subhuti,
 a son or daughter of good family,
 full of faith,
 attends to the Tathagata through a sign.
 But, so many signs,
 so many attachments.
 For, from signs, comes attachment.

It is thus that he is conscious
 that he rejoices in all the dharmas
 without outflows of the Buddhas and Lords,
 past,
 future and present,

and that,
 after rejoicing,
 he turns over into full enlightenment
 the wholesome root
 which is associated with his act of jubilation.

As a matter of fact,
 however,
 the true nature of dharmas is not past,
 nor future,
 nor present;
 it lies quite outside the three periods of time;

and for that reason
 it cannot possibly be converted,

cannot be treated as a sign,
 or as an objective support,
 and it cannot be seen,
 nor heard,
 nor felt,
 nor known.

3. Non-Attachment

Subhuti: Deep is the essential original nature of the dharmas.

The Lord: Because it is isolated.

Subhuti: Deep is the essential nature
 of perfect wisdom.

The Lord: Because its essential nature
 is pure and isolated,
 therefore has the perfection of wisdom
 a deep essential nature.

Subhuti: Isolated is the essential nature
 of perfect wisdom.
 I pay homage
 to the perfection of wisdom.

The Lord: Also all dharmas
 are isolated in their essential nature.
 And the isolatedness
 of the essential nature of all dharmas
 is identical with the perfection of wisdom.
 For the Tathagata has fully known
 all dharmas as not made.

Subhuti: Therefore all dharmas
 have the character
 of not having been fully known
 by the Tathagata?

The Lord: It is just through

their essential nature
that those dharmas
are not a something.

Their nature
is no-nature,
and their no-nature
is their nature.

Because all dharmas have one mark only,
i.e. no mark.

It is for this reason
that all dharmas have the character
of not having been fully known
by the Tathagata.

For there are no two natures of dharma,
but just one single one
is the nature of all dharmas.

And the nature of all dharmas is no nature,
and their no-nature
is their nature.

It is thus that all those points of attachment are abandoned.

Subhuti: Deep, O Lord,
is the perfection of wisdom.

The Lord: Through a depth
like that of space.

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

The Lord: Because nothing is fully known by the enlightened.

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

The Lord: Because the perfection of wisdom
is not something
that thought ought to know,
or that thought has access to.

Subhuti: Not something made
is the perfection of wisdom, O Lord.

The Lord: Because no maker
can be apprehended.

Subhuti: How then
under these circumstances,
should a Bodhisattva
course in perfect wisdom?

The Lord: A Bodhisattva
courses in perfect wisdom if,
while coursing,
he does not course in the skandhas;

or if he does not course
in the conviction
that the skandhas are impermanent,
or that they are empty,
or that they are neither defective
nor entire.

And if he does not even course
in the conviction that
form is not the defectiveness
or entirety of form,
and so for the other skandhas,
then he courses in perfect wisdom.

Subhuti: It is wonderful, O Lord,
how well the reasons for the attachment
and non-attachment
of the Bodhisattvas

have been explained.

The Lord: One courses in perfect wisdom
if one does not course in the idea
that form is with attachment,
or without attachment.

And as for form,
so for the other skandhas, the sight organ, etc.,
to feeling born from eye contact;

so for the physical elements,
the six perfections,
the thirty-seven wings of enlightenment,

the powers,
the grounds of self-confidence,
the analytical knowledges,

the eighteen special Buddha-dharmas,
and the fruits of the holy life,
from the fruit of a Streamwinner
to all-knowledge.

When he courses thus,
a Bodhisattva
does not generate attachment to anything,
from form to all-knowledge.

For all-knowledge is unattached,
it is neither bound nor freed,
and there is nothing that has risen above it.

It is thus, Subhuti,
that Bodhisattvas
should course in perfect wisdom
through rising completely above
all attachments.

4. Like Space or An Echo

Subhuti: It is wonderful, O Lord,
 how deep is this dharma,
 I mean,
 the perfection of wisdom.
 Demonstration does not diminish
 or increase it.
 Non-demonstration also
 does not diminish
 or increase it.

The Lord: Well said, Subhuti.
 It is just as if a Tathagata should,
 during his entire life,
 speak in praise of space,
 without thereby increasing
 the volume of space;
 and space would not diminish, either,
 while he was not speaking in praise of it.

Or,
 it is as with an illusory man.
 Praise does not penetrate to him
 or win him over.
 When there is no praise
 he is not affected,
 or frustrated.

Just so the true nature of dharmas
 is just so much,
 whether it be demonstrated or not.

Subhuti: A doer of what is hard
 is the Bodhisattva,
 who,
 while he courses in perfect wisdom,
 does not lose heart
 nor get elated;

who persists in making endeavours about it
and does not turn back.

The development of perfect wisdom
is like the development of space.

Homage should be paid
to those Bodhisattvas
who are armed with this armour.

For with space
they want to be armed when,
for the sake of beings,
they put on the armour.

Armed with the great armour
is a Bodhisattva,
a hero is a Bodhisattva,
when he wants to be armed with an armour,
and win full enlightenment,
for the sake of beings who are like space,
who are like the realm of dharma.

He is one who wants to liberate space,
he is one who wants to get rid of space,
he is one
who has won the armour
of the great perfection of vigour,

that Bodhisattva
who is armed with the armour
for the sake of beings who are like space,
who are like the realm of Dharma.

Thereupon,
a certain monk saluted the Lord
with folded hands
and said to the Lord:
I pay homage, O Lord,
to the perfection of wisdom!

For it neither produces
nor stops any dharma.

Sakra: If someone, holy Subhuti,
would make efforts
about this perfection of wisdom,
what would his efforts be about?

Subhuti: He would make efforts
about space.
And he would make his efforts
about a mere vacuity
if he would decide to train
in perfect wisdom
or to work on it.

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

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

Sakra: Not so, holy Subhuti.

Subhuti: So when a Bodhisattva
stands in the perfection of wisdom
as it has been expounded,
then just that will be his shelter,
defence and protection.

On the other hand,
when he is lacking in perfect wisdom,
then those men and ghosts
who look for entry

will gain entrance into him.

One would, however,
want to arrange shelter,
defence and protection
for space,

if one would want to
arrange shelter,
defence and protection
for a Bodhisattva
who courses in perfect wisdom.

What do you think, Kausika,
are you able to arrange shelter,
defence and protection
for an echo?

Sakra: Not so, holy Subhuti.

Subhuti: Just so,
a Bodhisattva,
who courses and dwells in perfect wisdom,
comprehends that all dharmas
are like an echo.

He does not think about them,
does not review,
identify,
or perceive them,
and he knows that those dharmas
do not exist,
that their reality does not appear,
cannot be found,
cannot be got at.

If he dwells thus,
he courses in perfect wisdom.

5. Conclusion

Thereupon,
 through the Buddha's might
 the four Great Kings
 in the great trichiliocosm,
 and all the Sakras,
 Chiefs of Gods,
 and all the great Brahma Gods,
 and Sahapati,
 the great Brahma,
 all came to where the Lord was.

They reverently saluted the Lord's feet
 with their heads,
 walked three times round the Lord,
 and stood on one side.

Through the Buddha's might,
 and through his miraculous power,
 their minds were impressed
 by the sight of a thousand Buddhas.

In these very words,
 by monks called Subhuti, etc.,
 has this very perfection of wisdom
 been expounded,
 just this very chapter
 of the perfection of wisdom.

With reference to it,
 just the Sakras,
 Chiefs of Gods,
 ask questions and counter-questions.
 At this very spot of earth,
 has just this perfection of wisdom
 been taught.

Maitreya also,
 the Bodhisattva,

the great being will,
after he has won the supreme enlightenment,
at this very spot of earth
teach this very same perfection of wisdom.

Chapter IX Praise

1. Perfect Wisdom Perfectly Pure

Subhuti: To call it 'perfection of wisdom,'
 O Lord,
 that is merely giving it a name.
 And what that name corresponds to,
 that cannot be got at.

One speaks of a 'name'
 with reference to a merely nominal entity.

Even this perfection of wisdom
 cannot be found
 or got at.

In so far as it is a word,
 in so far is it perfect wisdom;
 in so far as it is perfect wisdom,
 in so far is it a word.

No duality of dharmas
 between those two
 can either be found
 or got at.

For what reason then
 will Maitreya,
 the Bodhisattva,
 the great being,
 after he has won the supreme enlightenment,
 preach just this very same
 perfection of wisdom
 at this very spot of earth
 in just these same words?

The Lord: The reason is that
 Maitreya will be fully enlightened
 as to the fact
 that the skandhas are neither permanent
 nor impermanent,
 that they are neither bound nor freed,
 that they are absolutely pure.

Subhuti: Perfectly pure indeed
 is the perfection of wisdom.

The Lord: Perfect wisdom is perfectly pure
 because the skandhas are pure,

and because their non-production
 is perfectly pure,
 their non-stopping,
 their non-defilement,
 and their non-purification.

It is pure because space is pure
 and because the skandhas are stainless,
 and the defiling forces
 cannot take hold of them.

Perfect wisdom is perfectly pure
 because,
 like space or an echo,
 it is unutterable,
 incommunicable,
 and offers no basis for apprehension.

It is perfectly pure
 because it is not covered by any dharma,
 stained or stainless.

2. Effects of Perfect Wisdom

Subhuti: It is indeed a great gain
 to these sons and daughters of good family

that they should even come to hear
of this perfection of wisdom.

How much greater the gain
if they take it up,
bear it in mind,
recite,
study,
spread,
teach,
explain and master it.

Their eyes,
ears,
nose,
tongues and bodies
will be free from disease,
and their minds
free from stupefaction.

They will not die a violent death.
Many thousands of Gods
will follow closely behind them.

Wherever, on the eight,
fourteenth and fifteenth day,
when he preaches dharma,
a son or daughter of good family
teaches the perfection of wisdom,
there he will beget a great deal of merit.

The Lord: So it is, Subhuti.
Many thousands of Gods, Subhuti,
will follow closely behind
that son or daughter of good family,

and many thousands of Gods
will come to where perfect wisdom
is being taught.

Desirous of hearing dharma,
 they will,
 all of them,
 protect the preacher of dharma
 who teaches this perfection of wisdom.

For perfect wisdom
 is the most precious thing in the world
 with its Gods,
 men and Asuras.

That also is a reason
 why such a person
 will beget a great deal of merit.

On the other hand,
 there will be many obstacles
 to this deep perfection of wisdom
 being written,

taken up,
 borne in mind,
 recited,
 studied,
 spread,
 explained and repeated.

For very precious things
 provoke much hostility.
 The more excellent they are,
 the more violent the hostility.

But this is the most precious thing
 in the entire world,
 this perfection of wisdom,
 which has been set up
 and undertaken
 for the benefit and happiness of the world,
 by showing
 that all dharmas have not been produced

nor destroyed,
are neither defiled nor purified.

But perfect wisdom
does not cling to any dharma,
nor defile any dharma,
nor take hold of any dharma.
For all these dharmas
neither exist
nor are they got at.

Because it has not been apprehended
is the perfection of wisdom
without any stain.

‘To be free from stains,’
that is the same thing
as perfect wisdom.

And it is because the skandhas
are free from stains
that perfect wisdom
is without any stain.

A Bodhisattva courses in perfect wisdom
if he does not perceive even that.

Moreover,
this perfection of wisdom
does not enter or place itself
into any dharma,
it does not reveal
or define any dharma,
it does not bring in any dharma
or carry one away.

3. The Second Turning of the Wheel of Dharma

Thereupon a great many thousands of Gods
in the intermediate realm

called out aloud with cries of joy,
waved their garments,
and said:

We now, indeed,
see the second turning
of the wheel of dharma
taking place in Jambudvipa!

The Lord: This, Subhuti,
is not the second turning
of the wheel of dharma.
No dharma can be turned forwards
or backwards.

Just this
is a Bodhisattva's perfection of wisdom.

Subhuti: Great is this perfection
of a Bodhisattva,
who,
unattached to all dharmas,
wants to know full enlightenment,

and who yet
is not enlightened about any dharma,
or who will turn the wheel of dharma

and who yet
will not show up
any dharma.

For no dharma is here got at,
no dharma is indicated,
no dharma will move on any dharma.

Because absolutely,
reproduction is alien to all dharmas.

Nor will any dharma turn back

any other dharma.
 Because from the very beginning
 all dharmas have not been reproduced,
 since their essential nature
 is isolated.

The Lord: So it is, Subhuti.
 For emptiness does not proceed
 nor recede,
 and that holds good also
 for the Signless
 and the Wishless.

To demonstrate that
 is to demonstrate all dharmas.
 But no one has demonstrated it,
 no one has heard it,
 no one has received it,
 and no one realizes it,
 in the past,
 present or future.

Nor by this demonstration of dharma
 does anyone ever go to Nirvana.
 Nor by this demonstration of dharma
 has anyone ever been made worthy of gifts.

4. Modes and Qualities of Perfect Wisdom

Subhuti: This is a perfection of what is not,
 because space is not something that is.

This is a perfection
 which equals the unequalled,
 because all dharmas are not apprehended.

This is an isolated perfection,
 on account of absolute emptiness.

This perfection cannot be crushed,

because all dharmas are not apprehended.

This is a trackless perfection,
because both body and mind are absent.

This is a perfection which has no own-being,
because it neither comes and goes.

This perfection is inexpressible,
because all dharmas are not discriminated.

This perfection is nameless,
because the skandhas are not apprehended.

This perfection does not go away,
because no dharma ever goes away.

One cannot partake of this perfection,
because no dharma can be seized.

This perfection is inexhaustible,
as linked to the inexhaustible dharma.

This perfection has had no genesis,
because no dharma has really come about.

This is a perfection which does nothing,
because no doer can be apprehended.

This perfection does not generate
[cognize] anything,
because all dharmas are without self.

This perfection does not pass on,
because there is no genesis
of decease and rebirth.

This perfection does not discipline,
because the past, future and present periods are not apprehended.

This is the perfection of a dream,
an echo,
a reflected image,
a mirage,
or an illusion,
because it informs about non-production.

This perfection is free from defilement,
because greed, hate and delusion
have no own-being.

This perfection knows no purification,
because no possible receptacle
[which might have to be purified]
can be apprehended.

This perfection is spotless,
because space is spotless.

This perfection is free from impediments,
because it rises completely above
all mental attitudes to dharmas.

This perfection has no mental attitude,
because it is imperturbable.

This perfection is unshakeable,
in consequence
of the stability of the realm of dharma.

This perfection has turned away from greed,
because there is no falseness in dharmas.

This perfection does not rise up,
because there is no discrimination in dharmas.

This perfection is quieted,
because no sign is apprehended
in all dharmas.

This perfection is faultless,
as the perfection of all virtues.

This perfection is undefiled,
because imagination is something that is not.

No living being is found in this perfection,
because of the reality-limit.

This perfection is unlimited,
because the manifestation of all dharmas does not rise up.

This perfection does not follow after the duality of opposites,
because it does not settle down
in all dharmas.

This perfection is undifferentiated,
because all dharmas are.

This perfection is untarnished,
because it is free from any longing
for the level of Disciples and Pratyekabuddhas.

This perfection is indiscriminated,
because of the basic identity
of all that is discriminated.

This perfection is infinite,
because the nature of dharma is unlimited.

This perfection is unattached,
because of its non-attachment
to all dharmas.

Impermanent is this perfection,
because all dharmas are unconditioned.

Ill is this perfection,
because the nature of dharma
is the same as space.

Empty is this perfection,
because all dharmas
are not apprehended.

Not-self is this perfection,
because there is no settling down
in all dharmas.

Markless is this perfection,
because there is no reproduction in dharmas.

This is a perfection of all emptiness,
because endless and boundless.

This is a perfection
of the wings of enlightenment,
such as pillars of mindfulness, etc.,
because they cannot be apprehended.

This is a perfection of Emptiness,
of the Signless,
of the Wishless,
because the three doors to deliverance
cannot be apprehended.

This is a perfection of the eight deliverances,
because they cannot be apprehended.

This is a perfection
of the nine successive stations,
because the first trance, etc.,
cannot be apprehended.

This is a perfection of the Four Truths,
because ill, etc. cannot be apprehended.

This is a perfection of the Ten Perfections,
because giving, etc., cannot be apprehended.

This is the perfection of the ten powers,

because it cannot be crushed.

This is a perfection
of the four grounds of self-confidence,
because absolutely
it cannot be cowed.

This is a perfection
of the analytical knowledges,
because it is unobstructed
when unattached to all-knowledge.

This is a perfection
of all the special Buddha-dharmas,
because they have transcended all counting.

This is a perfection
of the Suchness of the Tathagata,
because there is no falseness in all dharmas.

This is a perfection
of the Self-existent,
because all dharmas have no own-being.

This perfection of wisdom
is a perfection of the cognition
of the all-knowing,
because it comprehends
all the modes
of the own-being of all dharmas.

Chapter X Proclamation of the Qualities of Bearing in Mind

1. Past Deeds, and the Present Attitude to Perfect Wisdom

Thereupon it occurred to Sakra,
Chief of Gods:

Those who come to hear
of this perfection of wisdom
must be people
who have fulfilled their duties
under the former Jinas,

who have planted wholesome roots
under many Buddhas,
who have been taken hold of
by good friends.

How much more so
those who take up this perfection of wisdom,
bear it in mind,

study,
spread and explain it,

and who,
in addition,
train in Thusness,
progress to Thusness,
make efforts about Thusness.

They are endowed
with more than trifling wholesome roots.
They will be people
who have honoured many Buddhas,
and who have
again and again
questioned them.

It was just this perfection of wisdom
which they have heard in the past

in the presence of former Tathagatas.

They have planted wholesome roots
 under many Buddhas,
 those sons and daughters of good family who,
 when just this perfection of wisdom
 is being taught,
 explained and repeated,
 will not become cowed nor stolid,

will not become cast down nor depressed,
 will not turn their minds away from it
 nor have their backs broken,
 will not tremble,
 be frightened,
 be terrified.

Sariputra read Sakra's thoughts,
 and said:
 Like an irreversible Bodhisattva
 should one regard that person who,
 when just this deep perfection of wisdom
 is being taught and explained,
 has faith in it,

and,
 trusting,
 firmly believing,
 his heart full of serene faith,

raises a thought
 directed towards enlightenment,
 takes up, etc.,
 this perfection of wisdom,
 trains in Thusness,
 progresses to Thusness,
 makes effort about Thusness.

For this perfection of wisdom is deep,
 O Lord,

and therefore
 someone with diminutive wholesome roots,
 who,
 unwilling to ask questions,
 has learned nothing
 when face to face
 with the Buddhas and Lords in the past,

and who has not practiced in the past,
 cannot just here
 believe in this so deep
 perfection of wisdom.

And as to those who neither believe in it
 nor understand it,
 and who decide to reject it,
 in the past also
 they have rejected
 this deep perfection of wisdom
 when it was taught,
 and that
 in consequence
 of the inadequacy of their wholesome roots.

For those who have not practiced
 in the past
 cannot believe in this perfection of wisdom.
 When they reject it now,
 they have also rejected it in the past.

And that is the reason why,
 when this deep perfection of wisdom
 is being taught,
 they have no faith,

or patience,
 or pleasure,
 or desire-to-do,
 or vigour,
 or vigilance,

or resolve.

And in the past also
they have questioned neither the Buddhas,
the Lords,
nor their disciples.

Sakra: Deep, O holy Sariputra,
is the perfection of wisdom.
It is not at all astonishing that,
when it is being taught,
a Bodhisattva would not believe in it,
if he had not practiced in the past.

Sakra then said to the Lord:
I pay homage, O Lord,
to the perfection of wisdom!
One pays homage

to the cognition
of the all-knowing
when one pays homage
to the perfection of wisdom.

The Lord: So it is.
For from it
has come forth
the all-knowledge of the Buddhas,
the Lords,

and,
conversely,
the perfection of wisdom
is brought about
as something that has come forth
from the cognition of the all-knowing.

That is why one should course,
stand,
progress,

and make efforts
in this perfection of wisdom.

Sakra: How does a Bodhisattva,
who courses in perfect wisdom,
become one who has stood
in the perfection of wisdom?
How does he make efforts
about the perfection of wisdom?

The Lord: Well said, well said, Kausika.
Well said, again,
well said, Kausika,
since you have decided
to question the Tathagata about this matter.
In that,
you have been inspired
by the Buddha's might.

Here, Kausika,
a Bodhisattva who courses
in perfect wisdom
does not stand in form, etc.,
does not stand in the notion that
'this is form,'
and that means
that he makes efforts about form, etc.

He does not apply himself
to the notion that
'this is form, etc.'

Insofar as he does not apply himself
to the notion that
'this is form, etc.,'
he does not stand in the
notion that 'this is form, etc.'

Thus he becomes one
who has stood in perfect wisdom,

thus he makes efforts.

Sariputra: Deep, O Lord,
is the perfection of wisdom.
Hard to fathom
is the perfection of wisdom.

Hard to grasp
is the perfection of wisdom.
Unlimited
is the perfection of wisdom.

The Lord: So it is, Sariputra.
He does not stand in the notion that
'form, etc., is deep.'

Insofar as he does not stand in this notion
he makes efforts about form, etc.
He does not make efforts about the notion that
'form , etc., is deep.'

In so far as he makes no efforts
about this notion
he does not stand in the notion
that 'form, etc., is deep.'

2. Qualifications of a Bodhisattva Who Obtains Perfect Wisdom

Sariputra: In front of
an irreversible Bodhisattva,
of a Bodhisattva
predestined to enlightenment,
should the deep perfection of wisdom
be taught.
For he will not hesitate,
not doubt,
not be stupefied,
not dispute it.

Sakra: What would be the fault

in teaching this perfection of wisdom
in front of an unpredestined Bodhisattva?

Sariputra: If Kausika,
unpredestined,
a Bodhisattva obtains
this perfection of wisdom,
for vision,
praise,
worship and hearing,

and if he remains unafraid when he hears it,
one can be sure that he has come from afar,
has set out for long in the vehicle,

and that his wholesome roots
are well matured.

It will not be long
from now onwards
until he receives the prediction
to supreme enlightenment.
One can be sure that that prediction

will be near,
and will come to him
before he has passed by one,
two, or three Tathagatas.

And, of course,
he will please the Tathagatas
whom he passes by,
will please them permanently,

and he will see to it
that the vision of those Tathagatas
will bear the fruit of the prediction,
that it will lead him to the prediction
to supreme enlightenment [itself].

Come from afar, O Lord,
 set out for long in the great vehicle,
 with wholesome roots well matured
 is that Bodhisattva
 who obtains this perfection of wisdom
 for vision,
 praise,
 worship and hearing.

How much more so
 if he would not only hear it,
 but also take it up,
 bear it in mind,

preach,
 study,
 spread,
 explain and repeat it.

The Lord: So it is, Sariputra,
 as you have said.

3. Five Similes to Illustrate Nearness to Full Enlightenment

Sariputra: A simile
 or example
 flashes into my mind,
 O Lord.

Just as we can be sure
 that a person belonging
 to the vehicle of the Bodhisattvas,
 when he dreams that he sits
 on the terrace of enlightenment,
 is actually near to supreme enlightenment;
 just so
 we can be sure that a person
 who fulfills the conditions just outlined
 has come from afar,
 has set out for long

in the vehicle of the Bodhisattvas,
and is near his prediction to enlightenment.

We can be sure that the Buddhas, the Lords,
will predict that this Bodhisattva
shall win full enlightenment.

For a Bodhisattva
has set out for long in the vehicle,
and his wholesome roots are mature,
if he gets to this deep perfection of wisdom,
even if he gets no further than hearing it.

How much more so
if he would also bear it in mind, etc.,
to: repeat it.

For the thoughts of beings
who are not without
an abundance of accumulations of karma
conducive to the ruin of dharma
will become averse
to this deep perfection of wisdom,
will sway away from it.

Through the abundance of that karma
beings who have not collected wholesome roots
will find no satisfaction
nor faith
in this reality-limit.

But those who find satisfaction
and faith in it
are people who have collected wholesome roots,
well collected them.

A man coming out of a huge wild forest,
one hundred miles big,
up to a thousand miles big,
might see certain signs

which indicate a town,
or other inhabited place,

such as cowherds,
or cattle keepers,
or boundary lines,
or gardens,
or groves.

From those signs he will infer
the nearness of an inhabited place.
He feels happier,
and robbers no longer worry him.

Just so
a Bodhisattva
for whom this deep perfection turns up
should know that he is quite near
to supreme enlightenment,
that before long
he will receive the prediction to it.

He should also
no longer be afraid
of the level of the Disciples
and Pratyekabuddhas.
For this sign has appeared to him,
i.e., that he has received
this deep perfection of wisdom
for vision,
praise,
worship, and hearing.

The Lord: So it is, Sariputra.
May you make clear also this section.
For what you say,
and what you will say,
is due to the Buddha's might.

Sariputra: A man,
 desirous of seeing the great ocean,
 might travel to it.

As long as
 on his travels
 he sees a tree,
 or the sign of a tree,
 a mountain,
 or the sign of a mountain,
 he knows that the great ocean
 is still far away.

But when he no longer sees
 either tree or mountain,
 then he knows
 that the great ocean
 is quite near from there.
 For this great ocean
 gradually slopes away,
 and within it
 there is neither tree
 nor mountain.

And although he may not yet
 see the great ocean directly before his eyes,
 he nevertheless can be quite certain
 that the ocean is quite near,
 not much farther away from there.

Similar is the case of the Bodhisattva
 who has heard
 this deep perfection of wisdom.
 He knows that,
 although he has not yet,
 face to face with these Tathagatas,
 been predicted to supreme enlightenment,
 nevertheless he is quite near that prediction.
 For he has received
 this deep perfection of wisdom,

for vision,
 praise,
 worship and hearing.

In spring, O Lord,
 when last year's leaves
 have withered away,
 one can see sproutings on many trees.
 The men of Jambudvīpa will then be glad,
 because when they have seen
 these symptoms in the woods,
 they know that soon also
 flowers and fruits will come out.
 For they have seen those signs on the trees.

Just so, O Lord,
 one can be sure that a Bodhisattva,
 when he receives
 this deep perfection of wisdom,
 when it turns up for him,
 that he has matured his wholesome roots
 for a long time.

It is just because of the existence
 of these wholesome roots in him
 that this deep perfection of wisdom
 has bent over to him.

Then those divinities
 who have seen the Buddhas of the past,
 are delighted,
 overjoyed and enchanted,
 because they feel that surely
 it will not be long before this Bodhisattva
 will receive his prediction
 to full enlightenment,

since also with the Bodhisattvas of the past
 these were the symptoms
 of their coming prediction

to full enlightenment.

A woman,
 pregnant with a heavy womb,
 is twisted and all weary,
 she does not walk about a great deal,
 takes little food,
 finds little rest,

speaks little,
 has little strength
 but many pains,
 often cries out aloud
 and abstains from habitual cohabitation.

She realizes that she experiences
 all these unpleasant feelings in her body
 as a result of indulging in unwise attention in the past,
 practicing it,
 developing it,
 making much of it.

When these symptoms are seen in her,
 one can be sure
 that before long
 she will give birth to a child.

Just so,
 when for a Bodhisattva
 this deep perfection of wisdom turns up
 for the sake of vision,
 praise,
 worship, and hearing,

and if,
 when he hears it,
 his thought delights in it,
 and he become desirous of it,
 then one can be sure
 that before long

he will receive the prediction
to full enlightenment.

4. Why Bodhisattvas Are Well Favoured By the Buddhas

Subhuti: It is wonderful to see
the extent to which the Tathagata
has well taken hold of the Bodhisattvas,
has well encompassed and favoured them.

The Lord: It is because these Bodhisattvas
have practiced
for the weal and happiness of the many,
out of pity for the world.

Out of pity for Gods and men,
for the benefit,
the weal and happiness
of a great mass of people
do they want to win
the supreme enlightenment,
and thereafter,
to demonstrate the supreme dharma.

5. Right Attitude to Perfect Wisdom

Subhuti: How does the development
of perfect wisdom,
on the part of a Bodhisattva
who courses in perfect wisdom,
become increasingly perfect?

The Lord: A Bodhisattva
courses in perfect wisdom
when he reviews neither the growth
nor the diminution of form, etc.,
when he does not review either dharma
or no-dharma.

It is thus

that his development of perfect wisdom becomes increasingly perfect.

Subhuti: This explanation is surely unthinkable.

The Lord: Because form is unthinkable, and so are the other skandhas.

When he does not even perceive that form, etc., are unthinkable, then he courses in perfect wisdom.

Sariputra: Who will zealously believe in this so deep perfection of wisdom?

The Lord: A Bodhisattva who is practiced in perfect wisdom.

Sariputra: How does a Bodhisattva become practiced, and, what is the meaning of the word 'practised'?

The Lord: Here a Bodhisattva does not construct the powers, nor the grounds of self-confidence, nor the Buddha-dharmas, nor even the state of all-knowledge.

Because the powers are unthinkable, and so are the grounds of self-confidence, so are the Buddha-dharmas, so is the state of all-knowledge, and so are all dharmas.

When, thus practiced, a Bodhisattva does not course anywhere, then he courses in perfect wisdom, For that reason is he called 'practised,'

and that is the meaning of the word ‘practised.’

6. Obstacles to Perfect Wisdom

Subhuti: Deep, O Lord,
is perfect wisdom.
It is a heap of treasure.

It is a pure heap,
as pure as space.
It would not be surprising
if many obstacles should arise
to someone who takes up, etc.,
this perfection of wisdom.

The Lord: There will be many obstacles
to the study of this perfection of wisdom.
For Mara,
the Evil One,
will make great efforts to cause difficulties.

Therefore one should hurry up
with one’s task
of copying it out.
If one has one month to do it in,
or two months,
or three months,
one should just carry on with the writing.

If one has a year or more,
even then
one should just carry on
with writing this perfection of wisdom
[since after,
or even during that time
one may be prevented
by all kinds of interruptions].

Because it is a fact
that in respect of very precious things

many difficulties are wont to arise.

Subhuti: Here, O Lord,
when the perfection of wisdom
is being studied,
Mara,
the Evil One,
will in many ways show zeal,
and exert himself to cause difficulties.

The Lord: In spite of that,
he is powerless to cause
really effective obstacles
to a Bodhisattva
who gives his undivided attention
to his task.

7. The Bodhisattva Sustained by the Buddhas

Sariputra: If, O Lord,
Mara,
the Evil One,
is determined to cause obstacles
to the study of this perfection of wisdom,
how can just now
people actually study it,
and through whose might
can they do so?

The Lord: It is through the might
of the Buddhas and Lords,
of the Tathagatas,
that they study it,
and that they make progress
in training in Thusness.

For it is in the nature of things
that the Buddhas, the Lords,
who stand,
hold,

and maintain themselves
 in immeasurable and incalculable
 world-systems,
 should bring to mind and uphold
 everyone who teaches
 and studies this perfection of wisdom.

The Buddhas will bring him to mind
 and assist him.

And it is quite impossible
 to cause an obstacle
 to someone
 who has been brought to mind
 and upheld by the Buddhas.

Sariputra: It is through the Buddha's might,
 sustaining power and grace
 that Bodhisattvas study
 this deep perfection of wisdom,
 and progressively train in Thusness?

The Lord: So it is, Sariputra.
 They are known to the Tathagata,
 they are sustained
 and seen by the Tathagata,
 and the Tathagata beholds them
 with his Buddha-eye.

And those Bodhisattvas
 who study this perfection of wisdom,
 and who are progressively training
 in Thusness,
 they are near to the Thusness
 of the supreme enlightenment,
 and they stand poised in their decision
 to win full enlightenment.

If they only just study
 this perfection of wisdom,
 without progressively training in Thusness,

they will not stand poised
 in Suchness
 in the supreme enlightenment;
 but,
 nevertheless,
 they are also known to the Tathagata,
 sustained and seen by the Tathagata,
 and the Tathagata beholds them
 with his Buddha-eye.

That continual study
 of the perfection of wisdom,
 and the mental excitation about it,
 will be greatly profitable to them,
 a great advantage,
 fruit and reward.

For,
 as aiming at ultimate reality,
 the perfection of wisdom
 has been set up
 for the penetration by all beings
 into what dharmas truly are.

8. Prediction About Spread of Perfect Wisdom

Moreover,
 these Sutras
 associated with the six perfections
 will,
 after the passing away of the Tathagata,
 appear in the South.

From the South they will spread to the East,
 and from there to the North
 from the time when the Dharma-Vinaya
 is like freshly made cream
 right into the period
 when the good law disappears.

Those who at that time

study and preserve this perfection of wisdom
 will be brought to mind by the Tathagata;
 the Tathagata will know,
 sustain and see them,
 and behold them with his Buddha-eye.

Sariputra: Will even this
 so deep perfection of wisdom
 in the last time,
 in the last period,
 be widespread in the northern direction,
 in the northern part of the world?

The Lord: Those who,
 in the North,
 will make efforts
 in this deep perfection of wisdom
 after they have heard it,
 they will make it widespread.

As set out for long in the vehicle
 should the Bodhisattvas be known
 who will study
 this perfection of wisdom then.

9. Description of Bodhisattvas Who Will Study Perfect Wisdom

Sariputra: Those Bodhisattvas
 who in the North
 will study this deep perfection of wisdom,
 will they be many
 or few?

The Lord: There will be many,
 a good many Bodhisattva in the North.
 But there will be only a few among them
 who will study
 this deep perfection of wisdom,
 and who,
 when it is being taught,

will not become demoralized by it.

As set out for long in the vehicle
should they be known.

In the past already
they have pursued,
questioned
and worshipped that Tathagatas.

They will become morally perfect,
and they will promote the welfare
of many people,
i.e. starting from just this
my supreme enlightenment.

For it is just for them
that I have preached
just the sermons associated
with the state of all-knowledge.
In them,
even after they have passed through this present birth,
just these ideas associated
with the state of all-knowledge
and with the perfection of wisdom,
will persist by force of habit.
And just this sermon will they both preach and delight in,
i.e. concerning the supreme enlightenment.

And they will be well established
in this perfection of wisdom
and concentrate on it.

They cannot be diverted from it
even by Mara,
how much less by other beings,
whether they use willpower or mantras.
Because of their firm and irresistible drive
towards full enlightenment.

From hearing this perfection of wisdom
 those sons and daughters of good family
 will gain an uncommon degree of zest,
 elation and serene faith.

For many people
 they will plant wholesome roots,
 i.e. in supreme enlightenment.
 Because in my presence,
 face to face with me,
 they have uttered the vow:

“We,
 coursing in the practices of a Bodhisattva,
 shall set going
 on their way to full enlightenment
 many hundreds of living beings,
 yea, many niyutas of kotis
 of living beings.

We shall hold up perfect enlightenment
 to them,
 instigate,
 encourage and excite them to win it,

help it to come forth,
 help them to get established in it,
 help them to become irreversible.”

And when I had surveyed their thought
 with my thought,
 I rejoiced in those sons and daughters
 of good family
 who belong to the vehicle
 of the Bodhisattvas
 and who had made this vow.

In consequence
 they will become so much confirmed
 in their faith

that they will seek rebirth
in other Buddha-fields,

and also there
will come face to face
with the Tathagatas there,
who demonstrate dharma
and from whom they will hear in detail
just this deep perfection of wisdom.

In those Buddha-fields also
they will set countless living beings
going on their way to the supreme enlightenment,
and will help them
in their quest for full enlightenment.

Sariputra: It is wonderful to think that
in past,
future and present dharmas
there is nothing that the Tathagata
has not seen,
not heard,
not felt,
and of which he is unaware.

There is no dharma
that he has not cognized,
there is no conduct of any being
that he is unaware of.

He has cognized even the future conduct
of those Bodhisattvas
who are zealous for enlightenment,
who are full of earnest intentions,
who have exerted vigour.

But among those sons and daughters
of good family
who in the future will study
this deep perfection of wisdom,

who have exerted themselves
on behalf of these six perfections
and of the welfare of all beings,

and who seek,
search
and strive to obtain
this deep perfection of wisdom,

some will not obtain it,
while others will obtain it
without striving to get it.
What, O Lord,
is the reason for that?

The Lord: So it is, Sariputra.
There is nothing in past,
future or present dharmas
that the Tathagata has not seen,
heard and felt,
or of which he is unaware.

It is further true
that at that time,
in that period,
some Bodhisattvas who hunt
and search for this perfection of wisdom
will not get it.

Others will get it
without hunting and searching for it.
They will be Bodhisattvas who,
in the past,
have persistently hunted and searched
for this perfection of wisdom.

It is through the impetus
of this former wholesome root
that they will get
this perfection of wisdom,

in spite of the fact
that they do not now
hunt and search for it.

And also the Sutras different from this one,
which welcome
just this perfection of wisdom,
will,
of their own accord
come to them.

For it is a rule, Sariputra,
that, if a Bodhisattva
persistently hunts and searches
for this perfection of wisdom,
he will,
after one or two births,
get it,
and also the other Sutras
associated with perfect wisdom
will then come to him on their own.

Sariputra: Will only just these Sutras
associated with the six perfections
come to him,
and no others?

The Lord: There will be also
other very deep Sutras
which will come to this son or daughter
of good family
of their own accord.

For it is as a rule, Sariputra,
that,
if Bodhisattvas set others going
on their way to full enlightenment,
and help them in their quest for it,
help them to become irreversible,
and if they also themselves train in that,

then,
after they have passed through
this present birth,

of their own account
these very deep Sutras will come to them,
Sutras
associated with the non-apprehension
of a basis,
associated with emptiness,
associated with the six perfections.

Chapter XI Mara's Deeds

1. Various Deeds of Mara

Subhuti: The Lord has proclaimed
these virtues
of those sons and daughters of good family.
Are there again any obstacles
which will arise to them?

The Lord: Many will be the deeds of Mara
that will cause obstructions to them.

Subhuti: Of what kind are they?

The Lord: The Bodhisattvas who teach
the perfection of wisdom
will understand it only after a long time.

Or, after understanding has been generated,
it will immediately again be disturbed.

Or they will write yawning,
laughing and sneering.

Or they will study it with
their thoughts disturbed.

Or they will write with their minds
on other things.

Or they will not gain mindfulness.

Or they will write
while deriding one another,
or while sneering at one another,
or with distracted eyes.

Or their writing will be in mutual discord.
“We gain no firm footing in it,

we derive no enjoyment from it,”
 with these words
 they will get up from their seats
 and take their leave.

Their thoughts,
 devoid of serene faith
 they will think,
 ‘we are not predestined
 for this perfection of wisdom,’
 will get up from their seats
 and leave.

Or, because this book does not name
 the place where they were born,
 does not mention their own name and clan,
 nor that of their mother and father,
 nor that of their family,
 they may decide not to listen
 to the perfection of wisdom,
 and take their leave.

And each time they take their leave,
 they will again and again
 have to take to birth-and-death
 for as many aeons
 as they have had productions of thought,
 and during those aeons
 they will have to make new efforts.

For what reason?
 Because Bodhisattvas
 who refuse to listen
 to this perfection of wisdom
 cannot go forth to the spiritual dharmas,
 be they worldly or supramundane.

2. The Perfection of Wisdom and the Sutras of the Disciples

In addition,
 persons who belong
 to the vehicle of the Bodhisattvas
 may give up and abandon
 this perfection of wisdom
 which nourishes
 the cognition of the all-knowing,
 and decide to look for Sutras
 which do not nourish it.

Furthermore,
 those do not train themselves
 in this perfection of wisdom
 who do not want to train
 in worldly
 and supramundane spiritual dharmas,
 nor to go forth to them.

As they do not train in perfect wisdom,
 they cannot go forth
 to worldly
 and supramundane spiritual dharmas.

Those people of limited intelligence
 get rid of and abandon
 the perfection of wisdom,
 which is the root
 of the comprehension
 of worldly
 and supramundane spiritual dharmas,
 as they really are,
 and, instead,
 decide to look for support
 in what are mere branches.

Just as if a dog would spurn a morsel of food
 given to him by his master,
 and prefer to take a mouthful of water

from a servant;

just so,
 in the future,
 some persons belonging to the vehicle
 of the Bodhisattvas
 will spurn this perfection of wisdom,
 which is the root
 of the cognition
 of the all-knowing,

and decide to look for the core,
 for growth,
 for Buddhahood,
 in the vehicle of the Disciples
 and Pratyekabuddhas,
 which really corresponds to branches,
 leaves and foliage.

This also should be known
 as done to them by Mara.

For those people of small intelligence
 will not cognize
 that the perfection of wisdom alone
 nourishes the cognition
 of the all-knowing.

They get rid of,
 abandon and spurn
 the perfection of wisdom,
 and decide to study,
 as superior to it,
 other Sutras,
 those which welcome the level
 of a Disciple
 or Pratyekabuddha.

They should be compared to branches,
 leaves and foliage.

For a Bodhisattva should not train
 in the same way
 in which persons belonging to the vehicle
 of the Disciples
 or Pratyekabuddhas are trained.

How then are the Disciples
 and Pratyekabuddhas trained?
 They make up their minds that
 “one single self we shall tame,
 one single self we shall pacify,
 one single self we shall lead
 to final Nirvana.”

Thus they undertake exercises,
 which are intended
 to bring about wholesome roots
 for the sake of taming themselves,
 pacifying themselves,
 leading themselves to Nirvana.

A Bodhisattva
 should certainly not
 in such a way
 train himself.
 On the contrary,
 he should train himself thus:

“My own self
 I will place in Suchness,
 and,
 so that all the world might be helped,
 I will place all beings into Suchness,
 and I will lead to Nirvana
 the whole immeasurable world of beings.”

With that intention
 should a Bodhisattva
 undertake all the exercises
 which bring about all the wholesome roots.

But he should not boast about them.

Imagine a man who,
unable to see an elephant,
would try to determine his colour and shape.

In the darkness he would touch
and examine the foot of the elephant,
and decide that the colour
and shape of the elephant
should be inferred from his foot.
Would that be
an intelligent thing to do?

Subhuti: No, Lord!

The Lord: The same is true of those persons
who belong
to the vehicle of the Bodhisattvas,

who do not understand
this perfection of wisdom
and ask no question about it,

but,
while desirous of full enlightenment,
spurn it
and prefer to look for the Sutras
which welcome the level
of a Disciple
or of a Pratyekabuddha.

Also this
has been done to them by Mara.

Just as if a person who desires jewels
would not look for them in the great ocean,
but in a puddle in a cow's footprint,
and would thus
in effect

equate the great ocean
with the water in a cow's footprint.
Would he be a very intelligent person?

Subhuti: No, Lord!

The Lord: The same applies
to persons who belong
to the vehicle of the Bodhisattvas
if,
though they have got
this perfection of wisdom,
they nevertheless cut themselves off from it,
without plunging
or probing into it.

And who prefer the Sutras
which welcome the level
of Disciples
or Pratyekabuddhas,
through advocating a dwelling
in unconcerned inactivity,
and which do not recommend
the vehicle of the Bodhisattvas,

but only the taming,
appeasing,
Nirvana,
of one single self.

The decision to win seclusion,
to win the fruits of a holy life,

from the fruit of a Streamwinner
to Pratyekabuddhahood,
to enter Parinirvana after one has,
in this very life,
freed thought,
without further clinging,
from the outflows,

-that means
to be “associated
with the level of a Disciple
or Pratyekabuddha.”

Not to that
should Bodhisattvas raise their thoughts.
For when they have set out
in the great vehicle,
Bodhisattvas put on the great armour.

Their thoughts
should not be raised
to any unconcernedness
whatsoever.

For they are real men,
leaders of the world,
promoter’s of the world’s weal.

Therefore they should be constantly
and always be trained
in the six perfections.

But those persons who belong
to the vehicle of the Bodhisattvas,
and who,
without knowing and understanding
Sutras associated with the six perfections,
spurn this perfection of wisdom,
and prefer the Sutras
which welcome the level of Disciple
or Pratyekabuddha,

their wholesome root is immature,
their intelligence limited and poor,
their resoluteness but weak.

They resemble a mason,
or mason’s apprentice,

who would want to build a palace
of the size of the Vaijayanta palace,
and who would take its measure
from measuring the car of sun or moon.

A similar procedure
is adopted by those
who reject the perfection of wisdom,
and try to find all-knowledge
through Sutras associated
with the level of Disciples
and Pratyekabuddhas,

Sutras which recommend the taming,
appeasing,
and Nirvana
of nothing more than one self only.

If they would look for such Sutras
and train with this intention,
would these Bodhisattvas
be very intelligent?

Subhuti: No, Lord!

The Lord: This also
has been done to them by Mara.

Suppose a person who first sees
the universal monarch,
and determines from the signs
of what he sees
his complexion,
shape,
beauty and majesty.

He would then do the same
with the commander of a fort.
If he were unable to make a distinction,
if he were to say of the commander of a fort,

“just like that
 is the universal monarch
 in complexion,
 shape,
 beauty and majesty,”

if he would
 in other words,
 equate a universal monarch
 with the commander of a fort,
 would that be
 an intelligent thing to do?

Subhuti: No, Lord!

The Lord: The same applies
 to persons
 who belong to the Bodhisattva vehicle
 and who in the future
 will reject this perfection of wisdom,
 and seek for all-knowledge
 through the sutras associated
 with the level of Disciple
 or Pratyekabuddha.

This also
 has been done to them by Mara.

On the contrary,
 I certainly do not say
 that Bodhisattvas should seek
 for all-knowledge
 through the Sutras associated
 with the level of Disciple
 or Pratyekabuddha.

Bodhisattvas can certainly not go forth
 to supreme enlightenment
 unless they are trained

in what the Tathagata has announced
 in the perfection of wisdom
 as the skill in means of a Bodhisattva.
 For the full knowledge of a Bodhisattva
 is stupid in other Sutras.

Therefore then, Subhuti,
 the Tathagata,
 seeing this advantage
 in the perfection of wisdom,
 by manifold methods
 shows it to the Bodhisattvas,
 instigates and introduces to it,

fills them with enthusiasm about it,
 makes them rejoice at it,
 entrusts them with it,
 in the hope that thus
 the Bodhisattva may become
 irreversible to full enlightenment.

Subhuti, do these Bodhisattvas
 appear to be very intelligent,
 who,
 having obtained
 and met with the irreversible,
 the great vehicle,
 will again abandon it,
 turn away from it,
 and prefer an inferior vehicle?

Subhuti: No, Lord!

The Lord: If a starving man
 would refuse superior and excellent food,
 and prefer to eat inferior and stale food, would he be very intelligent?

Subhuti: No, Lord!

The Lord: Just so, Subhuti,

in the future
 some Bodhisattvas
 will refuse this perfection of wisdom,
 will prefer the Sutras
 associated with the level of Disciple
 or Pratyekabuddha,

and will seek for all-knowledge
 through the Sutras
 which welcome the level of Disciple
 or Pratyekabuddha.
 Would these Bodhisattvas
 be very intelligent?

Subhuti: No, Lord!

The Lord: Also this
 has been done to them by Mara.

A man who had got a priceless gem
 and who considered it equal
 to a gem of inferior value and quality,
 would he be an intelligent person?

Subhuti: No, Lord!

The Lord: Just so,
 there will be in the future
 some persons
 belonging to the vehicle of the Bodhisattvas who,
 though they have got this deep
 and brightly shining gem of perfect wisdom,
 will nevertheless think
 that it should be considered equal
 with the vehicle of Disciples
 and Pratyekabuddhas,
 and will decide to seek for all-knowledge
 and for skill in means
 on the level of Disciple
 or Pratyekabuddha.

Would they be very intelligent?

Subhuti: No, Lord!

The Lord: This also
has been done to them by Mara.

3. Various Deeds of Mara

Moreover, Subhuti,
when this perfection of wisdom
is being taught,
demonstrated,

explained,
learned,
recited,
repeated,
or even merely written down,

many flashes of insight will come up
in bewildering multitude,
and they will make for confusion of thought.

This also
has been done by Mara
to these Bodhisattvas.

Subhuti: Is it at all possible
to write down the perfection of wisdom?

The Lord: No, Subhuti.
It is also a deed of Mara
if,
after one has written down
the perfection of wisdom,
one should either think
that it is the perfection of wisdom
which is written down,

or that it is not the perfection of wisdom
which is written down,

or if one should adhere
to the perfection of wisdom
either in the letters,
or as something not in the letters.

Moreover, Subhuti,
while they write down
the perfection of wisdom,
their minds are on all sorts of things:

places,
villages,
towns,
cities,
country districts,
nations,
royal cities,

pleasure groves,
preceptors,
tales,
robbers,
bathing places,
streets,
palanquins,

occasions for happiness,
occasions for fear,
women,
men,
neuters,
unsuitable situations,
mother and father,
brothers and sisters,

friends,
maternal relatives,

kinsmen,
chief wives,
sons and daughters,
houses,
food and drink,
clothes,
beds,
seats,

livelihood,
obligations,
occasions of greed,
hate and delusion,

on right times,
lucky times,
unlucky times,
on songs,
music,
dances,
poems,
plays,

treatises,
business,
jokes,
musical shows,
sorrows,
troubles,
and
themselves.

These and other acts of attention,
Mara,
the Evil One,
will arrange
when this perfection of wisdom
is being taught,
studied,
or merely written down,

and thus he will cause obstacles
and confusion of thought
to the Bodhisattvas.

A Bodhisattva should recognize this
as a deed of Mara,
and avoid it.

In addition,
his thoughts may also be on kings,
royal princes,
elephants,
horses,
chariots,
and
troops of soldiers.

Also that
has been done to him by Mara.

In addition,
his thoughts may be on fire,
temptations,
money,
corn and affluence.

This also
Mara has done to him.

Moreover,
difficulties will arise about gain,
honour,
robes,
alms-bowl,
lodging,
and
medicinal appliances for use in sickness,

or,
alternatively,

thoughts relishing gain,
 honour and fame
 may torment the Bodhisattvas
 who teach,
 explain,
 repeat
 or merely write this perfection of wisdom.

This also
 Mara does to them.

They should recognize
 and avoid these deeds of Mara.

Furthermore, Mara,
 the Evil One,
 will come to where Bodhisattvas teach, etc.,
 this perfection of wisdom,
 and he will bring along the very deep Sutras
 which are associated
 with the level of Disciples
 and Pratyekabuddhas.

He will advise them that
 they should “train in this,
 write,
 expound,
 and repeat this,
 for from it
 all-knowledge will be created.”

But a Bodhisattva who is skilled in means
 should not long for those Sutras.
 For although they teach Emptiness,
 the Signless,
 and the Wishless,
 nevertheless they do not announce
 the skill in means of the Bodhisattvas.

A Bodhisattvas who remains

without the higher knowledge
of the distinction
of the cognition
of skill in means
spurns this deep perfection of wisdom,
and seeks instead for skill in means
in the Sutras associated
with the level of Disciples
and Pratyekabuddhas.

This also
should be known as Mara's deed
to a Bodhisattva.

4. Sources of Discord Between Teacher and Pupil

Then again
there are the deeds of Mara
which wreck chances of cooperation
between teacher and pupil.

First of all,
it may be that the pupil is zealous,
and desires to learn perfect wisdom,
but that the teacher is indolent,
and has no desire to demonstrate dharma.

Or,
the teacher may be untiring,
and desire to give perfect wisdom,
while the pupil is tired,
or too busy.

Secondly,
it may be that the pupil is zealous,
and desires to learn
the perfection of wisdom,
to bear it in mind,
preach,
study,

spread,
or merely to write it,

that he is clever,
intelligent
and has a good memory;
but the teacher may move
into a different district,
or he may be unacquainted
with the main points,
unacquainted with the details,
without the higher knowledge.

Or,
the teacher may be untiring,
in possession of the higher knowledge,
willing to give
and preach this perfection of wisdom;
but the pupil has set out for another district,
or is unacquainted with the main points,
unacquainted with the details,
without the higher knowledge.

Further, the teacher may be a person
who attaches weight to fleshly things,
to gain,
honour and robes,
while the pupil is a man of few wishes,
easily contented,
and quite detached.

Or he may be a person
who is unwilling to give away
anything of value.

This also would cause discord,
when it is a question
of training in perfect wisdom,
or of copying it.

On the other hand,
 a pupil may be full of faith,
 desirous of hearing
 this perfection of wisdom
 and of understanding its meaning,
 liberal and generous;
 but the teacher has no faith,
 is too easily satisfied,
 and does not desire to teach.

Or,
 the pupil may be full of faith,
 and desire to hear
 and to understand the meaning;
 but it may be that the teacher,
 because some obstacle
 hinders his access to dharma,
 does not have these Sutras at his disposal,
 and cannot fathom them;
 a pupil would obviously be out of touch
 with a teacher who has not attained them.

Or again,
 a teacher may desire to teach,
 when a pupil is not zealous to hear.

Further,
 it may be that the pupil
 does not want to listen
 because he is weighed down by sloth,
 weighed down by bodily fatigue,
 but the teacher is willing to teach;

conversely,
 a teacher may,
 although the pupil will want to listen,
 not desire to teach
 because he is weighed down by sloth
 or physical fatigue.

This discord will also make writing,
preaching
and study difficult.

5. Misdirection of Aim

Moreover,
when people write,
or teach the perfection of wisdom,
or train in it,
someone will come along
and disparage life in the hells,
in the animal world,
among the Pretas and Asuras,
saying

“so ill are all these forms of life,
so ill are all conditioned things;
do make an end to just this ill,
and leave those beings to their fate.”

This also
is a work of Mara.

Or again,
someone may come along
and praise life among the Gods:

“So happy are the Gods,
so happy is life in the heavens.
One should therefore
tend sense-desires
in the world of sense-desires,
enter into the well-known trances
in the world of form,
and enter into the well-known attainments
in the formless world.”

Considered by wisdom,
all this is,

however,
nothing but rebirth in suffering.

Because the Lord has said:
“I do not praise any kind of rebirth
in becoming,
because it lasts no longer
than a finger-snap.

For everything that is conditioned
is impermanent.
Anything that may cause fear is ill.
All that is in the triple world is empty.
All dharmas are without self.

When the wise have understood
that all this
is thus devoid of eternity,
impermanent,
ill,
doomed to reversal,

then just here
they should attain the fruits of the holy life,
from the fruit of a Streamwinner
to Arhatship.

Let them beware
of meeting any further
with those attainments,
which are really failures,
and which abound in suffering.”

But nevertheless,
to some Bodhisattvas,
this will be a source of anxiety
[because they will feel deterred
from the quest for full enlightenment
by a desire for rebirth among the Gods].

This also
Mara does to them.

6. More Discord Between Teacher and Pupil

Furthermore,
the teacher may be a monk
who is fond of solitude,
while the pupils prefer a communal life.
He will tell them that he will give
this perfection of wisdom
to those who come to where he is,
but not to those who do not.

In their desire
and zeal for the dharma
which they value
they go to where the teacher is,
and still he gives them no opportunity
to learn anything.

He is one who is eager
for trifling bits of fleshy things,
but they do not want to give him
anything that he values.

Wherever he goes
he will be short of food,
surrounded by troubles,
and in danger of his life.

And his pupils will hear from others
that that place is short of food,
full of troubles
and dangers to life.

And that teacher will say
to those sons of good family:
“This place is short of food.
Of course,

sons of good family,
you may come here if you wish.
But I am afraid
that you will regret having come.”

This is a subtle device
by which he rejects them.

In disgust
they will interpret these remarks
as signs of refusal,
not as signs of a desire to give.
Convinced that he does not want to give,
they will not go to where he is.

Moreover,
the teacher may have set out for a spot
where there is danger from vermin,
from beasts of prey,
from ghosts.

And he will move from there
to a wild place
with beasts of prey,
snakes and robbers,
marked by drought and famine.

To those prospective pupils he will say:
“You are aware,
I suppose,
that in this spot
for which we have set out
there are many dangers,

from vermin,
beasts of prey,
flesh-eating ghosts,

that is swarming with snakes and robbers,
that it has neither food nor water.

So you must be able to experience
a great deal of suffering.”

Thus he will reject them
through a subtle device.
Disgusted, they will not go with him,
and turn back.

Finally,
the teacher may be one of the monks
who attach weight to their relations
with the friendly families who feed them.
All the time he goes to see them,
he is kept very busy that way,
and refuses those prospective pupils
on the ground that,
“first of all,
there is someone I must go and see.”

This also
will be a source of discord
when this perfection of wisdom
is being written and studied.

This also
is Mara’s work.

In such ways,
Mara will bestir himself
to prevent people from learning,
studying,
teaching
and writing this perfection of wisdom.

Therefore then, Subhuti,
all the factors which prevent cooperation
between teacher and pupil
should be recognized as Mara’s deeds,
and one should try to avoid them.

7. Mara Dissuades from Perfect Wisdom

Subhuti: What then, O Lord,
 is the reason why Mara makes great efforts
 and bestirs himself to prevent,
 by this or that device,
 people from learning
 and studying this perfection of wisdom?

The Lord: Perfect wisdom
 is the source
 of the all-knowledge
 of the Buddhas, the Lords.

And that in its turn
 is the source of the religion
 of the Tathagatas,
 which leads immeasurable
 and incalculable beings
 to forsake their defilements.

But to those
 who have forsaken the defilements,
 Mara cannot gain entry,
 and that makes him distressed and dispirited,
 and the dart of sorrow vexes him.

In consequence,
 when this perfection of wisdom
 is being written and studied,
 he makes
 in his great tribulation
 a great effort and bestirs himself,
 with this or that device,
 to prevent the study
 of this perfection of wisdom.

Mara,
 the Evil One,
 will,

moreover,
 come along in the guise of a Shramana,
 and cause dissention.

In order to dissuade the sons of good family
 who have but recently set out in the vehicle
 he will say:

“Not is that the perfection of wisdom
 which your Honours listen to.
 As it has been handed down in my Sutras,
 as it is included in my Sutras,
 that is the perfection of wisdom.”

Thus he will sow doubts
 in the minds of Bodhisattvas
 who have but recently set out in the vehicle,
 whose intelligence is small,
 sluggish and limited,
 who are blind,
 and whose future enlightenment
 has not yet been predicted.

Seized by doubt,
 they will not learn,
 study
 or write this perfection of wisdom.

This also
 Mara does to them.

Moreover,
 Mara may come along
 in the guise of a Buddha,
 with magically created monks around him,
 and maintain that a Bodhisattva
 who courses in deep dharmas
 is one who realizes the reality-limit,

who becomes a Disciple,
 and not a Bodhisattva,

as this Bodhisattva.

This also
is one of Mara's deeds.

Subhuti,
when this perfection of wisdom
is being written and studied,
Mara,
the Evil One,
produces these deeds,
which I have mentioned,
and many others also.

They all should be recognized
by a Bodhisattva,
and avoided,
not cultivated.

The Bodhisattva should reply to them
with vigour,
mindfulness
and self-possession.

8. Antagonism Between Mara and Buddha

Subhuti: So it is, O Lord.
Whatever is very precious,
that provokes much hostility.
Because it is so superior,
being hard to get,
and of great value.

One should therefore expect that,
as a rule,
many obstacles will arise
to this perfection of wisdom.

When,
overawed by these obstacles,

someone becomes lazy,
 one should know that those
 who decide not to learn,
 study and write this perfection of wisdom
 are people who are beset by Mara,
 have but recently set out in the vehicle,

their intelligence is small,
 sluggish,
 limited and perverted,
 and their thought refuses to function
 in these very sublime dharmas.

The Lord: So it is, Subhuti.
 And while it is true
 that these deeds of Mara
 are bound to arise,
 a great many agencies will arise in their turn
 that oppose the faults of Mara.

Those who decide to learn,
 study and write this perfection of wisdom
 have been swayed by the Buddha's might,
 by his sustaining power,
 by his grace.

For whereas Mara,
 the Evil One,
 will make great efforts to cause obstacles,
 the Tathagata in his turn will send help.

Chapter XII Showing the World

1. Perfect Wisdom the Mother of the Buddhas

The Lord:

It is
 as with a mother
 who has many children,
 five, or ten,
 or twenty, or thirty,
 or forty, or fifty,
 or one hundred or one thousand.

If she fell ill,
 they would all exert themselves
 to prevent their mother from dying,
 to keep her alive as long as possible,
 to keep pain and unpleasantness
 away from her body.

Because they are aware that
 to her
 they owe their existence,
 that in great pain
 she has brought them into the world,
 that she has instructed them
 in the ways of the world.

They would therefore
 look well after her,
 give her everything
 that can make her happy,
 protect her well,
 make much of her,
 and they will hope
 that she be free from pain,
 derived from contact with eye, ear,

nose, tongue,
 body or mind,

or coming from wind,
bile, phlegm,
or a disorder of the humours,

or from stinging insects,
mosquitoes,
or crawling animals,

from men or from ghosts,
from anything falling upon her,
or tearing her asunder,
or from a disastrous crash.

In this way
those sons honour their mother
by giving her all that can make her happy,

make much of her,
cherish and protect her,
because they are aware
that she is their mother and begetter,

that,
in great pain,
she brought them into the world,
that she instructed them
in the ways of the world.

In just this same way
the Tathagatas
bring this perfection of wisdom to mind,
and it is through their might,
sustaining power and grace
that people write,
learn,
study,
spread and repeat it.

And also the Tathagatas who dwell

in other world systems just now,
 for the weal and happiness of the many,
 out of pity for the many,
 for the weal and happiness
 of a great body of people,
 from pity for Gods,
 men and all beings,

they also
 all bring this perfection of wisdom to mind,
 and they put forth zeal
 so that this perfection of wisdom
 may last long,
 so that it may not be destroyed,

so that Mara and his host
 may not prevent this perfection of wisdom
 from being taught,
 written, and practiced.

So fond are the Tathagatas
 of this perfection of wisdom,
 so much do they cherish and protect it.
 For she is their mother and begetter,
 she showed them this all-knowledge,
 she instructed them in ways of the world.

From her have the Tathagatas come forth.
 For she has begotten
 and shown that cognition of the all-knowing,
 she has shown them the world
 for what it really is.

The all knowledge of the Tathagatas
 has come forth from her.
 All the Tathagatas,
 past, future and present,
 win full enlightenment
 thanks to this very perfection of wisdom.

It is in this sense
that the perfection of wisdom
generates the Tathagatas,
and instructs them in this world.

2. How the Tathagata Knows the World

Subhuti: How does perfect wisdom
instruct the Tathagatas in this world,
and what is it that the Tathagatas call ‘world’?

The Lord: The five skandhas
have by the Tathagata
been declared as ‘world’
[loka].
Which five?
Form, feeling,
perceptions, impulses,
and consciousness.

Subhuti: How have the five skandhas
been shown up
by the perfection of wisdom of the Tathagatas,
or what has been shown up by her?

The Lord: The perfect wisdom
of the Tathagatas
has pointed out the five skandhas
as ‘the world’
[loka],
because they do not crumble,
nor crumble away

For the five skandhas
have emptiness for own-being,
and,
as devoid of own-being,
emptiness cannot crumble
nor crumble away.

It is in this sense
that perfect wisdom
instructs the Tathagatas in this world.

And as emptiness does not crumble,
nor crumble away,
so also the Signless,
the Wishless,
the Uneffected,
the Unproduced,
Non-existence,
and the Realm of Dharma.

3. How the Tathagata Knows the Thoughts of Beings

Moreover, Subhuti,
thanks to this perfection of wisdom
the Tathagata wisely knows
immeasurable and incalculable beings
as they really are.
And that,
through the absence of own-being
in beings.

That Tathagata also knows wisely
the thoughts and doings
of immeasurable and incalculable beings,
since beings have no real existence
[as separate individualities].

Moreover,
the Tathagata,
thanks to the perfection of wisdom,
wisely knows as they really are
the collected thoughts of countless beings
as ‘collected thoughts.’

And how does the Tathagata know them?
He wisely sees that
collectedness is equivalent to extinction

[of the individual thought which,
empirically speaking,
has ceased to exist,
being merged into the absolute].

And also that that extinction is
[if we consider its true reality],
just non-extinction.

Furthermore
the Tathagata wisely knows
the distracted thoughts of beings
for what they are.
For he wisely knows
that thoughts are distracted
[by the objects of the external world
because no attention is paid to]
the realm of Dharma.

On the other hand
he knows that those thoughts,
as they really are
in ultimate reality,
are without marks,

do not get extinguished
[from moment to moment],
that their continuity is not interrupted,
and that they are not really distracted
[because they cannot,
in actual fact,
be directed on external objects].

That Tathagata knows
the infinite
and inexhaustible minds of beings.
For the Tathagata
in his great compassion,
has willed a mind
by which he wisely knows

as it really is
 that
 “in the likeness
 of the immeasurable inextinction of space
 should the immeasurable inextinction
 of the minds of all beings be understood.”

And that mind of the Buddha
 is never stopped,
 it was never produced,
 it has no duration
 in between production and stopping,

it gives no support,
 it is infinite,
 since it cannot be measured,
 and it is inexhaustible,
 like the realm of Dharma itself.

That Tathagata
 knows the polluted minds of beings
 for what they really are.

For he knows
 that the minds of ordinary people
 are not actually polluted
 by the polluting forces of perverted views, which,
 being nothing but wrong ideas,
 do not really find a place in them.

That Tathagata
 knows unpolluted thoughts
 for what they are.
 For he knows
 that those minds are transparently luminous
 in their essential original nature.

The Tathagata
 knows slack thoughts
 for what they really are.

For he knows
 that those thoughts
 are
 in reality
 unable to slouch
 on any resting place.

That Tathagata
 knows tensely active thoughts
 for what they are.
 For he knows
 that thoughts are exerted
 so as to win dispassion,
 and that they can no longer be exerted
 when there is nothing left
 that can be seized upon.

The Tathagata knows
 thoughts with outflows
 for what they really are.
 For he knows
 that those thoughts
 are without own-being,
 that they are just a false representation
 of what is not.

The Tathagata
 knows thoughts without outflows
 for what they really are.
 For he knows
 that these thoughts
 lead to the non-existence
 [of the outflows]
 and that
 [when a continuity is quite pure],
 there is nothing they can be directed to.

The Tathagata
 knows greedy thoughts
 for what they really are.

For he knows that a greedy mind
 is not a mind as it really is,
 and that a mind
 as it really is
 is not a greedy mind.

That Tathagata
 knows minds free from greed
 for what they really are.
 For he knows
 that a mind from which greed departs
 is not a greedy mind,
 and that the true reality
 of a mind which forsakes greed
 is not a greedy mind,
 because it gets detached from greed.

And as the Tathagata
 wisely knows the minds
 that are greedy
 and free from greed,
 so he knows,
 in the same manner,
 the minds that are with hate
 and the minds that are without hate,
 that are with delusion,
 and that are without delusion.

The Tathagata
 also knows the scant thoughts of beings
 for what they really are.
 For he knows
 that those thoughts
 are not joined up
 with the world of appearance,
 that they are not included
 in the world of appearance.

The Tathagata
 knows extensive or abundant thoughts

for what they really are.
 For he knows that those thoughts
 do neither diminish nor increase;
 that those thoughts do not depart,
 because they cannot possibly do so
 [as they are essentially identical
 with the realm of Dharma,
 and have nowhere outside that to go to].

That Tathagata
 knows thoughts
 which have not gone great
 for what they really are.
 For he knows that those thoughts
 have not come,
 that they do not go away,
 that their reality
 is not included in the present, either.

The Tathagata
 knows thoughts which have gone great
 for what they really are.
 For he knows those thoughts
 are all the same in ultimate Sameness,
 and that,
 in addition,
 they are all the same in their own-being
 [i.e. mere illusion].

The Tathagata
 knows thoughts that have become unlimited
 for what they really are.
 For he knows
 that those thoughts
 have become unlimited
 because they have ceased to lean
 on anything.

The Tathagata
 knows thought with perceptible attributes

for what they really are.
 For he knows
 that all those thoughts
 look at the same thing,
 and that in their own-being
 they are all thoughts.

The Tathagata
 knows thought without perceptible attributes
 for what they really are.
 For he knows
 that that thought,
 since it is itself without marks,
 and isolated from its object,
 is imperceptible,
 and does not come within the range
 of the three,
 or even all the five,
 kinds of vision.

The Tathagata
 knows reacting thoughts
 for what they really are.
 For he knows
 that those thoughts
 represent what is not really there,
 that they are empty,
 devoid of objective support.

The Tathagata
 knows non-reacting thoughts
 for what they really are.
 For he knows
 that those thoughts are non-dual,
 and that,
 ultimately unreal,
 they only seem to arrive at some reality.

That Tathagata
 knows lower thoughts

for what they really are.
 For he knows
 that in the true reality of lower thoughts
 there is no self-conceited imagining.

The Tathagata
 knows supreme thoughts
 for what they really are.
 For he knows
 that those thoughts are unimpeded,
 because not even the least thought
 has been apprehended.

The Tathagata
 knows unconcentrated thoughts
 for what they really are.
 For he knows
 that those thoughts are the same
 in that they take hold of differences;
 [directed toward a faulty representation
 of a world of separate things
 they are distracted,
 and]
 they do not achieve a synthesis;
 in that sense
 they are unconcentrated.

The Tathagata
 knows concentrated thoughts
 for what they really are.
 For he knows
 that those thoughts are the same
 in the self-identical realm of dharma,
 and that,
 by undoing all distractions,
 they do achieve synthesis,
 and that it is in this sense
 that they are concentrated thoughts,
 the same as space.

The Tathagata
 knows unemancipated thoughts
 for what they really are.
 For he knows
 that those thoughts are,
 in their own-being,
 already now emancipated,
 for they have non-existence for own-being.

The Tathagata
 knows emancipated thoughts
 for what they really are.
 For the Tathagata
 has not apprehended any thought as past,
 as future,
 or as present,
 because thought is not really there.

The Tathagata
 knows imperceptible thoughts
 for what they really are.
 For he knows
 with regard to that thought that,
 because it is not really there,
 it cannot be perceived;

that,
 because it has no reality,
 it cannot be discerned;

that,
 because it falls short
 of the perfect reality,
 it cannot be grasped,
 not by the eye of wisdom,
 not by the heavenly eye,
 and how much less by the fleshly eye,
 since it does not come within the range
 of any of them.

Furthermore,
 the Tathagata wisely knows,
 for what they really are,
 the tendencies of countless beings
 to make positive
 and negative statements about objects.
 For he knows
 that all these ideas
 arise in dependence on form,
 and the other skandhas.

How has he discerned
 the dependence on the skandhas
 of those positive and negative statements?

If we take such statements as
 ‘The Tathagata
 continues to exist after death,’
 ‘The Tathagata
 does not continue to exist after death,’

‘The Tathagata does and does not continue
 to exist after death,’ ‘
 The Tathagata neither does
 nor does not continue to exist after death’,

then these statements refer
 to the skandhas only
 [and they have no basis
 in the true reality of the Tathagata].

The same holds good
 of similar statements,
 i.e. when one says:
 ‘Eternal are self and the world,
 just that is the truth,
 everything else is delusion.’

And so if one maintains
 that self and the world are

non-eternal,
 both eternal and non-eternal,
 neither eternal nor non-eternal.

Or, similarly,
 if one maintains that self and the world
 are finite,
 or not finite,
 or both finite and not finite,
 or neither finite nor not finite.

Or, finally,
 if one says
 ‘that which is the soul,
 that is the body,’
 or
 ‘one thing is the soul,
 another the body,’

all these statements
 refer only to the skandhas.

It is thanks to the perfection of wisdom
 that the Tathagata knows those positive
 and negative statements
 for what they really are.

The Tathagata
 cognizes the skandhas
 as identical with Suchness.
 That is why He knows,
 thanks to perfect wisdom,
 those positive and negative statements
 for what they really are.

It is thus
 that the Tathagata makes known Suchness
 through the Suchness of the Tathagata,
 through the Suchness of the skandhas,
 through the Suchness of the positive

and negative statements.

And just that Suchness of the skandhas,
that is also the Suchness of the world.

For it has been said by the Tathagata
that
“the five skandhas
are reckoned as the ‘world.’”

Therefore then, Subhuti,
that which is the Suchness of the skandhas,
that is the Suchness of the world;
that which is the Suchness of the world,
that is the Suchness of all dharmas;

that which is the Suchness of all dharmas
that is the Suchness
of the fruit of a Streamwinner,
and so on,
up to:
that is the Suchness of Pratyekabuddhahood,
that is the Suchness of the Tathagata.

In consequence
all this Suchness,
the Suchness of the Tathagata,
of the skandhas,
of all dharmas,
of all holy Disciples and Pratyekabuddhas

is just one single Suchness,
is without any trace
of the variety of positivity
and negativity,
as being one,
non-different,
inextinguishable,
unaffected,
non-dual,

without cause for duality.

That is this Suchness
which the Tathagata has,
thanks to the perfection of wisdom,
fully known.

It is thus
that perfect wisdom
instructs the Tathagata
in this world.

It is thus
that the Tathagata shows up the world
to this infatuated world
for what it really is.
And thus a vision of this world takes place.

It is thus
that perfect wisdom
is the mother of Tathagatas,
who has generated them.

It is thus
that the Tathagata,
after he has
been enlightened as to Suchness,
cognizes the Suchness of the world,
its Non-falseness,
its unaltered Suchness.

And in consequence,
just because he has been enlightened
about Suchness
[tathata]
is the Tathagata called
a 'Tathagata.'

Subhuti: Deep, O Lord,
is Suchness.

The enlightenment of the Buddhas,
the Lords,
is brought about
and revealed through it.

Who else could firmly believe in it,
except an irreversible Bodhisattva,
or an Arhat whose intentions are fulfilled,
or a person who has achieved right views?

These extremely deep stations
were therefore described by the Tathagata
after he has been enlightened to them.

The Lord: So it is, Subhuti.
For this Suchness
which the Tathagata has fully known,
is inexhaustible,
and he has described it
as inexhaustible
after he had fully known it.

4. Deep Marks and How They are Fastened

Thereupon,
headed by Sakra,
Chief of Gods,
the Gods of the realm of sense-desire
and of the realm of form
and twenty thousand of the Gods
of the realm of Brahma
came to where the Lord was,
saluted his feet with their heads,
stood on one side,
and said:

Deep dharmas are being revealed,
O Lord.
How, O Lord,
are the marks fixed onto them?

The Lord: The marks
 are fixed on to the fact
 that they are empty,
 signless,
 wishless,

not brought together,
 not produced,
 not stopped,

not defiled,
 not purified,

that they are
 non-existence,
 Nirvana,
 the realm of Dharma,
 and Suchness.

For those marks
 are not supported by anything.
 They are like unto space.

Those marks
 are not fixed on
 by the Tathagata,

they cannot be reckoned
 among the skandhas,
 they are not dependent on the skandhas,

they are not fixed on by Gods,
 Nagas or men,
 and they cannot be shaken off by the world
 with its Gods,
 men and Asuras.

For also, this world
 with its Gods,
 men and Asuras

has just that mark.
No hand has fixed on those marks.

Would it be correct to say
that this space is fixed on by something?

The Gods: No, Lord,
because it is unconditioned.

The Lord: So it is, O Gods.
Independent of whether
Tathagatas are produced or not,
those marks stand out just as such.

In accordance
with what stands out just as such
has the Tathagata described their reality,
after he had fully known it.

Therefore is the Tathagata
called a 'Tathagata.'

Subhuti: Deep, O Lord,
are these marks
which the Tathagata has fully known.
But this perfection of wisdom
is the unattached cognition
of the Tathagatas.

As a field of unattached cognition
is the perfection of wisdom
the range of the Tathagatas.

5. The World Shown as Empty

The Lord: So it is, Subhuti.
It is thus
that the perfection of wisdom
instructs the Tathagatas in this world.

To the extent
 that the Tathagatas dwell
 in intimate dependence on this dharma,
 the perfection of wisdom,
 to that extent are those dharmas,
 which stand out for ever,
 fully known by the Tathagatas,
 through their taking their stand nowhere.

Thereby they dwell
 in close and intimate dependence
 on just the Dharma.

They treat the Dharma with respect,
 revere,
 worship and adore it,
 for they know
 that this essential nature of dharmas
 is just the perfection of wisdom.

For the all-knowledge of the Tathagatas
 has been brought about
 from this perfection of wisdom,
 and for that
 the Tathagatas are grateful
 and thankful to her.

With justice can the Tathagata be called
 'grateful and thankful'.
 In gratitude and thankfulness
 the Tathagata favours and cherishes
 the vehicle on which he has come,
 and the path by which
 he has won full enlightenment.

That
 one should know
 as the gratitude and thankfulness
 of the Tathagata.

In addition,
 the Tathagata has fully known
 all dharmas as not made,
 as not unmade,
 as not brought together.

This also
 one should know
 as the gratitude
 and thankfulness of the Tathagata.

For it is thanks to the perfection of wisdom
 that the cognition of the Tathagata
 has thus proceeded in all dharmas.

That is another aspect
 of the fact that perfect wisdom
 instructs the Tathagatas in this world.

Subhuti: But how can perfect wisdom
 instruct the Tathagata in this world
 if all dharmas are unknowable
 and imperceptible?

The Lord: It is good, Subhuti,
 that you should have decided
 to question the Tathagata about this matter.

All dharmas are indeed unknowable
 and imperceptible.
 Because they are empty,
 and do not lean on anything.

It is thus
 that all those dharmas have,
 thanks to perfect wisdom,
 been fully known by the Tathagatas.

For another reason also
 the perfection of wisdom can be regarded

as the instructress of the Tathagatas
in this world,
i.e. because none of the skandhas
has been viewed.

Subhuti: How can there be a non-viewing
of form, etc.?

The Lord: Where there arises
an act of consciousness
which has none of the skandhas
for objective support,
there the non-viewing of form, etc.,
takes place.

But just this non-viewing of the skandhas
is the viewing of the world.
That is the way in which the world
is viewed by the Tathagata.

It is thus
that perfect wisdom
acts as an instructress in the world
to the Tathagatas.

And how does perfect wisdom
show up the world for what it is?

She shows that the world
is empty,
unthinkable,
calmly quiet.

As purified of itself
she shows up the world,
she makes it known,
she indicates it.

Chapter XIII Unthinkable

1. Five Attributes of Perfect Wisdom

Subhuti: Deep, O Lord,
 is perfect wisdom.
 Certainly as a great enterprise
 has this perfection of wisdom been set up,
 as an unthinkable,
 incomparable,
 immeasurable,
 incalculable enterprise,
 as an enterprise
 which equals the unequalled.

The Lord: So it is, Subhuti.
 And why is
 it an unthinkable enterprise?
 Because unthinkable
 are Tathagatahood,
 Buddhahood,
 Self-existence,
 and the state of all-knowledge.

And on these
 one cannot reflect
 with one's thought,
 since they cannot be
 an object of thought,
 or of volition,
 or of any of the dharmas
 which constitute thought.

And why is it an incomparable enterprise?
 Because one cannot reflect
 on Tathagatahood, etc.,
 nor compare it.

And why is it immeasurable?

Because Tathagatahood, etc.,
is immeasurable.

And why is it incalculable?
Because Tathagatahood, etc.,
is incalculable.

And why is it an enterprise
which equals the unequalled?
Because nothing can be equal
to the Tathagata,
to the fully Enlightened One,
to the Self-existent,
to the All-knowing,
how much less can anything
be superior to him?

Subhuti: Do these five attributes
apply only to Tathagatahood, etc.,
or also to the skandhas,
and to all dharmas?

The Lord: They apply to them also.
Also the skandhas,
and also all dharmas are unthinkable.

For with regard
to the true essential nature
of form, etc.,
there is no thought,
nor volition,
nor any of the dharmas
which constitute thought,
nor any comparing.

For that reason
the skandhas and all dharmas
are also unthinkable
and incomparable.

They are also immeasurable,
 because one cannot conceive
 of a measure of form, etc.,
 since such a measure
 does not exist,
 in consequence
 of the infinitude of all dharmas.

They are also incalculable,
 because they have risen above
 all possibility of counting.

They are also equal to the unequalled,
 because all dharmas
 are the same as space.

What do you think, Subhuti,
 does there exist
 with reference to space
 any sameness,
 or counting

or measure,
 or comparison,
 or thought,
 or a dharma which constitutes thought?

Subhuti: No, Lord.

The Lord: In like manner also
 all dharmas are unthinkable,
 incomparable,
 immeasurable,

incalculable,
 equal to the unequalled.
 For they are Tathagatadharmas.

But those Tathagata-dharmas
 are unthinkable

because all thought has ceased,
and incomparable
because they have
completely risen above all comparison.

By the words 'unthinkable'
and 'incomparable'
are denoted all the objects
which belong to consciousness.

And so with 'immeasurable,'
'incalculable'
and
'equal to the unequalled.'

Because all measure,
calculation
and sameness have ceased
are the Tathagata-dharmas
immeasurable,
incalculable,
equal to the unequalled.

They are immeasurable,
incalculable,
equal to the unequalled
because their immeasurableness
and incalculability
is the same as that of space.

These dharmas are incomparable
in the same sense in which
space is incomparable.

These dharmas
can certainly not be placed side by side,
and that is why
they cannot be compared.

These dharmas are unthinkable, incomparable,

immeasurable,
incalculable,

equal to the unequalled
in the same sense that space
has these attributes.

2. Spiritual Rebirth Resulting From This Knowledge

When this doctrine of unthinkability, etc.,
was being taught,
the minds of five hundred monks were freed,
without further clinging,
from the outflows,
and so were the minds
of two thousand nuns.

Six thousand lay brethren
and three thousand lay sisters
obtained the pure,
dispassionate,
unstained eye of dharma.

Twenty thousand Bodhisattvas
won the patient acceptance of dharmas
which fail to be produced.
And the Lord has predicted
that they shall win enlightenment
in this very Bhadrakalpa.

And as to the lay brethren and lay sisters,
whose dharmaeye was purified,
they also have been predestined by the Lord,
and they also will be freed,
without further clinging,
from the outflows.

3. Nothing To Take Hold Of

Subhuti: Deep, O Lord,
is perfect wisdom.
Certainly
as a great enterprise
it has been set up.

The Lord: So it is, Subhuti.
For all-knowledge has been entrusted to it,
and so has the level of a Pratyekabuddha
and the level of all the Disciples.

An anointed king,
a Kshatriya,
who feels strong and secure in his kingdom,
entrusts all his business
concerning his kingly office,

and the city
and the kingdom
to his minister,
and he himself
has few cares
and his burden is light.

Just so,
whatever dharmas of Buddhas,
Pratyekabuddhas,
or Disciples there may be,
they are all entrusted
to the perfection of wisdom.

It is the perfection of wisdom
which in them does the work.

It is in this manner
that perfect wisdom has been set up
for a great enterprise,
i.e. so that one should not take hold

of form, etc.,
nor settle down in it.

And
as for the skandhas,
so also for the fruits of the holy life,
from the fruit of a Streamwinner
to the state of all-knowledge.

Subhuti: In what way has perfect wisdom been set up
so that one should not take hold
of the state of all-knowledge,
nor settle down in it?

The Lord: Do you view Arhatship
as a real dharma
which you could take hold of,
or settle down in?

Subhuti: No, Lord!

The Lord: So it is, Subhuti.
I also
do not view Tathagatahood as real,
and therefore
I do not take hold of it,
do not settle down in it.

For that reason
all-knowledge also
is a state in which
one neither takes hold of anything,
nor settles down in anything.

Subhuti: Bodhisattvas who have
but newly set out in the vehicle,
and whose wholesome roots are but small,
must beware that they not tremble
when they hear this exposition.

On the other hand,
 Bodhisattvas will,
 on hearing this
 deep perfection of wisdom,
 firmly believe in it
 if they are suitable for Buddhahood,

have fulfilled their duties
 under the Jinas of the past,
 and have planted wholesome roots
 for a long time.

The Lord: So it is, Subhuti.

4. Reaction of the Gods

Thereupon the Gods
 of the realm of sense-desire
 and of the realm of form
 said to the Lord:

Deep, O Lord,
 is the perfection of wisdom,
 hard to see,
 hard to understand.

Bodhisattvas who resolutely believe
 in this
 so deep perfection of wisdom
 must have fulfilled their duties
 under the Jinas of the past,
 must have planted wholesome roots
 for a long time.

If, O Lord,
 all the beings
 in this great trichiliocosm
 should,
 for an aeon
 or the remainder of an aeon,

course on the stage of a Faith-follower;

and if,
 on the other hand,
 someone should,
 for one day only,
 find pleasure
 in the patient acceptance
 of this deep perfection of wisdom,

and should search for it,
 reflect on it,
 weigh it up,
 investigate it and meditate on it,
 then this latter
 will be better than all those beings.

The Lord: If someone would hear, O Gods,
 this deep perfection of wisdom, etc.,
 then one would expect his Nirvana
 to take place more quickly
 than that of those who course
 on the stage of a faith-follower for an aeon,
 or for the remainder of an aeon.

The Gods: A great perfection
 is this perfection of wisdom!

After these words,
 they saluted the Lord's feet with their heads,
 thrice walked round the Lord,
 decided to go away
 from the presence of the Lord,
 took friendly leave of him,
 and moved away.

Before they had gone far,
 they disappeared from sight,
 and the Gods of the realm of sense-desire
 departed for the world of sense-desire,

and the Gods of the realm of form
departed for the Brahma-world.

Chapter XIV Similes

1. Future and Past Rebirths

Subhuti: If a Bodhisattva,
on merely hearing it,
immediately believes in this
deep perfection of wisdom,
does not become cowed,

stolid,
paralysed,
or
stupefied,

does not doubt or hesitate,
but delights in perfect wisdom,
where has he deceased,
where is he reborn?

The Lord: If a Bodhisattva
reacts in such a way
to the perfection of wisdom,
if he delights in seeing and hearing it,

bears it in mind and develops it,
keeps his mind fixed on it
without diverting it elsewhere,
feels an urge to take it up,
bear it in mind,
preach,
study and spread it,

if,
once he has heard the perfect wisdom,
he follows and pursues the reciter of dharma
and does not let him go,
until he knows this perfection of wisdom
by heart,
or has got it in the form of a book,

just as a cow
 does not abandon her young calf,
 then this Bodhisattva
 has deceased among men
 and will be reborn among men.

Subhuti: Could a Bodhisattva,
 who is endowed with just these qualities
 have deceased in other Buddha-fields
 before he was reborn here?

The Lord: It is quite possible
 that a Bodhisattva
 who is endowed with these qualities,
 has,
 before he was reborn here,
 deceased in other Buddha-fields,
 where he has honoured and questioned
 the Buddhas and the Lords.

Or,
 he may also have deceased among
 the Tushita Gods.
 It may be that he has honoured Maitreya,
 the Bodhisattva,
 and persistently questioned him
 concerning this perfection of wisdom.

2. Past Deeds of a Bodhisattva Who Fails in Perfect Wisdom

On the other hand,
 if a Bodhisattva in the past
 has heard this deep perfection of wisdom
 but has asked no questions about it,
 and if later on,
 when he is reborn among men
 and hears this deep perfection of wisdom being taught,
 he hesitates
 and is stupefied and cowed,

then one can be sure that in the past also
he was one of those who were unwilling
to ask questions.

Another Bodhisattva,
again,
may in the past have had the right attitude
to this deep perfection of wisdom,
for one, two,
three,
four or five days,

and now only for a certain time
he has faith in it,
but afterwards it is withdrawn again
and he no longer feels like asking questions about it.

For it is a fact that
if a Bodhisattva has in the past
not all the time
asked questions about
this deep perfection of wisdom,
and has not pursued it all the time,

then later on
he would at some time feel
urged to pursue the hearing
of this deep perfection of wisdom,
but not so at other times;

he would again fall from his faith,
become disheartened,
and his intelligence
would become unsteady,
and like cotton wool.

One can be sure that such a Bodhisattva
has but lately set out in the vehicle.
Come but lately to the vehicle,
he will lose his faith in it,

his serene confidence in it,
 his urge for it,
 in other words
 he will no further take up
 this perfection of wisdom,
 and pursue it.

One must expect he will move
 on either of two levels,
 on the level of a Disciple,
 or on the level of a Pratyekabuddha.

3. Four Similes

When a ship is wrecked
 in the middle of the ocean,
 people will die in the water
 without getting to the shore,
 if they do not find support
 on a log,
 or plank,
 or other solid body.

But those who manage
 to gain such a support
 will not die in the water;
 safely and unhindered
 they will cross over to the shore beyond,
 and stand,
 unhurt and uninjured,
 on firm ground.

In the same way,
 a Bodhisattva who is endowed
 with but a little faith,
 just a little serene confidence,
 just a little affection,
 just a little desire-to-do,

and who does not gain

the support of perfect wisdom,
 is bound to incur a fall
 in the middle of a bad road,
 and,
 without having attained
 to the state of all-knowledge,
 he will stand in Discipleship
 or Pratyekabuddhahood.

Different is the case of a Bodhisattva
 who has faith in it,
 accepts it patiently,
 has a taste for it,
 has desire-to-do,

vigour,
 vigilance,
 resolve,
 earnest intention,
 renunciation,
 a title to be respected,
 joyous zest,
 elation,
 serene confidence,
 affection for it,
 and persistence
 in trying to win full enlightenment,

and who also gains
 the support of the perfection of wisdom;
 having attained the perfection of wisdom,
 he will stand in all-knowledge.

If one would use a badly baked jar
 to carry water in,
 that jar would not last long,
 and would actually
 quickly fall to pieces
 and melt away.
 For in its unbaked condition

it would actually soon come to an end
on the ground.

Just so,
although a Bodhisattva may have
all the qualities enumerated above,
from faith
to a persistent desire to win enlightenment,

as long as he is not taken hold of
by perfect wisdom and skill in means,
he is bound to come to a bad fall
in the middle of a bad road,
in other words,
he will fall on the level of a Disciple
or a Pratyekabuddha.

But if someone would carry water,
from a river,
or lake, or pond,
or well,
or any other water-bearing place,
in a well-baked jar,
then that jar will,
with the water,
get safely and uninjured to the house,
just because of the well-baked condition
of that jar.

Just so a Bodhisattva,
who has not only
the qualities enumerated above,
but
who in addition also
has been taken hold of by perfect wisdom and skill in means,
will not
in the middle of a bad road
incur a fall,

and, unhurt and uninjured,

he will stand in all-knowledge.

A stupid man would launch into the water
a seafaring vessel which was not caulked
or repaired,
and had been tied to its moorings
for a long time,

would overload it with goods,
and mount on it,
and set out in it.
His ship is doomed to collapse
before it has conveyed the goods
across the water.

When his ship has burst asunder,
that stupid merchant,
who is unskilled in means,
will have lost a huge fortune,
a great source of wealth.

Just so a Bodhisattva
who has all the qualities enumerated above,
but who lacks in perfect wisdom
and skill in means,
without having gained
the wealth of all-knowledge
he is bound to collapse midway,
to incur a fall;

he has lost a great deal of his own wealth,
and he has also lost a great deal
of the wealth of others,
because he has lost all-knowledge,
which is like a huge fortune
and a great source of wealth;

not to mention his collapse
in the middle of the bad road,
his fall unto the level of a Disciple

or a Pratyekabuddha.

An intelligent merchant,
 on the other hand,
 would construct a solid ship,
 would launch it with proper care
 into the water,
 load it with goods
 and distribute them evenly,

and,
 with a favourable wind,
 his vessel would gradually sail
 to the country
 which is the goal of his voyage.

His ship will not collapse in the water,
 it will go to where it is meant to go,
 and the merchant will win great wealth
 in the shape of worldly jewels.

Likewise,
 a Bodhisattva who has faith,
 and the other qualities enumerated above, and who,
 in addition,
 has been taken hold of by perfect wisdom
 and does not lack in skill in means,

it is certain that he will not collapse
 in the middle of a bad road,
 that he will not incur a fall,
 that he will stand in supreme enlightenment.

For it is a fact
 that if a Bodhisattva has faith,
 and the other qualities enumerated above,

and if,
 in addition,
 these dharmas of his

have been taken hold of by perfect wisdom,
and are not lacking in skill in means,

then they will not hasten
towards the level of a Disciple
or a Pratyekabuddha,
but on the contrary,
these dharmas will face in the direction
of all-knowledge,

and they will set out for it,
and they will conduce to the winning
of full enlightenment.

If a person were very aged,
advanced in years,
decrepit,
say one hundred and twenty years old,
and if he would fall ill in his body,
could he rise from his bed
without being taken hold of by others?

Subhuti: No, Lord!

The Lord: And even if he could rise
from his bed,
he would certainly not have the strength
to walk about for half a mile.

Wasted away by both old age
and illness,
he could not walk about
for any length of time,
even if he could rise from his bed.

Likewise,
even if a Bodhisattva
has all the qualities enumerated above,
if he has not been taken hold of
by perfect wisdom,

and is lacking in skill in means,
 then,
 although he may have set out
 for full enlightenment,
 he is nevertheless bound to collapse
 in the middle of a bad road,

he is bound to incur a fall,
 in other words,
 he will stand on the level of a Disciple
 or a Pratyekabuddha.

This is a necessary consequence of the fact
 that he has not been taken hold of
 by perfect wisdom,
 and that he lacks in skill in means.

But it may be that two strong men
 take hold of that old and sick man,
 and carefully lift him up,
 and promise him that he may go
 wherever he wishes,
 and as far as he wishes,
 because they will assist him,

and he need not fear
 to fall on the way
 which takes him to the place
 which he has to go to.

In the same way,
 a Bodhisattva who has faith, etc.,
 and who is assisted by perfect wisdom,
 and endowed with skill in means,
 he is certain not to collapse
 in the middle of a bad road,
 he will not incur a fall,
 he is able to reach this station,
 i.e., the station of full enlightenment.

Chapter XV Gods

1. The Beginner's Task

Subhuti: How should a Bodhisattva
who is only just beginning
stand in perfect wisdom,
how train himself?

The Lord: Such a Bodhisattva should tend,
love, and honour the good friends.
His good friends are those
who will instruct
and admonish him in perfect wisdom,
and who will expound to him its meaning.

They will expound it as follows:
“Come here, son of good family,
make endeavours in the six perfections.

Whatever you may have achieved
by way of giving a gift,
guarding morality,
perfecting yourself in patience,
exertion of vigour,

entering into concentration,
or mastery in wisdom,
all that
turn over into full enlightenment.

But do not misconstrue full enlightenment
as form,
or any other skandha.
For intangible is all-knowledge.

And do not long for the level of Disciple
or Pratyekabuddha.

It is thus

that a Bodhisattva who is just beginning
should gradually,
through the good friends,
enter into perfect wisdom.”

2. How a Bodhisattva Helps Beings

Subhuti: Doers of what is hard
are the Bodhisattvas
who have set out to win full enlightenment.
Thanks to the practice of the six perfections,
as described above,
they do not wish to attain release
in a private Nirvana of their own.

They survey
the highly painful world of beings.
They want to win full enlightenment,
and yet they do not tremble
at birth-and-death.

The Lord: So it is.
Doers of what is hard are the Bodhisattvas
who have set out for the benefit
and happiness of the world,
out of pity for it.

“We will become a shelter for the world,
a refuge,
the place of rest,
the final relief,

islands,
lights,
and leaders of the world.
We will win full enlightenment,
and become the resort of the world,” –

with these words
they make a vigorous effort

to win such a full enlightenment.

1. How then do the Bodhisattvas
awakened to full enlightenment
become the world's shelter?
They protect from all the sufferings
which belong to birth and death,
they struggle and make efforts
to rid the world of them.

2. How do they become the world's refuge?
They set free from birth,
decay,
illness,

death,
sorrow,
lamentation,
pain,

sadness and despair
those beings who are doomed
to undergo these conditions.

3. How do they become
the world's resting place?
The Tathagatas
demonstrate Dharma to beings
so that they may learn
not to embrace anything.

Subhuti: How does that non-embracing come about?

The Lord: The non-embracing of form, etc.,
is the same as its non-connection,
and as its non-production
and non-stopping.

One thus learns not to embrace anything
as a result of the cognition

and vision
that all dharmas are non-embracing,
non-connected.

4. How do they become
the world's final relief?
The state beyond form is not form;
and yet,
as the Beyond,
so form, etc.,
and all dharmas.

Subhuti: If form, etc.,
and all dharmas are the Beyond,
then surely the Bodhisattvas
must fully know all dharmas.
Because there is no discrimination
between them.

The Lord: So it is.
In that Beyond,
there is no discrimination.

Through their non-discrimination
do all dharmas become fully known
to the Bodhisattvas.

This also
is most hard for the Bodhisattvas
that they meditate on all dharmas,
but neither realize,
nor become cowed,
and that they meditate thus:

“In this way
should all these dharmas be fully known;

and thus,
awakened to full enlightenment,
will we demonstrate these dharmas,

and reveal them.”

5. How do they become the world’s islands?

‘Islands’ are pieces of land
limited by water,
in rivers or great lakes.

Just so,
form, etc.,
is limited at its beginning and end,
and so are all dharmas.

But the limitation of all dharmas
is the same as the Calm Quiet,
the Sublime,
as Nirvana,
as the Really Existing,
the Unperverted.

6. How do they become the world’s lights?

Here the Bodhisattvas
win full enlightenment,
and then take away
all the darkness and gloom
of the uncognition
from beings

who for long
are enveloped in the membrane
of the eggshell of ignorance,
and overcome by darkness,
and they illuminate them
through wisdom.

7. How do they become the world’s leaders?

When they have become enlightened,
the Bodhisattvas demonstrate dharma
in order to reveal
the absence of production and stopping
in the essential nature of form, etc.,

and in the dharmas which constitute
and distinguish ordinary people,
Disciples,
Pratyekabuddhas,
Bodhisattvas and Buddhas,
and in all dharmas in general.

8. How are they the world's resort?
When they have become enlightened,
the Bodhisattvas demonstrate dharma
by teaching that form, etc.,
is situated in the world's space.

All dharmas are situated in space,
they have not come,
they have not gone,
they are the same as space.

Space has not come,
nor gone,
it is not made,
nor unmade,
nor effected;

it has not stood up,
does not last,
nor endure;
it is neither produced
nor stopped.

The same is true of all dharmas
which are,
after the fashion of space,
undiscriminate.

Because the emptiness of form, etc.,
neither comes nor goes.
Nor does the emptiness of all dharmas.
For all dharmas are situated in emptiness,
and from that situation they do not depart.

They are situated in the signless,
the wishless,
the ineffective,

in non-production,
no-birth,
in the absence of positivity,

in dream and self,
in the boundless,
in the calm quiet,

in Nirvana,
in the Unrecoverable;

they have not come,
nor gone,
situated in immobility;

they are situated in form, etc.,
and in the full enlightenment of Arhats
and Pratyekabuddhas.

3. Description of Perfect Wisdom

Subhuti: Who can understand
this perfection of wisdom?

The Lord: Bodhisattvas
who have coursed
under Tathagatas in the past,
and who have matured
their wholesome roots.

Subhuti: What is their own-being?

The Lord: Their own-being
is isolated from the need for discipline.

Subhuti: Will these Bodhisattvas
 be so situated that,
 after they have fully known this resort,
 they demonstrate it to all beings?
 Is it in this sense
 that they will become the resort
 of all beings?

The Lord: So it is, Subhuti.
 It is in this sense that a Bodhisattva will,
 after he has known full enlightenment,
 become the resort of countless beings.

Subhuti: A doer of what is hard
 is the Bodhisattva
 who has armed himself with this armour:
 “Immeasurable and incalculable beings
 I shall lead to Nirvana.”

The Lord: The armour of such a Bodhisattva is,
 however,
 not connected with form, etc.,
 nor is it put on for the sake of form, etc.

It is not connected
 with the level of a Disciple,
 or a Pratyekabuddha,
 or a Buddha,
 nor put on for their sake.

For surely
 unconnected with all dharmas
 is that armour of a Bodhisattva
 who is armed with the great armour.

Subhuti: Three standpoints
 one should not desire
 for a Bodhisattva who is armed
 with the great armour
 and who courses thus in deep wisdom.

Which three?

The level of a Disciple,
or of a Pratyekabuddha,
or of a Buddha.

The Lord: For what reason do you say that?
It is, of course, impossible,
it cannot be,
that such a Bodhisattva
should belong to the vehicle of the Disciples
or Pratyekabuddhas.

But,
since he put on his armour
for the sake of all beings,
surely he should desire
the level of a Buddha.

Subhuti: Deep, O Lord,
is perfect wisdom.
It cannot be developed by anything,
nor by anyone,
nor is there anything
or anyone to be developed.
For in perfect wisdom
nothing at all has been brought to perfection.

The development of perfect wisdom
is like the development of space,
or of all dharmas,
or of non-attachment,
of the infinite,
of what is not,
of no-taking-hold-of.

The Lord: So it is.
Because of what you said
a Bodhisattva,
who adjusts himself

to deep and perfect wisdom,
 is to be regarded
 as irreversible from full enlightenment.

For then
 a Bodhisattva does not settle down
 in this deep and perfect wisdom,
 nor in the declarations or counsels of others;
 he does not go by someone else
 whom he puts his trust in.

When this deep perfection of wisdom
 is being taught,
 he does not become cowed,
 nor stolid,
 nor does he turn his back on it;

he will not tremble,
 be frightened,
 or terrified;
 he does not hesitate,
 or doubt,
 or get stupefied,

but he plunges right into it,
 becomes resolutely intent on it,
 and delights in its vision and hearing.

One should know that
 in a former life already
 he has explored the perfection of wisdom.
 Because now,
 when this deep and perfect wisdom
 is being taught,
 he does not tremble,
 is not frightened,
 nor terrified.

Subhuti: By means of what mode
 does a Bodhisattva

who does not tremble
 when this deep perfection of wisdom
 is being taught
 apperceive perfect wisdom?

The Lord: This Bodhisattva
 apperceives perfect wisdom
 through a series [of thoughts]
 which are inclined to all-knowledge.

Subhuti: How does one apperceive
 such a series of thoughts?

The Lord: Through a series of thoughts
 inclined towards space,
 prone to space,
 sloping towards space.

This apperception is won
 through a series of thoughts
 inclined to all-knowledge.
 And why?
 Because all-knowledge is
 immeasurable and unlimited.

What is immeasurable and unlimited,
 that is not form,
 or any other skandha.

That is not attainment,
 or reunion,
 or getting there;
 not the path or its fruit;
 not cognition,
 or consciousness;

not genesis, or destruction,
 or production, or passing away,
 or stopping,
 or development,

or annihilation.

It has not been made by anything,
it has not come from anywhere,
it does not go to anywhere,
it does not stand in any place or spot.

On the contrary,
it comes to be styled
'immeasurable, unlimited.'

From the immeasurableness of space
is the immeasurableness of all-knowledge.
But what is immeasurableness -
that does not lend itself
to being fully known by anything,

be it form,
or any skandha,
or any of the six perfections.

Because form is all-knowledge,
and so are the other skandhas,
and the six perfections.

Thereupon,
Sakra approached and said:
Deep, O Lord,
is perfect wisdom.
It is hard to fathom,
hard to see,
hard to understand.

The thought of a Tathagata
who considers this depth of dharma,
and who,
seated on the terrace of enlightenment,
has just won full enlightenment,
is inclined to carefree non-action,
and not to demonstration of dharma.

The Lord: So it is.
Deep, certainly,
is this dharma
I have fully known.

Nothing has been,
or will be,
or is being
fully known,
and that is the depth of this dharma.

This dharma which I have fully known
is deep
through the depth of space,
the depth of the self,
the depth of the not-coming of all dharmas,
and of their not going.

Sakra: It is wonderful, O Lord,
it is astonishing, O Well-Gone!
As contrary to the ways of the whole world
is this dharma demonstrated,
it teaches you not to seize upon dharmas,
but the world is wont to grasp at anything.

Chapter XVI Suchness

1. Tathagata - Suchness

Subhuti:

As the non-observation of all dharmas,
to be sure,
is this dharma taught.

Nowhere is this dharma obstructed.
Through its identity with space
this dharma is,
to be sure,
marked with non-obstruction,
since no traces of it are noticed.

It has no counterpart,
because it is without a second.

It has no opponent,
because it has gone beyond all opposites.

It is without a trace,
because it has not been caused to become.

It is unproduced,
because there is no occasion for rebirth.

It is pathless,
because no path is noticed.

Sakra and the Gods: Born,
after the image of the Lord,
is this Disciple,
the holy Subhuti,
the Elder.

For,
whichever dharma he demonstrates,
he always starts from emptiness.

Subhuti: Because he is not born
is Subhuti, the Elder,
born after the image of the Tathagata.

He is born after the image
of the Tathagata's Suchness.

As that has neither come nor gone,
so also
the Suchness of Subhuti
has neither come nor gone.

From the very beginning
Subhuti the Elder has been born
after the image of the Tathagata's Suchness.
Because the Suchness of the Tathagata
and the Suchness of all dharmas
are the same thing,
and they are both
the Suchness of Subhuti the Elder.

Born after the image of that Suchness
is Subhuti the Elder;
hence,
born after the image of the Tathagata.

But that Suchness
is also no Suchness,
and,
after the image of that Suchness
has he been born.

It is in that sense
that the Elder Subhuti
is born after the image of the Tathagata,
and that
as a result of the established order
of the Suchness of the Tathagata.

Subhuti's Suchness
 is immutable
 and unchangeable,
 undiscriminated
 and undifferentiated,
 just as the Suchness of the Tathagata.

It is thus that Subhuti the Elder,
 immutable,
 unchangeable,

undiscriminated,
 undifferentiated,

through that Suchness,
 is born after the image of the Tathagata.

And just as the Suchness of the Tathagata,
 which is immutable
 and undifferentiated,
 is nowhere obstructed,

so also the Suchness of all dharmas,
 which is also immutable
 and undifferentiated.

For the Suchness of the Tathagata,
 and the Suchness of all dharmas,
 they are both one single Suchness,
 not two,
 not divided.

A non-dual Suchness,
 however,
 is nowhere,
 is from nowhere,
 belongs to nowhere.

It is because it is a Suchness
 which belongs nowhere

that it is non-dual.

It is therefore
through an unmade Suchness
that the Elder Subhuti
is born after the image of the Tathagata.

An unmade Suchness,
however,
is at no time not Suchness
and therefore it is non-dual.

It is in this sense
that the Elder Subhuti
is born after the image of the Tathagata.

Just as the Suchness of the Tathagata
is undiscriminated
and undifferentiated,

at all times
and in all dharmas,
so also
the Suchness of Subhuti.

And for that reason,
although we seem to have a duality
when Subhuti has been conjured up
from the Suchness of the Tathagata,

nevertheless
nothing real has been lopped off
that Suchness,

which remains unbroken,
because one cannot apprehend
an actually real agent
that could break it apart.

In that sense

is Subhuti the Elder
born after the image of the Tathagata.

As the Suchness of the Tathagata
is not outside
the Suchness of all dharmas,
so also the Suchness of Subhuti.

But what is not outside
the Suchness of all dharmas,
that is not of anything
not the Suchness.

The Suchness of Subhuti
is therefore
just the same as the Suchness of all dharmas.

Subhuti the Elder
has undergone the experience
of that Suchness
by imitating in himself
the unaltered Suchness,

but in actual fact,
no one has anywhere
undergone a process of imitation.

It is in this sense
that Subhuti the Elder
is born after the image of the Tathagata.

As the Suchness of the Tathagata
is neither past,
nor future,
nor present,
so also the Suchness of all dharmas.

As born in the image of that Suchness
is Subhuti called
“born after the image of the Tathagata.”

Because it is also through
 the Suchness of the Tathagata
 [and not only his own]
 that he has conformed to Suchness.

It is just through
 the Suchness of the Tathagata
 that he has conformed to past Suchness,

and it is just through past Suchness
 that he has conformed
 to the Suchness of the Tathagata.

And so with the future,
 and the present.

It is through the Suchness of the Tathagata
 that he has conformed to past,
 future ,
 and present Suchness,

and it is through past,
 future,
 and present Suchness
 that he has conformed
 to the Suchness of the Tathagata.

In this sense
 the Suchness of Subhuti,
 and past,
 future,
 and present Suchness,
 and the Suchness of the Tathagata,
 are not two,
 nor divided.

The Suchness of all dharmas
 and the Suchness of Subhuti
 are therefore not two,

nor divided.

And also,
the Suchness of the Lord
when he was a Bodhisattva -
that is the Suchness of the Lord
when he had won full enlightenment.

And that is the Suchness
through which a Bodhisattva,
when he has definitely won
full enlightenment,
comes to be called a 'Tathagata.'

2. The Earth Shakes, and Many Are Saved

When this disquisition
of the Suchness of the Tathagata
had taken place,
the great earth shook in six ways,

stirred,
quaked,
was agitated,

resounded and tumbled,
as it did
when the Tathagata won full enlightenment.

Subhuti: It is thus, O Gods,
that Subhuti the Elder
is born after the image of the Tathagata.

But he is not born after the image of form,
or of any of the fruits of a holy life,
from the fruit of a Streamwinner
to Buddhahood.

For those dharmas,
which might be born

after the image of something,
 or in the image of which he would be born,
 they do not exist,
 they are not got at.

It is thus that Subhuti the Elder
 is born in the image of the Tathagata.

Sariputra: This Suchness, O Lord,
 courses in the deep!

The Lord: So it is, Sariputra.

But when this disquisition of Suchness
 was expounded,
 the minds of three hundred monks
 were freed from the outflows,
 without any further clinging.

Five hundred nuns obtained the pure, dispassionate,
 and unstained dharma-eye.

Five thousand Gods,
 who in the past
 had made the necessary preparations,
 acquired the patient acceptance
 of dharmas which fail to be produced.

And the minds of six thousand Bodhisattvas
 were free from the outflows,
 without any further clinging.

3. Perfect Wisdom and Skill in Means

Sariputra knew
 that the thoughts of those Bodhisattvas
 were freed from the outflows,
 without any further clinging,
 and he asked the Lord for the reason,
 or cause, of that.

The Lord: Those Bodhisattvas
 have honoured five hundred Buddhas,
 and during all that time
 they have given gifts,
 guarded their morality,
 perfected their patience,
 exerted their vigour,
 and produced trance.

But they were not upheld
 by perfect wisdom
 and lacked in skill in means.

And so,
 although they
 had gained the path of emptiness,
 had coursed in the Signless,
 had put their minds to work on the Wishless,

as wanting skill in means
 they had realized the reality limit,
 and come forth on the level
 of Disciple or Pratyekabuddha,
 and not on the level of a Buddha.

Suppose there is a very huge bird,
 one hundred,
 or up to five hundred miles large,
 but without any wings,
 or with crippled or damaged wings.
 That bird now
 would want to fly down to Jambudvipa
 from the Heaven
 of the Gods of the Thirty-three.

If in the intermediate space,
 in the middle of its journey
 to Jambudvipa,
 it would want to return

to the Gods of the Thirty-three,
would it be able to do so?

Sariputra: No, Lord.

The Lord: And,
could it hope to come down on Jambudvipa
without damage or injury?

Sariputra: No, Lord.
It is bound to get damaged and injured,
and,
when it drops down on Jambudvipa
it will incur death or deadly pain.

Because of the fact that,
whereas its body is huge,
the strength of its wings is insufficient,
and it just drops down from above.

The Lord: So it is, Sariputra.
Even if a Bodhisattva,
after he has raised his mind
to full enlightenment,
would,
for countless aeons,
give gifts,
guard his morality,
perfect his patience,
exert his vigour,
and enter the trances,

how ever great may be his setting forth
and the thought
which he raises to full enlightenment,
if he is not upheld by perfect wisdom
and lacks in skill in means,
he is bound to fall on the level of Disciple
or Pratyekabuddha.

Furthermore, Sariputra,
 it may be that a Bodhisattva brings to mind,
 and retains in his mind,
 of the Buddhas and Lords,
 past,
 future and present,

the morality,
 the concentration,
 the wisdom,
 the emancipation,

the vision and cognition of emancipation,
 but all that
 after the manner of a sign.

He then neither knows
 nor sees
 the morality of the Tathagatas,

nor their concentration,
 or wisdom,
 or emancipation,
 or their vision
 and cognition of emancipation.

Ignorant of them,
 blind to them,
 he hears the word 'emptiness,'
 treats that as a sign,
 and wishes to convert [that mass of merit]
 into a full enlightenment
 [which he regards as emptiness].

In consequence
 he will remain on the level of a Disciple
 or a Pratyekabuddha,
 because of the fact
 that he is not upheld by perfect wisdom,
 that he lacks in skill in means.

Sariputra: As I understand
 the meaning of the Lord's teaching,
 although a Bodhisattva
 may be joined to a huge equipment of merit,
 as long as he is not upheld
 by perfect wisdom
 and is without skill in means,
 he lacks the good friend,
 and his attainment of full enlightenment
 is uncertain.

A Bodhisattvas
 who wants to win full enlightenment
 should therefore develop
 the perfection of wisdom,
 and become skilled in means.

The Lord: So it is, Sariputra.

Sakra and the Gods: Deep, O Lord,
 is perfect wisdom!
 Hard to win,
 exceedingly hard to win
 is full enlightenment!

The Lord: So it is, O Gods.
 Deep is this perfection of wisdom.
 Hard to win,
 exceedingly hard to win
 is full enlightenment,
 if one is weak in wisdom,
 below the mark in vigour and resolve,
 unskilled in means,
 and if one serves the bad friends.

4. Enlightenment and Emptiness

Subhuti: How can the Lord say
 that full enlightenment is hard to win,

exceedingly hard to win,
 when there is no one
 who can win enlightenment?

For,
 owing to the emptiness of all dharmas,
 no dharma exists
 that would be able to win enlightenment.

All dharmas are empty.
 That dharma also
 for the forsaking of which
 dharma is demonstrated,
 that dharma does not exist.

And also that dharma
 which would be enlightened
 in full enlightenment,
 and that which should be enlightened,
 and that which would cognize
 [the enlightenment],
 and that which should cognize it,
 -all these dharmas are empty.

In this manner
 I am inclined to think
 that full enlightenment is easy to win,
 not hard to win.

The Lord:
 Because it cannot possibly come about
 is full enlightenment hard to win,
 because in reality it is not there,
 because it cannot be discriminated,
 because it has not been fabricated
 [as a false appearance].

Sariputra: Also because it is empty
 is it hard to win,
 O Subhuti.

For it does not occur to space
that it will win full enlightenment.

As such,
i.e. as without own-being,
should these dharmas be known
in enlightenment.

For all dharmas are the same as space.
And,
Subhuti,
if full enlightenment
were easy to win,
then countless Bodhisattvas
would not turn away from it.

But as countless Bodhisattvas
do turn away from it,
therefore one can discern
that full enlightenment is hard to win,
exceedingly hard to win.

Subhuti: But, Sariputra,
does form, etc.,
turn away from full enlightenment?

Sariputra: No, Subhuti.

Subhuti: Is then the dharma
which turns away from full enlightenment
other than form, etc.?

Sariputra: No, Subhuti.

Subhuti: Does the Suchness of form, etc.,
turn away?

Sariputra: No, Subhuti.

Subhuti: Is the dharma

which turns away from full enlightenment
other than the Suchness of form, etc.?

Sariputra: No, Subhuti.

Subhuti: Does form, etc.,
know full enlightenment?

Sariputra: No, Subhuti.

Subhuti: Is the dharma
which knows full enlightenment
other than form, etc.?

Sariputra: No, Subhuti.

Subhuti: Does the Suchness of form, etc.,
know full enlightenment?

Sariputra: No, Subhuti.

Subhuti: Is the dharma
which knows full enlightenment
other than the Suchness of form, etc.?

Sariputra: No, Subhuti.

Subhuti: Should form, etc.,
be known in full enlightenment,
or a dharma other than form, etc.

or the Suchness of form, etc.,
or a dharma other than
the Suchness of form, etc.?

Sariputra: No, Subhuti.

Subhuti: Does Suchness
turn away from full enlightenment?

Sariputra: No, Subhuti.

Subhuti: Is that dharma
which turns away from full enlightenment
in Suchness?

Sariputra: No, Subhuti.

Subhuti: What then,
Sariputra,
is this dharma
which turns away from full enlightenment,

when we consider it
as it stands
in this nature of dharmas,
which is just emptiness,
after the manner
of taking no stand on any dharma?

Or what dharma,
is that Suchness?
Is it perhaps Suchness which is turned away?

Sariputra: No, Subhuti.

Subhuti: Since thus,
in ultimate truth
and as things stand,
no dharma can be apprehended as real,
what is that dharma
which is turned away from full enlightenment?

Sariputra: When one adopts the method
of considering dharmas
in their ultimate reality,
which Subhuti the Elder uses
in this exposition,
then indeed
there is no dharma which turns away

from full enlightenment.

But then,
 Venerable Subhuti,
 there is no longer any ground
 for the distinction of those
 who have set their hearts on enlightenment
 into three kinds of persons,
 as described by the Tathagata,
 who differ
 with respect to the vehicle
 which they have chosen.

According to the exposition
 of the Venerable Subhuti
 there should be only one vehicle
 [for those whose hearts
 are set on enlightenment],
 i.e. the Buddha-vehicle,
 the Bodhisattva-vehicle,
 the great vehicle.

Purna: First of all
 the Venerable Sariputra
 must ask the Venerable Subhuti the Elder
 whether he admits
 even one single kind of being
 whose heart is set on enlightenment,

and who uses
 either the vehicle of the Disciples,
 or that of the Pratyekabuddhas,
 or the great vehicle.

Sariputra: Subhuti,
 do you admit
 even one single kind of being
 whose heart is set on enlightenment,
 and who uses
 either the vehicle of the Disciples,

or that of the Bodhisattvas,
or the great vehicle?

Subhuti: Sariputra,
do you see
in the Suchness of Suchness
even one single being
whose heart is set on enlightenment
[i.e. as a real entity],

be he one
who uses the vehicle of the Disciples,
or that of the Pratyekabuddhas,
or the great
vehicle?

Sariputra: No so, Subhuti.
Suchness,
first of all,
is not apprehended as of three kinds,
how much less
the being whose heart
is set on enlightenment.

Subhuti: Is then Suchness
apprehended as of one kind even?

Sariputra: Not so, Subhuti.

Subhuti: Do you then perhaps
see in Suchness
even one single dharma
which would constitute a being
whose heart is set on enlightenment?

Sariputra: Not so, Subhuti.

Subhuti: Since thus,
in ultimate truth
and as things stand,

such a dharma
 which could constitute a being
 whose heart is set on enlightenment
 cannot be apprehended,

where do you get the idea that
 “this one belongs
 to the vehicle of the Disciples,
 that one
 to the vehicle of the Pratyekabuddhas,
 that one to the great vehicle”?

If a Bodhisattva
 who hears this absence of difference,
 distinction,
 or differentiation
 between the three kinds of persons
 who have set their hearts on enlightenment,

in so far
 as they are encompassed
 by the same Suchness,
 does not become cowed
 or stolid in mind,

does not turn back,
 then one should know
 that he will go forth to enlightenment.

The Lord: Well said, Subhuti.
 Through the might and sustaining power
 of the Tathagata
 have you been inspired to say this.

Sariputra: To which enlightenment,
 O Lord,
 will that Bodhisattva go forth?

The Lord: To the full
 and supreme enlightenment.

5. Requisites of Going Forth to Enlightenment

Subhuti: How should a Bodhisattva behave,
 how should he train,
 if he wants to go forth
 to the full and supreme enlightenment?

The Lord: The Bodhisattva
 should adopt the same attitude
 towards all beings,
 his mind should be even towards all beings,

he should not handle others
 with an uneven mind,
 but with a mind which is friendly,
 well disposed,
 helpful,

free from aversion,
 avoiding harm and hurt,
 he should handle others

as if they were his mother,
 father,
 son or daughter.

As a saviour of all beings
 should a Bodhisattva behave
 towards all beings,
 should he train himself,
 if he wants to know
 the full and supreme enlightenment.

He should, himself,
 stand in the abstention from all evil,

he should give gifts,
 guard his morality,

perfect himself in patience,

exert vigour,
enter into the trances,

achieve mastery over wisdom,
survey conditioned coproduction,
both in direct and in reverse order;

and also others
he should instigate to do the same,
incite and encourage them.

In the same way
he should stand in everything
from the meditation on the truths

to the stage
when he reaches the certainty
that it is as a Bodhisattva
that he will be saved,

and when he matures beings,
and also others
he should instigate to do the same,
incite and encourage them.

When he longs eagerly for all that
and trains himself in it,
then everything will be uncovered to him,
from form
to the established order of dharma.

Chapter XVII Attributes, Tokens, and Signs of Irreversibility

1. Various Tokens of Irreversibility

Subhuti: What, O Lord,
are the attributes,
tokens and signs
of an irreversible Bodhisattva,
and how can we know
that a Bodhisattva is irreversible?

The Lord: The level of the common people,
the level of the Disciples,
the level of the Pratyekabuddhas,
the level of the Buddhas
they are all called
the “Level of Suchness.”

With the thought that all these are,
through Suchness,
not two,
nor divided,
nor discriminated,

undiscriminate,
he enters on this Suchness,
this nature of dharma.

After he has stood firmly in Suchness,
he neither imagines
nor discriminates it.
In that sense does he enter into it.

When he has thus entered on it,
even when he has gone away
from the assembly
where he has heard about Suchness,

he does not hesitate,
does not become perplexed,

does not doubt,

and he is not stupefied
by the thought
[concerning form, etc.]
that
'it is not thus.'

On the contrary,
he firmly believes that
'it is just thus,
just Suchness,'
and, like that,
he plunges into it.

But he does not prattle away
about everything
that comes into his head.

He only speaks when it is profitable
[to others],
and not when it is not profitable.

He does not look down on
what others have done
or have not done.

Endowed with these attributes,
tokens and signs,
a Bodhisattva
should be borne in mind
as irreversible from full enlightenment.

Furthermore,
an irreversible Bodhisattva
does not pander to Shramanas
and Brahmins of other schools,
telling them
that they know what is worth knowing,
that they see what is worth seeing.

He pays no homage to strange Gods,
 offers them no flowers,
 incense, etc.,
 does not put his trusts in them.

He is no more reborn in the places of woe,
 nor does he ever again become a woman.

Furthermore, Subhuti,
 an irreversible Bodhisattva
 undertakes to observe
 the ten avenues
 [ways] of wholesome action.

He himself observes,
 and he instigates others to observe,

abstention from taking life,
 abstention from taking what is not given,
 abstention from wrong conduct
 as regards sensuous pleasures,

abstention from intoxicants
 as tending to cloud the mind,

abstention from lying speech,
 abstention from malicious speech,
 abstention from harsh speech,
 abstention from indistinct prattling,

abstention from covetousness,
 abstention from ill will,
 abstention from wrong views.

It is quite certain
 that an irreversible Bodhisattva
 observes the ten ways
 of wholesome action,
 and instigates other to observe them,

incites and encourages them to do so,
establishes and confirms others in them.

Even in his dreams
he never commits offenses
against those ten precepts,
and he does not nurse such offenses
in his mind.

Even in his dreams
an irreversible Bodhisattva
keeps the ten wholesome paths of action present in his mind.

Furthermore,
when an irreversible Bodhisattva
masters a text of dharma,
and offers it to others,
he has in mind
the welfare and happiness of all beings,
and he offers that gift of dharma
in common to all beings,
without distinction.

Furthermore,
when deep dharmas are being taught,
a Bodhisattva does not hesitate,
does not become perplexed,
does not doubt,
does not get stupefied.

He only says what is beneficial,
he speaks gently
and in moderation.

He has little sloth and torpor,
and he loses all the latent biases to evil.

Whether he goes out or comes back,
his mind does not wander,
but his mindfulness is fixed before him.

When he steps on the ground
 he knows what he does,
 and when he lifts up
 or puts down his feet
 he neither loiters nor hurries
 but remains at ease.

His robe is free from lice,
 his habits are clean,
 he is rarely ill,
 and his afflictions are few.

In his body
 the eighty thousand families of worms
 which are present in the bodies
 of other beings
 cannot at all develop,
 because his wholesome roots
 have elevated him above the whole world.

And as those wholesome roots of his
 go on increasing,
 in due course
 he will gain the perfect purity of body, speech,
 and thought.

Subhuti: What should be known
 as perfect purity of thought
 on the part of this Bodhisattva?

The Lord: As those wholesome roots of his
 go on increasing,
 in due course
 he will gain a state of mind
 where he has few cares,
 and is free from treachery,
 deceit,
 crookedness and craftiness.

In addition,

his perfect purity of thought
 also consists
 in that he has transcended
 the level of Disciples and Pratyekabuddhas.

Furthermore,
 an irreversible Bodhisattva
 is not one to attach weight to gain,
 honour,
 or fame,

or to robes,
 alms bowl,
 lodging,
 or medicinal appliances for use in sickness.
 He is not one who is full of envy
 and meanness.

And,
 when deep dharmas are being taught,
 he does not lose heart;
 but his intelligence becomes steady,
 his intelligence goes deep.

With respect,
 he hears the Dharma from others.
 All the dharmas which he hears from others
 he unites with the perfection of wisdom,

and also all worldly arts and professions
 he unites,
 thanks to the perfection of wisdom,
 with the nature of dharma.

There is not any dharma
 which he does not see
 as yoked to the nature of dharmas,
 and each dharma
 he sees simply
 as engaged in that effort.

2. Mara's Deeds

Furthermore, Mara,
the Evil One,
conjures up a vision
of the eight great hells,

with many hundreds,
many thousands,
many hundreds of thousands
of Bodhisattvas in them,

and he says to the irreversible Bodhisattva:
“Those Bodhisattvas,
described by the Tathagata as irreversible,
have been reborn in the great hells.

Just so you also,
since you have been described
as irreversible,
will fall into the great hells.

Confess
that that thought of enlightenment was an error!
Abandon it!
What is Buddhahood to you?

In that way
you will avoid rebirth in the hells.
If you act thus
you will be one who goes to heaven.”

If even then
the mind of the Bodhisattva does not waver,
is not put out,

if he is certain in his knowledge
that an irreversible Bodhisattva
cannot possibly be reborn
against his will in the hells,

then this is another token
of his irreversibility.

Furthermore, Mara,
the Evil One,
may come along in the guise of a Shramana,
and say:
“Give up what you have heard up to now,
abandon what you have gained so far!

And if you follow this advice,
we will again and again approach you,
and say to you:
‘What you have heard just now,
that is not the word of the Buddha.
It is poetry,
the work of poets.

But what I here teach to you,
that is the teaching of the Buddha,
that is the word of the Buddha.”

If,
on hearing that,
a Bodhisattva wavers and is put out,
then one should know
that he has not been predicted
by the Tathagata,

that he is not fixed on full enlightenment,
that he does not stand firmly
in the element of irreversibility.

But if,
even when he has heard
these words of Mara,
he does not waver,
but flees back to the nature of dharma,

to Non-production,

to Non-stopping,
to the Uneffected,
then he is not one of those
who put their trust in others.

An Arhat,
a monk whose outflows are dried up,
does not go by someone else
whom he puts his trust in,
but he has placed the nature of dharma
directly before his own eyes,
and Mara has no access to him.

Just so
an irreversible Bodhisattva
cannot be crushed
by persons who belong
to the vehicle of the Disciples
and Pratyekabuddhas,

he cannot,
by his very nature,
backslide into the level of Disciple
or Pratyekabuddha,

he is fixed on all-knowledge,
and ends up in perfect enlightenment.

It is quite certain
that a Bodhisattva who stands firmly
in the element of irreversibility
cannot possibly be led astray by others.

Furthermore,
someone will come
to the irreversible Bodhisattva
and say:

“A journey in birth-and-death
is this coursing in perfect wisdom,

and not the journey of someone
 who is in quest of enlightenment.
 Put an end to all suffering in this very life!

You will then no longer experience
 all the sufferings and disappointments
 which are bound up
 with the plane of birth and death.

Aye surely,
 in this very life already
 will this personality of yours be finished,
 why do you think of taking upon yourself another one
 [for the sake of other beings]?”

If even then
 the Bodhisattva neither wavers or is put out,
 then Mara himself will say to him:

“Just have a look at those Bodhisattvas
 who for countless aeons
 have presented the necessities of life
 to the Buddhas, the Lords,

who have led holy lives
 in the presence of countless Buddhas,
 who have honoured countless Buddhas
 and Lords,

have questioned them
 about just this vehicle of the Bodhisattvas,
 has asked them
 how a Bodhisattva should stand,
 have heard the answer of the Tathagatas,
 and have acted on it!

In spite of the fact
 that they have stood,
 coursed,
 and exerted themselves as they should,

to this very day
they have not yet known full enlightenment!

They stand firm in their instructions,
they train themselves as they should,
but they have not reached all-knowledge!
How then will you reach full enlightenment ever?"

If even then
he does not waver and is not put out,
then Mara, the Evil One,
will conjure up some monks in that place, and say:

"Those monks have become Arhats,
with their outflows dried up.

They who have set out for enlightenment,
in the meantime
have reached Arhatship,
and become established in it.

How will you ever
reach full enlightenment?"

It is quite certain that a Bodhisattva
must be irreversible from full enlightenment,
if, when this is being said and expounded,
his mind does not waver and is not put out.

If the mind of a Bodhisattva
who has heard from a stranger
these discouraging remarks
is not excluded
from the true nature of dharma,

if he does not go back on it,
if he does not change his mind,
if he recognizes those deeds of Mara
for what they are,

then it is quite impossible that
 he who courses correctly in the perfections
 should not reach all-knowledge.

Mara, the Evil One,
 cannot possibly gain entry
 to a Bodhisattva who not only courses
 but also trains himself correctly,

who does not lack in the practices
 described by the Tathagatas,

who is completely adjusted
 to this mental activity
 which is associated with the perfections.

If a Bodhisattva
 recognizes the deeds of Mara,

if,
 when he hears discouraging remarks
 from strangers,
 he does not desist,
 nor slide back,
 nor change his mind,

if he perceives those deeds of Mara
 for what they are,
 then this is another token of irreversibility.

Furthermore,
 an irreversible Bodhisattva
 does not piece together
 a perception of form, etc.,
 nor produce one.

For the irreversible Bodhisattva
 who has,
 through dharmas
 which are empty of their own marks,

definitely entered on the certainty
 that he will win salvation as a Bodhisattva
 does not apprehend
 even that dharma,
 and so he cannot piece it together,
 or produce it.

One says therefore that
 “a Bodhisattva is irreversible
 if he patiently accepts
 the cognition of nonproduction.”
 This is another token of irreversibility.

Furthermore,
 Mara, the Evil One,
 comes along in the guise of a monk
 and tries to deter the Bodhisattva
 with the words:

“The same as space is this all knowledge.
 It is a dharma which is not,
 it is non-existent.

Who can anoint himself for it,
 who fully know it?
 There is no one who could go forth to it,
 there is no one who could fully know it,
 nothing that should be fully known,

there is no one who would understand,
 there is nothing
 that should be understood.

At all times
 those dharmas are the same as space,
 it is useless for you to resist,

revealed as a deed of Mara
 is this doctrine that
 ‘one should know full enlightenment,’

it is not the Buddha's teaching.”

A son or daughter of good family
should then cognize,
realize and know
that this kind of critical examination
is just a deed of Mara.

After he has made this reflection,
he should make his mind firm,
unshakeable,
irrestible.

This is another token of irreversibility.

3. More Tokens of Irreversibility

Furthermore,
an irreversible Bodhisattva
is one who has turned away from
the level of Disciples and Pratyekabuddhas,
and who has proceeded
in the direction of all-knowledge.

According to plan he enters into the first,
second, third and fourth trance,
and he dwells in those four trances.

He comes a complete master over the trances,
i.e. he enters into the trances,
but his future rebirth
is not determined by their influence.

It is on the dharmas
of the sphere of sense-desire
that he bases his rebirth.

This also should be known
as a mark of irreversibility

in an irreversible Bodhisattva.

Furthermore,
 an irreversible Bodhisattva
 does not attach weight to a name,
 nor to renown,
 title or fame.

He does not get attached
 to a [particular] name
 [which in any case
 is absent in emptiness].

His mind remains undismayed,
 and interested only
 in the welfare of all beings.

Whether he goes out or comes back,
 his mind does not wander,
 and he remains ever mindful.

When he lives the life of a householder,
 he has no great love for pleasant things,
 and he does not want them too much.

With fear and disgust
 he possesses all pleasant things.

Situated in a wilderness
 infested with robbers
 one would eat one's meals in fear,

and with the constant thought
 of getting away,
 of getting out of this wilderness,
 and not with repose.

Just so
 an irreversible Bodhisattva
 who lives the life of a householder,

possesses any pleasant things he may have
 simply without caring for them,
 without eagerness,
 without attachment.

He is not one of those people
 who care for dear and pleasant forms.
 Those who live the lives of householders
 and who are involved
 in the five kinds of sensuous pleasures
 do not earn their living in an irregular way,
 but in the right way.

Neither do they incur death in a state of sin,
 nor do they inflict injuries on others.
 For they have incited all beings
 to win the supreme happiness,

those worthy men,
 those great men,
 supermen,
 excellent men,

splendid men,
 bulls of men,
 sublime men,
 valiant men,

heroes of men,
 leaders of men,

waterlilies of men,
 lotuses of men,
 thoroughbred men,

Nagas of men,
 lions of men,
 trainers of men!

It is in this spirit that Bodhisattvas

live the life of householders,
 in as much as they have been impregnated
 with the power of the perfection of wisdom,
 and that is another token
 of their irreversibility.

Furthermore,
 Vajrapani, the great Yaksha,
 constantly follows behind
 the irreversible Bodhisattva.

Unassailable,
 the Bodhisattva cannot be defeated
 by either men or ghosts.

All beings
 find it hard to conquer him,
 and his mind is not disturbed
 [by their attacks].

His faculties are all complete,
 and he is not deficient in any.

He possesses the organs of a virile man,
 not those of an impotent man.

He does not in any way
 embark on those spells,
 mutterings,
 herbs,
 magical formulae,
 medical incantations, etc.,
 which are the work of women.

He earns his livelihood in a clean way,
 not in a wrong way.

His character is neither quarrelsome
 nor disputatious.

His views are upright,

he does not exalt himself
nor deprecate others.

With these
and other similar qualities
he is endowed.

He does not predict to women or men
that they will have a son or daughter.

Such faulty ways
of making himself acceptable
will not be his.

All this is another token of irreversibility.

Furthermore, Subhuti,
I will demonstrate the attributes,
tokens and signs
of an irreversible Bodhisattva.

Endowed with them
he would be known
as irreversible from full enlightenment.

Again, which are they?
The following:
He does not give himself over
to occupation and preoccupation

with the skandhas,
the sense-fields,
the elements,
and with conditioned coproduction.

He is not preoccupied
with the kind of talk one is fond of in society,

with talk about kings,
and robbers,

about armies and battles;
about villages, cities, market towns,
countries, kingdoms, and capitals;

about himself,
about ministers and prime ministers;
about women, men and neuters;

about journeys, parks, monasteries,
palaces, pools, lakes, ponds, lotus ponds,

woods, gardens and mountains;

about Yakshas, Rakshasas,
Pretas, Pishacas,

Kataputana-demons
and Kumbhanda-demons;

about food, drink,
dresses, ornaments,
perfumes,
garlands and ointments;

about roads, crossroads, streets,
markets, palanquins and people;

about songs, dances, tales,
actors, dancers, and wandering singers;

about the ocean, about rivers, about islands.

They do not devote themselves
to talk which obstructs dharma,
to the kind of talk
which delights the common people,
but to talk on the perfection of wisdom,

and they become people
 who do not lack in the mental activities
 which are associated with all-knowledge.

But talk about fightings and strife,
 about quarrels and disputes they avoid.

They are willing for what is right,
 and not willing for what is wrong.

They praise without causing dissension,
 and not in order to cause dissension.

They want friendship,
 and not its opposite.

They preach dharma,
 and not its opposite.

They plan to gain a vision
 of those Tathagatas
 who dwell in other world systems,

and thus they produce a thought
 which leads them to rebirth
 in their presence.

According to plan
 they are reborn near them,
 and so they do not lack
 in the vision of the Tathagatas,
 nor in opportunities for honouring
 and serving them.

Furthermore,
 when an irreversible Bodhisattva
 has definitely terminated his existence among the Gods,

whether they belong

to the sphere of sense-desire,
 or the sphere of form,
 or the formless sphere,

he is reborn in just this middle region,
 in Jambudvipa.

For in the border countries
 there are only a few beings
 with a good knowledge of the arts,

of poetry,
 of mantras,
 of secret lore,

of the standard treatises,
 of portents
 and of the meaning of religion,

but in the middle of region
 they are reborn in abundance.

But those who are reborn
 in the border regions
 are at least reborn in the big towns.

This is another mark of irreversibility.

Furthermore,
 to an irreversible Bodhisattva
 it does not occur to ask himself
 whether he is irreversible or not.

No doubt about it arises in him,
 he has not uncertainty about the stage
 he has made his own,
 and he does not sink down below it.

Just as a Streamwinner has no hesitations
 or doubts about the fruit of a Streamwinner,

if that is the stage which is his by right,

just so
 an irreversible Bodhisattva
 has no hesitations or doubts
 about being on the stage of a Bodhisattva,

when that stage is his by right,
 he has no uncertainties about the stage
 which is his right,
 nor does he sink below it.

And he quickly sees through
 any deed of Mara
 that they may have arisen,
 and does not come under his sway.

A man who has committed
 one of the deadly sins
 will never again,
 until his death,
 lose the thought of that action,

he cannot get rid of it
 or remove it,
 but it follows after him
 until the time of his death.

Just so
 the irreversible mind
 of an irreversible Bodhisattva
 has learned to stand firm
 on the irreversible stage
 which is his by right,

and even the whole world,
 with its Gods,
 men and Asuras,
 cannot deflect,
 divert or diverge him from it.

He recognizes any deeds of Mara
that may have arisen for what they are,
and does not come under their sway.

He is free from hesitations
and doubts about the stage
which is his by right,

and even after he has passed
through this present life
the thoughts which are characteristics of
Disciples and Pratyekabuddhas
will not arise in him.

But when he has passed through
this present life he will think:
“It is not the case
that I shall not win full enlightenment.

I am sure to win full enlightenment,
I, who have stood firm
on the stage which is mine by right.”

He can no longer be led astray by others,
and, on the stage which is his by right
he cannot be crushed.

For,
as he has stood firm on it,
his mind becomes insuperable,
his cognition becomes insuperable.

Suppose that Mara,
the Evil One,
in the guise of the Buddha himself
were to come to him, and say:

“Realize Arhatship in this very life!
You are not predestined

to full enlightenment.
 You have not the attributes,
 tokens and signs
 with which a Bodhisattva must be endowed
 in order to win full enlightenment.
 Why then should you course in this?"

If the Bodhisattva then experiences
 a change of heart,
 one should know
 that he has not been predicted
 to full enlightenment
 by the Tathagatas of the past.

If,
 on the other hand,
 he considers that,
 "this, surely, is Mara,
 the Evil One,
 who has come along after he has,
 by magical means,
 adopted the disguise of the Buddha,

I am beset by Mara,
 this is one of Mara's magical creations,
 but not the Tathagata.

The Tathagata has spoken to the effect
 that one should not realize Arhatship,
 and not otherwise,"

if he sees and understands that
 "this, surely, is Mara,
 the Evil One,
 who has manufactured a magical double
 of the appearance of the Buddha,
 and who wants to estrange me
 from supreme enlightenment,"

and if Mara,

after that,
turns back,

then this Bodhisattva
has certainly in the past
been predicted to full enlightenment
by the Tathagatas,
and he has stood firmly
on the irreversible Bodhisattva stage.

Where these attributes,
tokens, and signs
are found in a Bodhisattva,
there one can be certain,
beyond any shadow of a doubt,
that,
as he has those qualities,
he has been predicted by the Tathagatas
in the past,
and has stood firm
on the irreversible Bodhisattva-stage.

For he has the attributes,
tokens and signs
of an irreversible Bodhisattva.

This is another token of irreversibility.

Furthermore,
an irreversible Bodhisattva
tries to gain the good dharma
even if it costs him his life
and all his belongings.

Therefore
he makes a supreme effort
to gain the good dharma,
through his affection
and respect for the Buddhas and Lords,
past,

future and present.

In the conviction that
 “the Dharma-bodies are the Buddhas,
 the Lords.”

he wins the good dharma
 through his affection
 and respect for Dharma

He gains the good Dharma
 not only of the past Buddhas and Lords,
 but also of the present and future
 Buddhas and Lords.

He becomes convinced that he also
 has joined the ranks of those
 who are reckoned as future Buddhas
 and Lords,

that he also has been predicted
 to that supreme enlightenment,
 that also
 he will gain just this good dharma.

Also these considerations
 he bears in mind when,
 in his efforts to gain the good dharma,
 he renounces even his life
 and all his belongings,
 when he does not lose heart,
 or become indolent.

This is another token of irreversibility.

Moreover,
 when the Tathagata demonstrates dharma,
 an irreversible bodhisattva
 does not hesitate or doubt.

Subhuti: Does he also not hesitate or doubt
when a Disciple demonstrates dharma?

The Lord: No, he does not.
For a Bodhisattva
who has acquired the patient acceptance
of dharmas which fail to be produced
does not hesitate or doubt
when he hears about the unobstructed
true nature of all dharmas.

Endowed with these virtues
a Bodhisattva becomes irreversible.

These also should be known
as the attributes,
tokens and signs
of a Bodhisattva who is irreversible
from full enlightenment.

Chapter XVIII Emptiness

1. Deep Stations

Subhuti: It is wonderful, O Lord,
with how great,
with what unlimited
and measureless qualities
a Bodhisattva is endowed!

The Lord: So it is, Subhuti.
For an irreversible Bodhisattva
has gained a cognition
which is endless and boundless,
and to which
Disciples and Pratyekabuddhas
have no claim.

Subhuti: For aeons on end
the Lord could go on expounding
the attributes,
tokens and signs
of an irreversible Bodhisattva.
Hence he now might indicate
the very deep positions of a Bodhisattva
which are connected with perfect wisdom.

The Lord: Well said, Subhuti.
You obviously bring up
the very deep positions
because you want me to change the subject.

“Deep,” Subhuti,
of Emptiness,
that is a synonym,
of the Signless,
the Wishless,

the Uneffected,
the Unproduced,

of No-birth,
Non-existence,

Dispassion,
Cessation,
Nirvana and Departing.

Subhuti: It is a synonym only of these,
or of all dharmas?

The Lord: It is a synonym of all dharmas.
For form, etc., is deep.

How is form, etc., deep?
As deep as Suchness,
so deep is form, etc.
As deep as the Suchness of form, etc.,
so deep is form, etc.

Where there is no form, etc.,
that is the depth of form, etc.

Subhuti: It is wonderful, O Lord,
how a subtle device has opened up
[or: impeded] form, etc.,
and indicated Nirvana at the same time.

2. How to Attend to Perfect Wisdom

The Lord: When a Bodhisattva reflects,
ponders and meditates
on these very deep positions
which are connected with perfect wisdom,

and strives to stand,
train,
and progress as it is ordained,
described and explained
in the perfection of wisdom,

then,
 if he does so for one day only,
 how great is the deed he does
 during that one day!

If a man,
 moved by considerations of greed,
 had made a date with a handsome,
 attractive, and good-looking woman,
 and if now that woman were held back
 by someone else
 and could not leave her house,
 what do you think, Subhuti,
 with what would that man's preoccupations be connected?

Subhuti: With the woman, of course.
 He thinks about her coming,
 about the things they will do together,
 and about the joy,
 fun and delight he will have with her.

The Lord: Will he have many such ideas
 in the course of a day?

Subhuti: Many indeed, O Lord.

The Lord: As many such ideas
 as he has in the course of a day,
 for so many aeons
 a Bodhisattva spurns birth-and-death,
 turns his back on it,
 seeks to end it.

3. Merit

When he stands,
 trains,
 progresses,

meditates

and strives as it is ordained,
described and explained
in this perfection of wisdom,

he gets rid also of those faults
which cause him to turn away
from full enlightenment.

If now one Bodhisattva gives himself up
to devotion to perfect wisdom,
and does deeds for one day only
while dwelling completely
in mental activities
connected with perfect wisdom;

and if another Bodhisattva
lacks in perfect wisdom,
but gives gifts for countless aeons;
superior to him is the Bodhisattva who,
for one day only,
makes endeavours about perfect wisdom.

A Bodhisattva who for one day only
makes endeavours about perfect wisdom
begets greater merit
than another Bodhisattva
who for countless aeons
gives and bestows gifts
on all the classes of holy persons,
from Streamwinners to Tathagatas
but lacks in perfect wisdom.

If that other Bodhisattva
should not only bestow gifts as indicated,
but in addition
observe the moral precepts,
but lack in perfect wisdom,
then this Bodhisattva,
a dweller in perfect wisdom,
would beget the greater merit if,

after he had emerged
 from his mental work on perfect wisdom,
 he would demonstrate dharma.

And that would remain true
 even if the other Bodhisattva
 in addition
 were endowed with patience.

Even if
 in addition
 he would exert vigour,
 would make endeavours about the trances
 and wings of enlightenment,
 but were still lacking in perfect wisdom;
 a Bodhisattva who,
 after he had given the gift of dharma,
 as said before,
 would turn it over to full enlightenment,
 would beget a greater merit than his.

Greater still
 would be the merit of a Bodhisattva
 who not only gave the gift of dharma,
 not only turned it over
 into full enlightenment,
 but employed the kind of turning over
 which has been taught
 in the perfection of wisdom.

But if a Bodhisattva,
 after he has done all that,
 makes no further efforts about it
 in meditative seclusion,
 then his merit is less than that of one
 who also makes efforts about it
 in meditative seclusion

and who,
 taken hold of by perfect wisdom,

causes that meditative seclusion
to be not devoid of perfect wisdom.
The latter begets the greater merit.

4. Immeasurable, Empty, and Talk

Subhuti: How can one say
that he begets the greater merit
since the Lord has described
all accumulations
as the result of false discrimination?

The Lord: In that case also
the accumulation of merit
on the part of a Bodhisattva
who courses in perfect wisdom
must be described as just empty,
worthless,
insignificant and unsubstantial.

To the extent that a Bodhisattva
goes on contemplating all dharmas
in this manner,
to that extent
he becomes one who does not lack
in perfect wisdom.

And to the extent that he does not lack
in perfect wisdom,
to that extent he begets
an immeasurable
and incalculable heap of merit.

Subhuti: Is there any distinction
or difference
between immeasurable
and incalculable?

The Lord: It is 'immeasurable'
because in it

all measurements must cease.
It is 'incalculable'
because it exhausts all efforts to count it.

Subhuti: Would there be a reason to assume
that the skandhas are immeasurable?

The Lord: Yes, there would be.

Subhuti: Of what is that term 'immeasurable' a synonym?

The Lord: Of emptiness,
of the signless,
of the wishless.

Subhuti: Is it a synonym only of those,
and not of the other dharmas?

The Lord: Have I not described
all dharmas as 'empty'?

Subhuti: As simply empty
has the Tathagata described all dharmas.

The Lord: And, being empty,
they are also inexhaustible.

And what is emptiness,
that is also immeasurableness.

Therefore then,
according to ultimate reality,
no distinction or difference
can be apprehended between these dharmas.

As talk
have they been described
by the Tathagata.
One just talks
when one speaks of 'immeasurable,'

or ‘incalculable,’
or ‘inexhaustible,’

or of ‘empty,’
or ‘signless,’
or ‘wishless,’

or ‘the Uneffected,’
or ‘Non-production,’

‘no-birth,’
‘nonexistence,’

‘dispassion,’
‘cessation,’
‘Nirvana.’

This exposition
has by the Tathagata
been described
as the consummation of his demonstrations.

Subhuti: It is wonderful to see
the extent to which the Tathagata
has demonstrated the true nature
of all these dharmas,
and yet one cannot properly talk about
the true nature of all these dharmas,

[in the sense of predicating
distinctive attributes
to separate real entities].

As I understand the meaning
of the Tathagata’s teaching,
even all dharmas cannot be talked about,
in any proper sense?

The Lord: So it is,
for one cannot properly express

the emptiness of all dharmas in words.

5. No Growth or Diminution

Subhuti: Can something have growth,
or diminution,
if it is beyond all distinctive words?

The Lord: No, Subhuti.

Subhuti: But if there is no growth
or diminution of an entity
which is beyond all distinctive words,
then there can be no growth
or diminution of the six perfections.

And how then could a Bodhisattva
win full enlightenment
through the force of these six perfections,
if they do not grow,

and
how could he come close
to full enlightenment,
since,
without fulfilling the perfections,
he cannot come close to full enlightenment?

The Lord: So it is, Subhuti.
There is certainly no growth
or diminution of a perfection-entity.

A Bodhisattva
who courses in perfect wisdom,
who develops perfect wisdom,
and who is skilled in means,
does obviously not think that
“this perfection of giving grows,
this perfection of giving diminishes.”
But he knows that

“this perfection of giving is a mere word.”

When he gives a gift
 he turns over to full enlightenment
 the mental activities,
 the productions of thought,
 the roots of good
 which are involved in that act of giving.
 But he turns them over in such a way
 that he respects the actual reality
 of full enlightenment.

And he proceeds in the same way
 when he takes upon himself
 the moral obligations,
 when he perfects himself in patience,
 when he exerts vigour,
 enters into the trances,
 courses in perfect wisdom,
 develops perfect wisdom.

Subhuti: What then
 is this supreme enlightenment?

The Lord: It is Suchness.
 But Suchness neither grows nor diminishes.
 A Bodhisattva who repeatedly
 and often dwells in mental activities
 connected with that Suchness
 comes near to the supreme enlightenment,
 and he does not lose
 those mental activities again.

It is certain that there can be no growth
 or diminution of an entity
 which is beyond all words,
 and that therefore
 neither the perfections,
 nor all dharmas,
 can grow or diminish.

It is thus that,
when he dwells in mental activities
of this kind,
a Bodhisattva becomes one
who is near to perfect enlightenment.

Chapter XIX The Goddess of the Ganges

1. Conditioned Coproduction

Subhuti: If a Bodhisattva
wins full enlightenment,
is that due to the production
of the first thought of enlightenment,
or
due to the last thought of enlightenment?

Those two acts of thought
can nowhere be synthesized
[and therefore
they cannot cooperate in producing a result].

How can an accumulation
of a Bodhisattva's wholesome roots
take place?

The Lord: What do you think, Subhuti,
is the wick of a burning oil lamp
burned up by the first incidence
of the flame,
or
by the last incidence of the flame?

Subhuti: Not so, O Lord!
It is not burned up by the first incidence
of the flame,
nor independent of it,
and
it is also not burned up
by the incidence of the last flame,
nor independent of it.

The Lord: Has then this wick
been definitely burned up?

Subhuti: Yes, Lord.

The Lord: In the same way,
it is neither through the first
nor through the last
thought of enlightenment,
nor independent of them
that a Bodhisattva
wins full enlightenment.

He does not win it
through these productions of thought,
nor otherwise than through them.
And yet he does win full enlightenment.

2. No Development

Subhuti: Deep is this
conditioned coproduction!

The Lord: Subhuti,
will that [first] thought
which has stopped
[after its momentary appearance]
be again produced
[at the time of the second thought]?

Subhuti: No Lord.

The Lord: That thought
which has [in the past]
been produced,
is that
by its very nature
doomed to stop?

Subhuti: Yes it is, O Lord.

The Lord: If something is
by its very nature
doomed to stop,
will that be destroyed?

Subhuti: No, Lord.

The Lord: That thought
which has [not yet] been produced,
is that
by its very nature
doomed to stop?

Subhuti: No, Lord
[because something
which has not been produced
cannot be stopped].

The Lord: But when it comes to the point
when by its own nature
it is doomed to stop,
will it then be destroyed?

Subhuti: No, Lord.

The Lord: If the essential nature
of that thought
involves neither production nor stopping,
will that then be stopped?

Subhuti: No, Lord.

The Lord: If a dharma is,
by its essential original nature,
stopped already in its own being,
will that dharma be stopped?

Subhuti: No, Lord.

The Lord: Will the true nature of dharmas
be stopped?

Subhuti: No, Lord.

The Lord: Will the Bodhisattva

stand firm
 in the same way
 in which Suchness stands firm?

Subhuti: Yes, he will.

The Lord: Will then that Suchness
 not be in danger
 of being changed away
 from its overtowering immobility?

Subhuti: No, Lord.

The Lord: Deep is Suchness.

Subhuti: It is deep, O Lord.

The Lord: Is thought in Suchness?

Subhuti: No, Lord.

The Lord: Is thought
 [identical with] Suchness?

Subhuti: No, Lord.

The Lord: Is thought other than Suchness?

Subhuti: No, Lord.

The Lord: Can you see a Suchness?

Subhuti: No, Lord.

The Lord: One who courses like
 unto Suchness,
 he courses in the deep?

Subhuti: He courses nowhere at all.
 For any ideas

as to his own performance
habitually neither proceed in him,
nor befall him.

The Lord: Where does a Bodhisattva course
when he courses in perfect wisdom?

Subhuti: In ultimate reality.

The Lord: When coursing in ultimate reality
does he course in a sign?

Subhuti: No, Lord.

The Lord: Is then the sign to him
something which he has not undone
by meditational development?

Subhuti: No, Lord.

The Lord: Does then the sign
become to the Bodhisattva
who courses in perfect wisdom,
something which he has undone
by his meditational development?

Subhuti: That Bodhisattva
does not make any efforts,
while he courses
in the course of a Bodhisattva,
to reach in this present birth
the state in which all signs are forsaken.

If he were to reach that state
before all Buddha-dharmas
are complete in him,
he would automatically become a Disciple.

The skill in means of a Bodhisattva
consists in this,

that he cognizes that sign,
both its mark and cause,

and yet he surrenders himself
completely to the Signless [realm of dharma,
in which no sign has ever arisen].

Sariputra:
Does a Bodhisattva's perfect wisdom
increase when in his dreams
he develops the three doors to deliverance,
i.e. the Empty,
the Signless
and the Wishless?

Subhuti:
If it increases through development by day,
then it also increases
in one who dreams [about it].
For the Lord has said
that dream and waking are indiscriminate,
[essentially the same].

If a Bodhisattva
who has received perfect wisdom,
day by day courses in perfect wisdom,
then he also in his dreams
remains quite close to perfect wisdom,
and develops it even then
in abundance.

Sariputra: If someone in his dreams
does a deed,
wholesome or unwholesome,
will that be added
on to the heap
or collection of his karma?

Subhuti: In so far as the Lord has taught
that ultimately all dharmas

are like a dream,
 in so far
 [i.e. from the standpoint of ultimate reality]
 that deed will not be added
 to his heap
 or collection of karma.

But on the other hand
 [from the standpoint of empirical reality],
 that deed will be added to the heap
 and collection of his karma
 if,
 after the man has woken up,
 he thinks the dream over,
 and consciously forms the notion
 that he wants to kill someone.

How does he do that?
 During his dream he may have taken life,
 and after he has woken up,
 he thinks it over like this:
 “it is good that he was killed!
 It is right that he was killed!
 It was just that he was killed!
 It was I who killed him.”

Such thoughts are equivalent
 to the conscious notion
 that he wants to kill someone.

3. No Objective Supports and No Own-Being

Sariputra: If
 as a result
 of such conscious reflections
 the deed of that man
 is added on to his collection of karma,
 then the deed of the Buddha,
 the Lord,

when he,
 thinking to himself,
 consciously forms the notion
 that he wants to enter extinction,
 will also be added
 to the Buddha's heap
 and collection of karma?

Subhuti: No, indeed not, Sariputra.
 For the Tathagata is one
 who has forsaken all reflections
 and discriminations.

Space
 on its own
 cannot raise a deed
 or a thought
 without the help of an objective support.

A deed can arise
 only with an objective support,
 not without one.

A thought can arise
 only with an objective support,
 not without one.

Intellectual acts
 must refer to dharmas which are seen,
 heard,
 felt, or known.

In respect of some objects
 intellectual acts
 take defilement upon themselves,
 in respect of others,
 purification.

Acts of will
 and deeds

can therefore arise
only with objective support,
not without.

Sariputra: Since the Lord has described
all objective supports as isolated
[without an inherent relation to a subject],
how can an act of will
arise only with objective support,
and not without?

Subhuti: An act of will
is raised only with an objective support,
and not without,
in the sense that one treats
an actually non-existent objective support
as a sign,
as an objective support.

In fact
also the act of will is isolated,
and
also the sign.

And so are Karma-formations
which are conditioned by ignorance,
and so all the links
of conditioned co-production,
up to decay and death
conditioned by birth.

Even so
objective supports are isolated.

The act of will
is isolated from the sign
[which seems to cause it],
and
it arises only in reference
to the conventional expressions

current in the world.
 Sariputra: If in his dreams
 a Bodhisattva gives a gift,
 and dedicates it to
 full enlightenment,
 can that gift be called effectively dedicated?

Subhuti: We are face to face with Maitreya,
 the Bodhisattva,
 the great being.

The Tathagata has predicted
 his supreme enlightenment.
 He is a direct eyewitness of this matter,
 he will dispose of this matter.

Sariputra: Subhuti the Elder,
 Maitreya,
 has said:
 “There is Maitreya,
 the Bodhisattva, the great being!
 He will dispose of this matter.”
 Dispose of this matter, Venerable Ajita!

Maitreya: With reference
 to what the Venerable Subhuti has said,
 what corresponds to those words
 “Maitreya”
 and
 “he will dispose of this matter”?

Will my form reply?
 Or my feeling,
 perception,
 impulses, or consciousness?

Will my outward appearance reply,
 or my shape?

Or will the emptiness of form reply,

or
 the emptiness of feeling,
 perception,
 impulses or consciousness?

Obviously
 the emptiness of form, etc.,
 does not have the capacity to reply.

Nor do I see any dharma which could reply,
 or which should reply,
 or by which one could reply,

or any dharma
 which has been predicted
 to the supreme enlightenment.

Sariputra: Maitreya,
 have you then perhaps
 really witnessed those dharmas
 in the way in which you teach?

Maitreya: I have not.
 Even I do not know those dharmas,
 do not apprehend,
 do not see them,
 in the way in which my words express,
 and my thoughts reflect on them.

But certainly
 the body could not touch them,
 speech could not express them,
 mind could not consider them.

That is the own-being of all dharmas,
 because they are without any own-being.

Sariputra thought: Deeply wise, indeed,
 is this Bodhisattva Maitreya
 the great being.

How he expounds the perfection of wisdom
in which he has coursed
for such a long time!

The Lord: Why did that thought
occur to you?
Can you, Sariputra,
see that dharma
endowed with which
you have been made into an Arhat?

Sariputra: No, Lord.

The Lord: In the same way
it does not occur to a Bodhisattva
who courses in perfect wisdom,
that

“this dharma has been predestined
to full enlightenment,
that dharma will be predestined,
that dharma is being predestined,
that dharma will know full enlightenment.”

When he courses in such a way,
then he courses in perfect wisdom.

4. Five Places Which Inspire Fear

While he courses thus,
he is not afraid.
He is impregnated
with the strength that he has gained
[in his coursings in the baseless],
and that enables him
to persist in his endeavours
and to think:
“It is not the case
that I shall not be fully enlightened.”

If he courses thus,
then he courses in perfect wisdom.

Moreover
a Bodhisattva is not afraid
when he gets into a wilderness
infested with wild beasts.
For it is his duty to renounce everything
for the sake of all beings.

Therefore
he should react with the thought:
“If these wild beasts should devour me,
then just that will be my gift to them.
The perfection of giving
will become more perfect in me,
and I will come nearer to full enlightenment.

And after I have won full enlightenment
I will take steps
so that in my Buddha-field
there will be no animals at all,
that one will have
even no conception of them,
but that all beings in it
will live on heavenly food.”

Moreover,
a Bodhisattva should not be afraid
if he finds himself in a wilderness
infested by robbers.
For Bodhisattvas take pleasure
in the wholesome practice
of renouncing all their belongings.

A Bodhisattva
must cast away even his body,
and he must renounce
all that is necessary to life.

He should react to the danger
with the thought :

“If those beings take away from me
everything that is necessary to life,
then let that be my gift to them.

If someone should rob me of my life,
I should feel no ill will,
anger or fury on account of that.

Even against them
I should take no offensive action,
either by body,
voice or mind.

This will be an occasion
to bring the perfections of giving,
morality
and patience to greater perfection,
and I will get nearer to full enlightenment.

After I have won full enlightenment,
I will act and behave in such a manner
that in my Buddha-field
wildernesses infested with robbers
will in no way whatsoever
either be,
or even be conceivable.

And my exertions
to bring about perfect purity
in that Buddha-field
will be so great
that in it
neither these
nor other faults
will exist,
or even be conceivable.”

Furthermore,
 in a waterless waste also
 a Bodhisattva should not be afraid.
 For his character is such
 that he is not alarmed or terrified.

He should resolve that his own training
 might result in removing all thirst
 from all beings.

He should not tremble when he thinks that,
 if he dies from thirst,
 he will be reborn as a Preta.

On the contrary,
 he should direct a thought
 of great compassion unto all beings,
 and think:

“Alas,
 certainly those beings
 must be of small merit
 if
 in their world
 such deserts are conceivable.

After I have won enlightenment,
 I will see to it
 that in my Buddha-field
 no such deserts exist,
 or are even conceivable.

And I will bestow on all beings
 so much merit
 that they shall have the most excellent water.

Thus will I exert
 firm vigour on behalf of all beings,
 so that
 on that occasion also

the perfection of vigour
shall become more perfect in me.”

Furthermore,
in a foodless waste
also a Bodhisattva should not be afraid.
He should arm himself with the thought:

“I will exert firm vigour,
I will purify my own Buddha-field
in such a way that,
after I have won enlightenment,
in that Buddha-field
there will be no foodless wastes,
and none will be even conceivable.

The beings in that field
shall be entirely happy,
filled with happiness,
possessed of all happiness.

And thus will I act
that all the intentions
and plans of those beings
shall be realized.

Just as
with the Gods of the Thirty-three
an idea in their minds
is sufficient
to produce anything they desire,

so I will exert firm vigour
so that those beings
can realize and produce everything
by merely thinking of it in their minds.

In order that their legitimate intentions
should be fulfilled,
in order that all beings,

everywhere and anywhere,
 should not go short
 of the requirements of life,

I will so struggle for perfect purity
 in my own thought,
 for the sake of all beings,
 that on that occasion also
 the perfection of concentration
 will become more perfect in me.

Furthermore,
 a Bodhisattva will not be afraid
 in a district infested by epidemics.
 But he should consider,
 reflect and deliberate that

“there is no dharma here
 which sickness could oppress,
 nor is that which is called ‘sickness’
 a dharma.”

In that manner
 he should contemplate emptiness,
 and he should not be afraid.

But he should not think that

“it will be an excessively long time
 before I shall win full enlightenment,”
 and he should not tremble at such a thought.

For that thought-moment
 [which in reality has not been produced]
 is the extreme limit
 of something which has no beginning;
 in other words,
 it is the absence of a limit.

A Bodhisattva should therefore

avoid dwelling in his mind on difficulties,
and he should think that

“great and long is this limit
which has no beginning,
for it is connected
with one single thought-moment,
in other words,
it is the absence of a limit.”

This will prevent a Bodhisattva
from trembling at the thought
that it will be long
before he will win full enlightenment.

Moreover, Subhuti,
if these and other fears and terrors,
be they seen,
heard,
felt or known,
do not cause a Bodhisattva to tremble,
then one should know that

“this son or daughter of good family
is capable of knowing full enlightenment.”

A Bodhisattva should therefore
put on the great armour of the thought:

“Thus will I act,
thus will I exert firm vigour
that,
after I have won full enlightenment,
all beings in my Buddha-field
shall not suffer from sickness,
and
shall not even know what it is.

I will act in such a way
that I shall preach

what the Tathagatas have taught,
and that I will do what I have preached.

And I will so master
the perfection of wisdom,
for the sake of all beings,
that on that occasion also
the perfection of wisdom
will
in me
come to fulfillment.”

5. Prediction of the Goddess of the Ganges

Thereupon
a certain woman came to that assembly,
and sat down in it.
She rose from her seat,
put her upper robe over one shoulder,
saluted the Lord with folded hands,
and said:

‘I, O Lord,
when placed in those positions,
will not be afraid,
and,
without fear,
I shall demonstrate dharma to all beings.’

Thereupon the Lord at that time
smiled a golden smile.

Its luster irradiated endless
and boundless world systems,

it rose up to the Brahma-world,
returned from there,
circulated three times round the Lord,
and disappeared again
into the head of the Lord.

When she saw that smile,
 that woman seized golden flowers,
 and scattered them over the Lord.
 Without being fixed anywhere,
 they remained suspended in the air.

Ananda: What is the reason, O Lord,
 of this smile?
 It is not without reason
 that the Tathagatas manifest a smile.

The Lord: This Goddess of the Ganges, Ananda,
 will,
 in a future period,
 become a Tathagata,
 “Golden Flower” by name,

an Arhat,
 fully Enlightened,
 proficient in knowledge and conduct,

Well-Gone,
 a knower of the world,
 unsurpassed,

a tamer of men to be tamed,
 a teacher of Gods and men,
 a Buddha,
 a Lord.

In the starlike aeon
 he will appear in the world
 and know full enlightenment.

When she has deceased here
 she will cease to be a woman,
 she will become a man.

He will be reborn in Abhirati,
 the Buddha-field

of the Tathagata Akshobhya,
 in whose presence
 he will lead the holy life.

After his decease there
 he will pass
 from Buddha-field to Buddha-field,
 never deprived
 of the sight of the Tathagata.

He will go on passing
 from Buddha-field to Buddha-field,
 from here to there,
 always choosing those in which
 he is not without the Buddhas,
 the Lords.

A universal monarch
 can pass from palace to palace,
 and the soles of his feet never,
 during his entire life,
 tread upon the surface of the earth,
 and he dies without ever,
 up to the time of his death,
 having trodden
 with his feet on the ground.

Just so
 the Ganges Goddess will pass
 from Buddha-field to Buddha-field,
 and she will never
 at any time
 be deprived of the Buddhas and Lords,
 until the time of her full enlightenment.

Ananda thought: Those Bodhisattvas
 who will be
 with the Tathagata Akshobhya
 must actually be considered
 as the congregation of the Tathagata.

The Lord read Ananda's thoughts, and said:
 So it is, Ananda.
 Those Bodhisattvas
 who lead the holy life
 in the Buddha-field of Akshobhya,
 the Tathagata,
 should be known
 as having emerged from the mud,
 as having approached
 to the accomplishment of enlightenment.

In addition, Ananda,
 the community of the disciples
 of the Tathagata "Golden Flower"
 will not be bound by any measure.

For his disciples will be so many
 that there will be no measure to them.
 They will,
 on the contrary,
 have to be styled
 "immeasurable,
 incalculable."

In addition, Ananda,
 at that time,
 on that occasion
 there will be in that Buddha-field
 no wildernesses infested with wild beasts,
 or with robbers,
 and no waterless wastes,
 and no districts infested by epidemics
 and no foodless wastes.

All these,
 and all other disagreeable places
 will in that Buddha-field,
 in no way whatsoever either be,
 or be conceived.

It is quite certain that,
 after the Tathagata “Golden Flower”
 has known full enlightenment,
 all these kinds of places
 which inspire fear and terror
 will then no longer exist,
 or
 be even conceivable.

Ananda: Who was the Tathagata
 in whose presence
 this Goddess of the Ganges
 has planted the wholesome root
 of the first thought of enlightenment,
 and turned it over
 to supreme enlightenment?

The Lord: That was under
 the Tathagata Dipankara.
 And she actually scattered golden flowers over the Tathagata
 when she requested of him
 [the prediction to]
 the supreme enlightenment.

It was when I strewed
 the five lotus flowers over Dipankara,
 the Tathagata,
 and I acquired
 the patience acceptance of dharmas
 which fail to be produced,
 and then Dipankara predicted
 my future enlightenment
 with the words:

“You,
 young man,
 will in a future period
 become a Tathagata,
 Shakyamuni by name!”

Thereupon,
when she had heard my prediction,
that Goddess produced a thought
to the effect that:

“Oh, certainly,
like that young man
I also
would like to be predicted
to full enlightenment!”

And in that way, Ananda,
in the presence of the Tathagata
Dipankara,
that Goddess
planted the wholesome root
of the first thought of enlightenment,
[and turned it over
to] full enlightenment.

Ananda: Certainly,
as one
who has made the necessary preparations,
as one
who has made the grade
has this Goddess of the Ganges
been predicted to full enlightenment.

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

Chapter XX Discussion of Skill in Means

1. Emptiness and Reality Limit

Subhuti: How should a Bodhisattva,
 who courses in perfect wisdom,
 achieve the complete conquest of emptiness, or
 how should he enter into
 the concentration on emptiness?

The Lord: He should contemplate form, etc., as empty.
 But he should contemplate that
 with an undisturbed series of thoughts
 in such a way that,
 when
 he contemplates the fact
 that “form, etc., is empty,”
 he does not regard
 that true nature of dharmas
 [i.e. emptiness]
 as something which,
 as a result of its own true nature
 [i.e. emptiness]
 is a real entity.

But when he does not regard
 that true nature of dharmas as a real thing,
 then he cannot realise the reality-limit.

Subhuti: With reference to the Lord
 having said that
 “a Bodhisattva
 should not realise emptiness,”
 how does a Bodhisattva
 who has stood [firmly
 in the repeated practice of]
 this concentration [on emptiness]
 not realize emptiness?

The Lord: It is because a Bodhisattva contemplates that emptiness

which is possessed of the best of all modes
[i.e. of the six perfections].

He does, however,
not contemplate that
“I shall realize,”

or
“I should realize,”

but he contemplates that
“this is the time for complete conquest,
and not for realization.”

Without losing himself in the concentration,
he ties his thought to an objective support
[for his compassion]
and he determines
that he will take hold of perfect wisdom
[which is essentially skill in means],
and that he will not realize [emptiness,
because its realization is not the final goal]

Meanwhile, however,
the Bodhisattva does not lose the dharmas
which act as the wings to enlightenment.

He does not effect
the extinction of the outflows
[which would prevent renewed rebirths],
but over that also
he achieves complete conquest.

At the time
when a Bodhisattva dwells
in the concentration on emptiness –
which is one of the doors to deliverance –
he should also dwell
in the concentration on the Signless,
but without realizing the Signless.

For,
 endowed with the dharma
 of the wholesome root
 which has thus come about,
 he contemplates that
 “this is the time for nurturing beings,
 and not for realization.”

Taken hold of by perfect wisdom
 he does not realize the reality limit.

2. Three Similes

The Lord: Suppose, Subhuti,
 that there were a most excellent hero,
 very vigorous,
 of high social position,
 handsome,
 attractive and most fair to behold,

of many virtues,
 in possession of all the finest virtues,
 of those virtues which spring
 from the very height of sovereignty, morality,
 learning,
 renunciation and so on.

He is judicious,
 able to express himself,
 to formulate his views clearly,
 to substantiate his claims;
 one who always knows the suitable time,
 place and situation for everything.

In archery
 he has gone as far as one can go,
 he is successful in warding off
 all manner of attack,
 most skilled in all arts,
 and foremost,

through his fine achievements,
in all crafts.

He has a good memory,
is intelligent,
clever,

steady and prudent,
versed in all the treatises,
has many friends,
is wealthy,

strong of body,
with large limbs,
with all his faculties complete,
generous to all,
dear and pleasant to many.

Any work he might undertake
he manages to complete,
he speaks methodically,

shares his great riches with the many,
honours what should be honoured,
reveres what should be revered,
worships what should be worshipped.

Would such a person, Subhuti,
feel ever increasing joy and zest?

Subhuti: He would, O Lord.

The Lord: Now suppose, further,
that this person,
so greatly accomplished,
should have taken his family with him
on a journey,
his mother and father,
his sons and daughters.

By some circumstances,
 they find themselves in a great,
 wild forest.
 The foolish ones among them
 would feel fright,
 terror and hair-raising fear.
 He, however,
 would fearlessly say to his family:
 “Do not be afraid!
 I shall soon take you safely
 and securely
 out of this terrible and frightening forest.
 I shall soon set you free!”

If then more and more hostile
 and inimical forces
 should rise up against him in that forest,
 would this heroic man
 decide to abandon his family,
 and to take himself alone
 out of that terrible and frightening forest

he who is not one to draw back,
 who is endowed
 with all the force
 of firmness and vigour,

who is wise,
 exceedingly tender and compassionate,
 courageous
 and a master of many resources?

Subhuti: No, O Lord.
 For that person,
 who does not abandon his family,
 has at his disposal powerful resources,
 both within and without.

On his side
 forces will arise in that wild forest

which are quite a match
for the hostile and inimical forces,
and they will stand up for him
and protect him.

Those enemies and adversaries of his,
who look for a weak spot,
who seek for a weak spot,
will not gain any hold over him.

He is competent to deal with the situation,
and is able,
unhurt and uninjured,
soon to take out of that forest
both his family and himself,

and securely and safely
they will reach a village,
city or market-town.

The Lord: Just so, Subhuti,
is it with a Bodhisattva
who is full of pity
and concerned with the welfare of all beings,
who dwells in friendliness,
compassion,
sympathetic joy and impartiality,

who has been taken hold of
by skill in means and perfect wisdom,

who has correctly turned over
his wholesome roots,
employing the kind of transformation
which has the Buddha's sanction.

Although he enters into the concentrations
which are the doors to deliverance,
i.e. the concentrations on emptiness,

the signless and the wishless,

he nevertheless just does not realise
the reality-limit,
i.e. neither on the level of Disciple,
nor on that of a Pratyekabuddha.

For he has at his disposal
very strong and powerful helpers,
in perfect wisdom and skill in means.

Since he has not abandoned all beings,
he is thus able to win full enlightenment,
safely and securely.

At the time when a Bodhisattva
has made all beings
into an objective support
for his thought of friendliness,
and
with the highest friendliness
ties himself to them,

at that time
he rises above the factiousness
of the defilements
and of Mara,
he rises above the level of Disciple
and Pratyekabuddha,
and he abides in that concentration
[on friendliness].

But he is not one who has attained
the extinction of the outflows,
he achieves a complete conquest
of emptiness,
which [in his case]
is endowed with the highest perfections.

At the time when a Bodhisattva
dwells in the concentration on emptiness,
which is one door to freedom,
at that time he does not dwell
in the concentration on the Signless,
nor does he realise the concentration
on the Signless.

It is just like a bird
who
on its wings
courses in the air.
It neither falls unto the ground,
nor does it stand anywhere on any support.

It dwells in space,
just in the air,
without being either supported
or settled therein.

Just so
a Bodhisattva dwells
in the dwelling of emptiness,
achieves complete conquest over emptiness.

Just so
he dwells in the dwelling of the Signless
and Wishless,
and achieves complete conquest
over the Signless and Wishless.

But he does not fall into emptiness,
or into the Signless,
or into the Wishless,
with his Buddha-dharmas remaining incomplete.

It is
as with a master of archery,
strong,
well-trained,

perfectly trained in archery.
 He first would shoot one arrow upwards.
 He would then send after that
 another arrow
 which would check the fall of the first.

By a regular succession of arrows
 he would not permit that first arrow
 to fall to the ground,
 and
 that arrow would be kept up in the air
 until he should decide
 that it should fall to the ground.

In the same way
 a Bodhisattva
 who courses in perfect wisdom
 and who is upheld by skill in means,
 does not realise that farthest reality-limit
 until his wholesome roots are matured,
 well matured in full enlightenment.

Only when his wholesome roots
 are matured,
 well matured in full enlightenment,
 only then
 does he realise that farthest reality-limit.

A Bodhisattva
 who courses in perfect wisdom,
 who develops perfect wisdom,
 should therefore contemplate
 and meditate
 on the deep true nature of those dharmas,
 but he should not realise it.

3. Doors to Deliverance and Vows About Beings

Subhuti: A doer of what is hard
 is the Bodhisattva,

a doer of what is most hard,
 if he courses and dwells in emptiness,
 if he enters into
 the concentration on emptiness,
 and yet
 does not realise the reality-limit!

Exceedingly wonderful is this,
 O Well-Gone!

The Lord: So it is, Subhuti.
 For the Bodhisattva has not abandoned
 all beings.
 He has made the special vows
 to set free all those beings.

If the mind of a Bodhisattva
 forms the aspiration
 not to abandon all beings
 but to set them free,

and if
 in addition
 he aspires for the concentration
 on emptiness,
 the Signless,
 the Wishless,
 i.e. for the three doors of deliverance,

then that Bodhisattva should be known
 as one who is endowed with skill in means,
 and he will not realise the reality-limit midway,
 before his Buddha-dharmas
 have become complete.

For it is this skill means which protects him.
 His thought of enlightenment
 consists in just that fact
 that he does not want
 to leave all beings behind.

When he is thus endowed
with the thought of enlightenment
and with skill in means,
then he does not midway
realise the reality-limit.

Moreover,
while a Bodhisattva either actually
contemplates those deep stations,
i.e., the three doors to deliverance,

or becomes desirous of contemplating them,
he should
in his mind
form the following aspiration:

“For a long time those beings,
because they have the notion of existence,
course in the apprehension of basis.
After I have won full enlightenment
I shall demonstrate dharma to those beings
so that they may forsake
the erroneous views about a basis.”

As a free agent
he then enters into the concentration
on emptiness,
on the Signless,
on the Wishless.

A Bodhisattva who is thus endowed
with this thought of enlightenment
and with skill in means
does not midway
realise the reality-limit.

On the contrary,
he does not lose his
concentration on friendliness,

compassion,
sympathetic joy
and impartiality.

For,
upheld by skill in means,
he increases his pure dharmas
more and more.

His faith, etc.,
becomes keener and keener,
and he acquires the powers,
the limbs of enlightenment,
and the path.

Moreover,
a Bodhisattva reflects that

“for a long time those beings,
because they perceive dharmas,
course in the apprehension of a basis,”

and he develops this aspiration
as he did the former one,
entering the concentration on emptiness.

Furthermore,
he reflects that by perceiving a sign,
those beings have,
for a long time,
coursed in the sign,
and he deals with this aspiration as before,
entering the concentration on the Signless.

Furthermore,
a Bodhisattva reflects:

“For a long time
have these beings been perverted
by the perceptions of permanence,

of happiness,
of the self,
of loveliness.

I will act in such a way that,
after my full enlightenment,
I shall demonstrate dharma
in order that they may forsake
the perverted views
of the perception of permanence,
of happiness,
of the self,
of loveliness,

and
in order that they may learn that
'impermanent is all this, not permanent;
ill is all this, not happiness;
without self is all this, not with a self;
repulsive is all this, not lovely.'

“Endowed with this thought of enlightenment,
and with the previously described
skill in means,
taken hold of by perfect wisdom,
he does not realize the reality-limit midway,
before all his Buddha-dharma are complete.

He dwells thus,
and he has entered on the concentration
on the Wishless,
but he does not lose his concentration
on friendliness, etc.

For,
upheld by skill in means,
he increases more and more
his pure dharmas.

His faith, etc.,

becomes keener and keener,
and he acquires the powers,
the limbs of enlightenment,
and the path.

If a Bodhisattva raises
the following thought:

“These beings also
have for a long time
been in the habit of coursing
in the apprehension of a basis,
and even just now they do so.

They have
for a long time
been in the habit
of coursing in the apprehension of a basis,
and even just now they do so.

They have for a long time
been in the habit
of coursing in the perception of signs,

in perverted views,
in perceptions of material objects,
in perceptions of unreal objects,
in wrong views,
and even now they continue to do so.

Thus will I act that these faults
in each and every way
may cease to be in them,
that they will be inconceivable in them”;

If a Bodhisattva brings all beings to mind
in such a way,
if he is endowed with this recollection
of all beings,
with this production of thought,

and with skill in means,
if he is taken hold of by perfect wisdom,

and if,
endowed with all these qualities,
he thus contemplates the true nature
of those deep dharmas
-through their emptiness,
or Signlessness,
or Wishlessness,

or through their being unaffected,
unproduced,
without birth,
without any positivity

then it is quite impossible
that such a Bodhisattva,
who is endowed with such a cognition,
could either fall into the Uneffected,
or become intimate
with what belongs to the triple world.
That cannot possibly be.

4. Irreversibility

Suppose that a Bodhisattva
is asked by another Bodhisattva
who wants to win full enlightenment:

“Over which dharmas
should one achieve complete conquest?

What kind of aspiration
should one form in one’s mind,
aspirations which enable a Bodhisattva
not to realise emptiness,
or the Signless,
or the Wishless,

or the Uneffected,

or non-production,
or non-positivity,

but to go on
developing the perfection of wisdom?”

If the Bodhisattva answers
that just emptiness should be attended to,
just the Signless,
just the Wishless,

just the Uneffected,
just non-production,
just no-birth,
just non-positivity,

and if he should not make manifest
this production
of the thought
of the non-abandonment of all beings,

or if he should not include skill in means
in his answer,
then one must know that this Bodhisattva has not
in irreversibility
been predicted to full enlightenment
by the Tathagatas of the past.

For he does not indicate this special dharma
of an irreversible Bodhisattva
[i.e. the non-abandonment of all beings],

does not make much of it,
does not make it manifest,

does not wisely know it,
does not include it in his answer,

and he does not induce others
to enter into that stage
[of skill in means]
which is the true stage
of an irreversible Bodhisattva.

Subhuti: And how can a Bodhisattva,
in regard to this question,
be regarded as irreversible?

The Lord: He should be known
as an irreversible Bodhisattva if,
whether he has heard
this perfection of wisdom or not,
he hits upon the correct answer.

Subhuti: There are many
who course towards enlightenment,
but a few only
could give the correct answer.

The Lord: Because few only
are the Bodhisattvas
who have been predicted
to the irreversible stage
on which this cognition becomes possible.

But those who have been predestined for it,
they will give the correct answer.
One can be sure
that they have planted
splendid wholesome roots in the past,
and the whole world,
with its Gods,
men and Asuras,
cannot overwhelm them.

5. Dream Experiences and the Mark of Irreversibility

Furthermore,
 if a Bodhisattva
 even in his dreams
 beholds that
 “all dharmas are like a dream,”
 but does not realize
 [that experience, regarding it as final]
 then also
 that should be known
 as the irreversible mark
 of an irreversible Bodhisattva.

It is another mark,
 if even in his dreams,
 neither the level of Disciple
 or Pratyekabuddha,
 nor anything that belongs to the triple world,
 becomes an object of his longing,
 or appears advantageous to him.

It is another mark,
 if even in his dreams,
 he sees himself as a Tathagata,
 in the middle of an assembly
 of many hundreds of thousands
 of niyutas of kotis of persons,

seated in a circular hall with a peaked roof,
 surrounded by a community of monks,
 revered by the community of Bodhisattvas, demonstrating dharma.

It is another mark,
 if,
 even in his dreams,
 he rises into the air
 and demonstrates dharma to beings,

if he perceives the halo round the Buddha,

if he conjures up monks
 who go into the different directions
 to fulfil the functions of Buddhas
 in other world systems
 and demonstrate dharma there.

Even when he dreams
 he has such perceptions.

It is another mark if,
 when he dreams,
 he remains unafraid

when a village,
 town,
 city, or kingdom is sacked;

or
 when he sees
 a huge conflagration spreading;
 or when he sees wild beasts
 or other offensive animals;

or when his head is about to be cut off,
 or when he is subjected
 to other great fears and terrors,
 and when he sees the fears and terrors
 to which other beings are subjected.

In no case
 do fear and terror arise in him,
 and he remains unafraid.

And immediately after he has woken up from his dream,
 he reflects that
 “like a dream is all this
 which belongs to the triple world.

And in that sense
 should I demonstrate dharmas

after I have won enlightenment,
as one who demonstrates dharma correctly.”

It is again another mark of irreversibility
if a Bodhisattva,
on seeing in his dreams
the beings that are in the hells,
reflects that

“Thus will I act
that in my Buddha-field,
after I have won full enlightenment,
there shall be no states of woe at all!”

This also should be known
as a mark which shows
that an irreversible Bodhisattva
has become so pure
that he can never again be reborn
[against his will]
in the states of woe.

And how could one know
that there would be no states of woe
in the Buddha-field of that Bodhisattva?

If a Bodhisattva,
on seeing in his dreams
the beings reborn in the hells,

as animals,
or as Pretas,

sets up mindfulness
and determines to bring about
a Buddha-field
without such states of woe,
then that should be known
as the mark which shows
that he has become so pure

that he can never again be reborn
in the states of woe.

Furthermore,
a Bodhisattva may dream
[a prophetic dream]
to the effect that a town
or village is on fire.

After he has woken up,
he considers thus:
“I have the attributes, tokens
and signs which I have seen,
in my dreams,
as the attributes,
tokens and sign
by which an irreversible Bodhisattva
should be borne in mind.

Because of this Truth,
because of my utterance of this Truth,
let this town fire or village fire,
which is taking place there,
be appeased,
cooled,
extinguished.”

If that fire is then extinguished,
one should know that that Bodhisattva
has been predicted to full enlightenment
by the Tathagatas in the past;

if it is not extinguished,
one should know
that he has not been so predicted.

If again, Subhuti,
instead of being appeased,
this conflagration passes beyond all bounds
and spreads from house to house,

from road to road,
 then one should know
 that this Bodhisattva
 has in the past
 collected karma consisting
 in the refusal of dharma,
 conducive to weakness in wisdom.

From that results the karma of his
 which led him to this experience
 in his present life
 [i.e. to his distress
 at being unable to control that fire],
 which is just a result of karma
 left over from his refusal of dharma
 [in the past].

For,
 as you know,
 a Bodhisattva's past lives
 condition the [absence
 or presence
 of the] mark of irreversibility
 later on.

A Bodhisattva who succeeds
 in controlling the fire
 should,
 on the other hand,
 be borne in mind as irreversible
 from full enlightenment.

6. Irreversibility and the Magical Power of Veracity

And once more, Subhuti,
 I will demonstrate the attributes,
 tokens and signs
 by which an irreversible Bodhisattva
 should be borne in mind.
 Listen well and attentively.

I will teach you.

Subhuti: So be it, O Lord.

The Lord: If a person,
man or woman,
boy or girl,
were seized or possessed by a ghost,
then a Bodhisattva,
who has come across him,
should perform the Act of Truth,
and say:

“If it is true that I have been predicted
to full enlightenment
by the Tathagatas of the past,
and

if it is true
that my
intention to win full enlightenment
is perfectly pure,
to the extent that I want to win
full enlightenment
and that my attention to it
is perfectly pure,
to that extent
I have left behind the thoughts
of Disciples and Pratyekabuddhas.

It is my duty to win full enlightenment.
Not shall I not win full enlightenment!
But I shall win just full enlightenment!

There is nothing that the Buddhas and Lords
who reside in countless world systems
have not cognized,
seen,
felt and fully known.

Those Buddhas and Lords
know my earnest intention
that also
I want to win full enlightenment.

Because this is the truth,
because this is an utterance of the Truth,
may he depart
who seized and possessed that person
with his ghostly seizure!”

If,
as a result of these words of the Bodhisattva
that ghost does not depart,
one should know
that the Bodhisattva
has not had his prediction;
but if he departs
one should know
that he has had his prediction
to full enlightenment.

Chapter XXI Mara's Deeds

1. Pride and the Magical Power of Veracity

The Bodhisattva,
as we saw,
has said:

“I have been predicted
to full enlightenment
by the Tathagatas of the past.
Because that is the Truth,
because of my utterance of that Truth,
let that ghost depart!”

Mara,
in his turn tries, at that time,
to induce the ghost to depart.
And his efforts will be particularly strong
and energetic
when he has to deal with a Bodhisattva
who has but recently set out in the vehicle.

It will then be the magical power of Mara
which has driven the ghost away.

But the Bodhisattva thinks
that it was his might
which drove him away,
and he does not know
that it was Mara's might.
He will then slacken in his efforts.

But as a result of his
[apparent] victory
over the ghost
he thinks that he has had his prediction
in the past,
and he despises other Bodhisattvas,
sneers at them,

ironically compliments,
contemns and deprecates them.

His pride will go on increasing,
will become quite firm and rigid.
That pride,
arrogance,
hauteur,
false pride,
conceit

keep him away from all-knowledge,
from the supreme cognition of a Buddha,

from the cognition of the Self-Existent,
from the cognition of all knowing,

from the cognition of the all-knowing,
from supreme enlightenment.

When he meets with Bodhisattvas
who could be his good friends,
virtuous in character,

resolutely intent on the sublime,
earnestly intent,

skilled in means,
endowed with the irreversible dharma,

in his conceit
he despises them,
does not tend,
love and honour them.

So he will tighten the bond of Mara
still further.

One would expect him to belong
to one of the two levels,

either that of a Disciple,
or that of a Pratyekabuddha.

In this way,
in connection with the magical power
of the enunciation of a Truth,
Mara
the Evil One
may cause an obstacle to full enlightenment in a Bodhisattva
who has but recently set out in the vehicle,

who has little faith,
has learned little,
lacks in the good friend,
is not upheld by perfect wisdom,
and lacks in skill in means.

This also should be known
as Mara's deed to a Bodhisattva.

2. Pride in Connection with the Annunciation of the Name

Moreover, Subhuti,
the deeds of Mara will operate also
in connection with the annunciation
of a Bodhisattva's name.

And how?
Mara uses even
the annunciation of the name,
and of the other details connected with it,
to tempt a Bodhisattva.
He comes to him in all kinds of disguises,
and says to him:

“You have had your prediction
from the Tathagatas in the past.
The proof is that
this is the name you will have as a Buddha,
and these are the names of your mother,

your father,
your brother,
your sister,
your friends,
maternal relatives,
kinsmen and relations.”

He proclaims these names backwards
through seven generations.

He tells you
that you were born in this region,
this country,
this village,
town or marketplace.

If you have any particular quality,
he will tell you
that you have had that same quality
also in the past.

Whether the Bodhisattva
be dull by nature,
or keen in his faculties,
Mara will tell him
that he was the same in the past.

Or take other qualities
which he has in this present life:

He is, say,
a forest dweller,
or one who begs for his food
from door to door
without accepting invitations,
or he wears clothes
made of rags
taken from a dust heap,
or never eats any food after midday

or he eats his meal in one sitting,
 or he sleeps at night
 wherever he may happen to be,
 or he possesses no more than three robes,
 or he lives in and frequents cemeteries,

or he dwells at the foot of a tree,
 or
 even in his sleep
 he remains in a sitting posture,

or he lives in an open, unsheltered place,
 or
 he wears a garment made of felt,

or he has few wishes,
 is easily contented,
 detached,
 frugal,
 soft in speech,
 or a man of few words,

-in each case
 Mara will announce to him
 that also in the past
 he has been endowed
 with this same quality,

and that for certain
 the Tathagatas of the past
 must have predicted him
 to full enlightenment
 and to the stage
 of an irreversible Bodhisattva,

for he now has
 the just mentioned qualities
 of an austere ascetic,
 and he must therefore
 in all certainty

also have been endowed with them
in the past.

It may be that then
a Bodhisattva feels conceit
when he thinks
of the annunciation of his names
and circumstances in the past,
and of his present austere penances
as a rigid ascetic.

He may actually think
that he has had his prediction in the past
because now he has those qualities
of a rigid ascetic.

And Mara will confirm him in this view.

In the guise of a monk,
or nun,
or lay brother,
or lay sister,

or Brahmin,
or householder,
or mother,
father,
brother,
sister,
friend or relative

Mara will come to the Bodhisattva
and tell him
that he has had his prediction in the past
to full enlightenment
and to the irreversible stage of a Bodhisattva
for the simple reason
that now he has those qualities
of a rigid ascetic,
which,

according to him,
are the qualities
of an irreversible Bodhisattva.

But the Bodhisattva
has not got the attributes,
tokens and signs
of an irreversible Bodhisattva
which I have described.

He is surely a man beset by Mara,
unlike those other Bodhisattvas
[who could be his good friends].

For he has not got the attributes,
tokens and signs
which are actually characteristic
of an irreversible Bodhisattva.

And as a result
of the annunciation
of the circumstances of his past
he feels conceit.

In his conceit,
overcome by great and rigid conceit,
defeated by the magical power of Mara,
he despises his fellow-Bodhisattvas
sneers at them
and deprecates them.

One should recognize this
as a deed of Mara,
who makes uses
of the annunciation
of the past circumstances of a Bodhisattva.

Furthermore, Subhuti,
Mara also operates
in connection with the prediction

of the name
 which a Bodhisattva will have
 as a Buddha.

In the guise of a monk
 he comes to a Bodhisattva
 and predicts to him that

“this will be your name
 when you have won full enlightenment.”

And Mara
 will predict that name
 which the Bodhisattva
 had already guessed for himself
 when he had pondered over the name
 he would bear
 after his full enlightenment.

If the Bodhisattva is weak in wisdom,
 and without skill in means,
 he reflects
 that the name which that monk
 has mentioned
 is the same
 which he had guessed himself.

He compares the name
 which he has thought out by himself
 with the name proclaimed by that monk,
 who is either beset by Mara,
 or was conjured up by Mara
 or his host,
 he finds that the two agree,

and he concludes
 that he has in the past
 been predicted to full enlightenment
 by the Tathagatas by name.

But he has not got the attributes,
tokens and signs
of an irreversible Bodhisattva
which I have described.

Since he lacks in them,
he feels conceit
as a result of that prediction of his name.

In his conceit
he despises his fellow Bodhisattvas,
and thinks that,
while he has had his prediction,
they have not had it.

That pride,
arrogance and conceit
which makes him despise
those other Bodhisattvas
keep him far away from all-knowledge
and the cognition of a Buddha.

Not upheld by perfect wisdom,
lacking in skill in means
and the good friend,
taken hold of by the bad friend,
he would,
we must expect,
belong to one of the two levels,
that of a Disciple,
or that of a Pratyekabuddha.

But even if,
after he has spent a long time,
a good long time
in erring about
and in wandering about
[in birth and death],
he would again become one
who wants to know full enlightenment

by resorting to just this
perfection of wisdom;

and
if he were to go to the good friends
and regularly approach them;

and if,
in his newfound outlook on life
he would,
first of all,
censure his former ideas,
vomit them up,
abhor them,
throw them back,
see their error,
- even then
it will be hard for him
to get to the Buddha-level.

So serious is the offense of conceitedness.

Among the monks who belong
to the vehicle
or level of the Disciples,
four unforgivable offences
are so serious that,
if someone has been guilty of one of them,
he ceases to be a monk,
a Shramana,
a son of the Shakya.

More serious than those four
unforgivable offences
is this production of a proud thought,
when,
on the occasion
of the prediction of his name,
a Bodhisattva has despised
other Bodhisattvas,

and produced a thought
 which is very unwholesome,
 which is more serious
 than the four unforgivable offences.

Not only that,
 but it is more serious even
 than the five deadly sins,
 this production of a thought
 connected with pride,
 produced on the occasion
 when a Bodhisattva's future name
 [as a Buddha]
 is announced.

That thought is more serious
 even than the five deadly sins.

In this way,
 even through the annunciation
 of a Bodhisattva's name
 very subtle deeds of Mara may arise.

They should be recognized
 for what they are, and avoided,
 both by the Bodhisattva himself,
 and by others.

3. Faults in Connection with Detachment

Furthermore,
 Mara
 the Evil One
 may come to the Bodhisattva
 and exhort and inform him
 in connection with the quality of detachment
 that

the Tathagata has praised detachment,
and that
that means

that one should dwell in the remote forest,
in a jungle,
in mountain clefts,
burial grounds,
or on heaps of straw, etc.

But that is not what I teach
as the detachment of a Bodhisattva,
that he should live in a forest,
remote,
lonely and isolated,

or in jungle,
mountain clefts,
burial grounds,
on heaps of straw, etc.

Subhuti: If that is not
the detachment of the Bodhisattva,
what then is it?

The Lord: A Bodhisattva dwells detached
when he becomes detached
from the mental activities
associated with the Disciples
and Pratyekabuddhas.

For,
if he is taken hold of
by perfection of wisdom and skill in means,
and if he dwells
in the dwelling of friendliness
and of great compassion towards all beings,
then he dwells detached
even when he dwells
in the neighborhood of a village.

It is I who have ordained this detachment
 from the mental activities
 associated with the Disciples
 and Pratyekabuddhas.

A Bodhisattva dwells detached
 if he passes day and night
 dwelling in this detachment.

If a Bodhisattva dwells in this dwelling
 while he lives in remote dwelling places,
 in the remote forest,
 in the jungle,
 in mountain clefts and burial grounds,
 then he dwells detached.

But
 as to the detachment
 recommended by Mara,
 the Evil One,
 -i.e.
 the dwelling in remote forests,
 jungles,
 mountain clefts and burial grounds,

-if that detachment is actually contaminated by the mental activities
 associated with Disciples
 and Pratyekabuddhas,

then,
 as he does not practice the perfection of wisdom,
 he does not fulfill the conditions necessary
 to win all-knowledge.

He dwells in a contaminated dwelling,
 in a mental activity
 which is not quite pure.
 And,
 in consequence,

his deeds of body,
voice, and mind,
cannot be quite pure.

In consequence of that
he despises other Bodhisattvas
who dwell in villages,
but who are uncontaminated
by mental activities
associated with Disciples
and Pratyekabuddhas,

who dwell in the dwelling of wisdom
with its many devices,
and with its great compassion.

Since his deeds of body,
voice and mind
are not quite pure,
he is just a dweller in contamination,
not a dweller in detachment,
although he may dwell in the remote forest.

At first
he despises those
who live in the neighborhood of a village,
though they dwell
in the dwelling of wisdom,
with its devices and great compassion,
though they are habitually
quite pure in what they do
with their body, voice or mind,

though they are detached
from mental activities
associated with Disciples
and Pratyekabuddhas,
uncontaminated by them;

after that

he finds that they cannot gain the Trances,
 Concentrations,
 Attainments,
 Emancipations and Super-knowledges,
 and that they do not reach
 their fulfillment in him.

The reason
 is that he is without skill in means.

Even though a Bodhisattva
 may dwell in deserted forests
 hundreds of miles wide,
 with no other company
 than beasts of prey, antelopes,
 flocks of birds,

uninfested even by the smaller wild animals,
 by Yakshas and Rakshasas,
 and untroubled by the fear of robbers,

and even though he may settle there
 for one year,
 or for one hundred years,
 or even for hundreds of thousands
 of niyutas of kotis of years,
 or for more than that;

if he does not know the detachment
 which I have explained,
 and
 through which
 a Bodhisattva dwells
 as one who has set out
 with earnest intention,
 who has achieved earnest intention;

then even one
 completely devoted
 to life in the remote forest

fails to gladden my heart,
 if he does not know this [detachment],
 if he is without skill in means,
 if he leans of that detachment of his,
 clings to it,
 is bent on it,
 indulges in it.

For the detachment of a Bodhisattva
 which I have described
 does not appear in his detachment.

But from a place high up in the air
 Mara will say
 to the dweller in the remote forest
 that he does well,
 that his detachment
 is the one
 which the Tathagata has described,

that he should go on dwelling
 in just this detachment,
 and that
 in consequence of it
 he will quickly win full enlightenment.

When he leaves that isolated place
 in the forest,
 and comes back to a village,
 he despises the Bodhisattvas there,

monks who are well behaved,
 chaste,
 lovely in character,
 uncontaminated by mental activities
 associated with Disciples
 and Pratyekabuddhas,
 and living lives quite pure,
 in body,
 voice and mind.

He tells them
 that they surely do not dwell
 in a detached dwelling,
 but in a contaminated
 and crowded one.

Those Bodhisattvas there,
 who dwell in a detached dwelling,
 he warns against contaminated
 and crowded dwellings.

He tries to commit them
 to a detached dwelling
 [as he conceives it].

He claims their respect
 for his isolated residence,
 he becomes proud,
 and tells them:

“Superhuman beings have exhorted me,
 superhuman beings
 have come to inform me!

This [isolated place in the forest],
 Subhuti,
 is the dwelling
 in which I dwell.

What dweller in a village
 has ever been exhorted
 and informed by superhuman beings?”

In this kind of way
 he despises the persons
 who belong
 to the vehicle of the Bodhisattva.

He should be known

as a Candala of a Bodhisattva,
 as a defamer of Bodhisattvas,
 as a mere fake of a Bodhisattva,
 as a counterfeit Bodhisattva,
 as filth of a Bodhisattva,

as a robber in the guise of a Shramana,
 a robber of persons
 belonging to the vehicle of the Bodhisattvas,
 a robber of the world
 with its Gods.

Such a one
 should surely not be tended,
 loved or honoured.

For such persons have fallen into conceit.

They will even succeed
 in corrupting other kindred spirits, weaklings
 who have but recently set out in the vehicle.

They should be regarded
 as impure by nature,
 as devoid of proper teachers,
 devoid of the qualities of holiness.

But a Bodhisattva
 should not tend such persons,
 nor love or honour them,
 if he is one
 who has neither abandoned all beings,
 nor all-knowledge
 nor full enlightenment,

if he wants earnestly
 to win full enlightenment,
 and to bring about
 the weal of all beings.

On the contrary,
 one who has raised himself to a height
 where he considers the weal of all beings,
 should,
 so that he may see through these
 and other deeds of Mara,
 always have a mind
 which is anxious to expound
 the path to beings
 who have not yet got it,

a mind which does not tremble
 and which is not submerged
 in the wanderings through the triple world;

he has
 first of all
 an attitude of friendliness,
 and an attitude of compassion,
 he has produced the great compassion
 and is moved by pity,

he has a thought of joy
 in sympathy with the beings
 who progress in the right direction,

he is impartial
 because the true nature of dharmas
 is such that it cannot be apprehended;

[with all this in mind]
 he should form the resolution:

“Thus will I act
 that in the future
 all the faults of Mara’s deeds
 shall in no way whatsoever
 either be,
 or be produced;

or,
if produced,
that they shall at once
pass away again.

Thus will I train myself!”

This should also be known
as a Bodhisattva’s courageous advance
towards his own higher knowledge.

So much
for what a Bodhisattva should know
about Mara’s deeds
in connection
with the quality of detachment.

Chapter XXII The Good Friend

1. The Good Friends

A Bodhisattva
 who has set out with earnest intention
 and wants to win full enlightenment
 should
 from the very beginning tend,
 love and honour the good friends.

Subhuti: Who are those good friends
 of a Bodhisattva?

The Lord: The Buddhas and Lords,
 and also the irreversible Bodhisattvas
 who are skilful in the Bodhisattva-course,
 and who instruct
 and admonish him in the perfections,
 who demonstrate
 and expound the perfection of wisdom.

The perfection of wisdom in particular
 should be regarded
 as a Bodhisattva's good friend.

All the six perfections,
 in fact,
 are the good friends of a Bodhisattva.

They are his Teacher,
 his path,
 his light,

his torch,
 his illumination,
 his shelter,

his refuge,

his place of rest,
his final relief,

his island,
his mother,
his father,

and they lead him to cognition,
to understanding,
to full enlightenment.

For it is in these perfections
that the perfection of wisdom
is accomplished.

Simply from the six perfections
has come forth the all-knowledge
of the Tathagatas
who,
in the past period,
have won full enlightenment
and then entered Nirvana.

And so has the all-knowledge
of the Tathagatas who in a future period
will win enlightenment,

and the Tathagatas who just now
reside in incalculable,
immeasurable,
infinite,
inconceivable world systems.

I also, Subhuti,
am a Tathagata
who has in this present period
won full enlightenment,
and my all-knowledge also
has come forth from the six perfections.

For the six perfections
 contain the thirty-seven dharmas
 which act as wings to enlightenment,

they contain the four Brahma-dwellings,
 the four means of conversion,
 and any Buddha-dharma there may be,
 any Buddha-cognition,

cognition of the Self-Existent,
 any unthinkable,
 incomparable,

immeasurable,
 incalculable,
 unequalled cognition,

any cognition which equals the unequalled,
 any cognition of the all-knowing.

Therefore, Subhuti,
 simply the six perfections of a Bodhisattva
 should be known as his good friends.

They are his Teacher, etc.,
 to:
 they lead him to cognition,
 to understanding,
 to full enlightenment.

In addition,
 a Bodhisattva
 who trains in the six perfections
 becomes a true benefactor to all beings
 who are in need of one.

But if he wants to train
 in the six perfections,
 a Bodhisattva must
 above all

hear this perfection of wisdom,

take it up,
bear it in mind,

recite,
study,
spread,

demonstrate,
expound,
explain and write it,

and investigate its meaning,
content and method,
meditate on it,
and ask questions about it.

For this perfection of wisdom
directs the six perfections,
guides,
leads,
instructs and advises them,
is their genetrix and nurse.

Because, if they are deprived
of the perfection of wisdom,
the first five perfections
do not come under the concept
of perfections,
and they do not deserve to be called ‘perfections.’

A Bodhisattva should therefore train
in just this perfection of wisdom
if he wishes to get to a state
where he cannot be led astray by others,
and to stand firmly in it.

2. Emptiness, Defilement and Purification

Subhuti: How is perfect wisdom marked?

The Lord: It has non-attachment for mark.

Subhuti: Would it be feasible to say
that that same mark
of non-attachment,
which exists in perfect wisdom,
exists also in all dharmas?

The Lord: So it is, Subhuti.
For all dharmas are isolated and empty.
Therefore that same mark
of non-attachment,
which makes perfect wisdom
isolated and empty,
also makes all dharmas
isolated and empty.

Subhuti: If all dharmas
are isolated and empty,
how is the defilement
and purification of beings conceivable?

For what is isolated
cannot be defiled or purified,
what is empty
cannot be defiled or purified,
and what is isolated and empty
cannot know full enlightenment.

Nor can one get at any dharma
outside emptiness
which has known full enlightenment,
which will know it,
or which does know it.

How then shall we understand
the meaning of this teaching!

Show us, O Lord,
show us, O Sugata!

The Lord: What do you think, Subhuti.
Do beings course for a long time
in I-making and mine-making?

Subhuti: So it is, Lord.

The Lord: Are also I-making
and mine-making empty?

Subhuti: They are, O Lord.

The Lord: It is just because of their I-making
and mine-making
that beings wander about
in birth-and-death?

Subhuti: So it is, Lord.

The Lord: It is in that sense
that the defilement of beings
becomes conceivable.

To the extent that beings
take hold of things
and settle down in them,
to that extent is there defilement.
But no one is thereby defiled.

And to the extent
that one does not take hold of things
and does not settle down in them,
to that extent can one conceive
of the absence of I-making
and mine-making.

In that sense
 can one form the concept
 of the purification of beings,

i.e. to the extent that
 they do not take hold of things
 and do not settle down in them,
 to that extent there is purification.
 But no one is therein purified.

When a Bodhisattva courses thus,
 he courses in perfect wisdom.

It is in this sense
 that one can form the concept
 of the defilement and purification of beings
 in spite of the fact
 that all dharmas are isolated and empty.

Subhuti: This is truly wonderful!
 And a Bodhisattva who courses thus,
 he courses in perfect wisdom.
 Because he then does not course in form,
 or the other skandhas.

When he courses thus,
 a Bodhisattva cannot be crushed
 by the whole world
 with its Gods,
 men and Asuras.

When he courses thus,
 a Bodhisattva surpasses the coursing
 of all the persons
 who belong to the vehicle
 of the Disciples and Pratyekabuddhas,
 and he gains an insuperable position.

For Buddhahood is insuperable,

and so is Tathagatahood,
the state of the Self-Existent,
the state of all-knowledge.

A Bodhisattva,
who day and night passes his time
dwelling on these mental activities
associated with perfect wisdom,
is quite near full enlightenment
and shall quickly know it.

3. Attentions to Perfect Wisdom and the Pearl of Great Price

The Lord: So it is, Subhuti.
Suppose, Subhuti,
that all beings in Jambudvipa
should simultaneously
acquire a human personality,
should raise their thoughts
to full enlightenment,
abide in that thought of enlightenment
all their lives.

If now
[after all this preparation],
they should give gifts to all beings,
-would those Bodhisattvas
on the strength of that
beget much merit?

Subhuti: They would, O Lord.

The Lord: Truly again, Subhuti,
that son or daughter of good family
begets a greater heap of merit,
who,
as a Bodhisattva,
dwells for even one single day only
in mental activities
connected with the perfection of wisdom.

For, as he goes on dwelling day and night
 in those mental activities,
 he comes more and more worthy
 of the sacrificial gifts of all beings.

Because not other being has a mind
 so full of friendliness as he has,
 except for the Buddhas, the Lords.

And the Tathagatas,
 of course,
 are matchless,
 without a like,
 endowed with unthinkable dharmas.

How then
 does that son or daughter of good family
 at first aspire to that merit?

He becomes endowed
 with that kind of wise insight
 which allows him to see all beings
 as on the way to their slaughter.
 Great compassion on that occasion
 takes hold of him.

He surveys countless beings
 with his heavenly eye,
 and what he sees fills him
 with great agitation:

so many carry the burden of a karma
 which leads to immediate retribution
 in the hells,
 others have acquired unfortunate rebirths
 [which keep them away from the Buddha and his teachings],

other are doomed to be killed,
 or they are enveloped in the net
 of false views,

or fail to find the path,

while others
 who had gained a fortunate rebirth
 have lost it again.

And he attends to them with the thought that:

“I shall become a saviour
 to all those beings,

I shall release them
 from all their sufferings!”

But he does not make either this,
 or anything else, into a sign
 to which he becomes partial.

This also is the great light
 of a Bodhisattva’s wisdom,
 which allows him to know
 full enlightenment.

For Bodhisattvas,
 when they dwell in this dwelling,
 become worthy of the gifts
 of the whole world,
 and yet they do not turn back
 on full enlightenment.

They purify the gifts
 and offerings of those who give them
 the requisites of life,
 when their thoughts are well supported
 by perfect wisdom,
 and they are near to all-knowledge.

Therefore a Bodhisattva should dwell
 in this mental work

associated with perfect wisdom,
if he does not want to consume
his alms fruitlessly,

if he wants to point out the path
to all beings.

to shed light over a wide range,

to set free from birth-and-death
all the beings who are subjected to it,

and to cleanse the organs of vision
of all beings.

If he wishes to dwell in mental activities
directed towards these goals,
he should bring to mind mental activities
associated with the perfection of wisdom.

For one who decides to bring these to mind,
his mind works on the welfare of all beings.

But he should give no room
to other mental activities,
such as lack in perfect wisdom.

If he acts so
[as the mental work,
which is essentially loving concern for beings,
impels him],
he spends his days and nights
in mental activities associated
with the perfection of wisdom.

Suppose a man,
well versed in jewelry
and the different varieties of jewels,
had newly acquired a very precious gem.
That would make him very glad and elated.

If he again lost this precious gem,
he would be most sad and distressed.

Constantly and always mental activities
associated with that jewel
would proceed in him,
and he would regret to be parted from it.

He would not forget it,
until he had either regained this gem,
or gained another one
of like quality and kind.

Just so a Bodhisattva
who has again lost the precious jewel
of perfect wisdom;

with a clear perception
of the preciousness of perfect wisdom,
and convinced that he has not been definitely parted from it,

he should,
with a thought that is not lacking
in mental work on perfect wisdom,
and which is directed to the state
of all-knowledge,

search about everywhere
until he has regained this Sutra,
or gained an equivalent one.

All that time he should be one
who is not lacking in mental activities
associated with the acquisition
of the precious jewel
of the perfection of wisdom,

one who is not lacking
in mental activities associated
with the acquisition of the great jewel

of all-knowledge.

Subhuti: But, since the Lord has taught
that all dharmas and all mental activities
are lacking in own-being,
and empty,

how then can a Bodhisattva
become one who is not lacking
in mental activities associated
with perfect wisdom,
or with all-knowledge?

The Lord: If the mind of a Bodhisattva
works on the fact
that all dharmas are
through their own-being
isolated and empty,
and agrees that that is so,

then he becomes one who is not lacking
in mental activities
associated with perfect wisdom
and with all-knowledge.
For perfect wisdom is empty,
it neither increases nor decreases.

4. Emptiness and Growth in Enlightenment

Subhuti: If that is so,
how can a Bodhisattva arrive,
without an increase in perfect wisdom,
at the full attainment of enlightenment,
how can he know full enlightenment?

The Lord: In actual fact
a Bodhisattva who courses
in perfect wisdom
neither increases or decreases.

Just as perfect wisdom is empty,
without increase or decrease,
just so also a Bodhisattva is empty,
without increase or decrease.

It is because of this fact,
i.e. that just as perfect wisdom is empty,
without increase or decrease,
that a Bodhisattva arrives
at the full attainment of enlightenment,
and thus knows full enlightenment.

If a Bodhisattva,
when this is being taught,
is not afraid or loses heart,
then he should be known
as a Bodhisattva
who courses in perfect wisdom.

Subhuti: Does then perfect wisdom
course in perfect wisdom?

The Lord: No, Subhuti.

Subhuti: Does the emptiness
of perfect wisdom
course in perfect wisdom?

The Lord: No, Subhuti.

Subhuti: Can one then apprehend
outside the emptiness of perfect wisdom
any dharma
which courses in perfect wisdom?

The Lord: No, Subhuti.

Subhuti: Does emptiness
course in perfect wisdom?

The Lord: No, Subhuti.

Subhuti: Can one apprehend in emptiness any dharma that courses in perfect wisdom?

The Lord: No, Subhuti.

Subhuti: Does emptiness course in emptiness?

The Lord: No, Subhuti.

Subhuti: Does form, etc., course in perfect wisdom?

The Lord: No, Subhuti.

Subhuti: Can one apprehend outside form, etc., any dharma which courses in perfect wisdom?

The Lord: No, Subhuti.

Subhuti: How then does a Bodhisattva course in perfect wisdom?

The Lord: Do you then, Subhuti, see a real dharma which courses in perfect wisdom?

Subhuti: No, Lord.

The Lord: Do you see that perfect wisdom, in which the Bodhisattva courses, as a real thing?

Subhuti: No, Lord.

The Lord: Do you see as real that dharma which offers no basis

for apprehension?

Has that dharma
by any chance been produced,
or will it be produced,
or is it being produced,

has it been stopped,
will it be stopped
or is it being stopped?

Subhuti: No, Lord.

The Lord: This insight gives a Bodhisattva
the patient acceptance of dharmas
which fail to be produced.

When he is endowed with that,
he is predestined to full enlightenment.
He is bound to progress
towards the self-confidence of a Tathagata.

It is quite impossible that a Bodhisattva,
who courses,
strives and struggles in this way,
and progresses in this direction,

should not reach
the supreme cognition of a Buddha,
the cognition of the all-knowing,
the cognition of the great Caravan Leader.

Subhuti: Can the true nature of all dharmas,
which consists in the fact
that they fail to be produced,
can that be predestined
to full enlightenment?

The Lord: No, Subhuti.

Subhuti: How then
 in that case
 does the prediction of this dharma
 to full enlightenment
 take place?

The Lord: Do you see as real
 that dharma which has a prediction
 to full enlightenment?

Subhuti: No, Lord.
 I do not see any real dharma
 which is at any time predestined
 to full enlightenment.

Nor do I see any real dharma
 which is known by the enlightened,
 which should be known to them,
 or by means of which
 they would have their full knowledge.

It is because all dharmas
 cannot be apprehended,
 that it does not occur to me to think that

“this dharma
 is known to the Enlightened,
 this dharma should be known to them,
 by means of this dharma
 they do have their full knowledge.”

Chapter XXIII Sakra

1. The Superior Position of Bodhisattvas

At that time, Sakra,
Chief of Gods,
was seated amid that assembly,
and said:

To be sure,
deep is this perfection of wisdom,
hard to see,
hard to understand!

The Lord: So it is, Kausika.
With the depth of space
is this perfect wisdom deep.

As isolated
it is hard to see,
as empty
it is hard to understand.

Sakra: Those beings
who hear this perfection of wisdom,
take it up,

study,
spread, and write it,

must be endowed
with more than a puny wholesome root!

The Lord: So it is.
If all the beings in Jambudvipa
were endowed
with [the ability to observe]
the ten ways of wholesome action,
would they
on the strength of that

beget much merit?

Sakra: They would, O Lord.

The Lord: A person who hears,
studies,
spreads and writes
this perfection of wisdom
begets greater merit than they.

The just mentioned heap of merit,
due to the morality
of all beings in Jambudvipa,
is infinitesimal
compared with the heap of merit
which is due to the wholesome root
of someone who hears,
studies,
spreads and writes
this deep perfection of wisdom.

Thereupon, a monk said to Sakra,
Chief of Gods:

You have been surpassed,
Kausika,
by that person who hears,
studies,
spreads and writes
this deep perfection of wisdom!

Sakra: I am even surpassed
by that son or daughter of good family
who has raised
but one single thought to enlightenment:
how much more so
if
in addition
they train in Thusness,
progress to it,

make endeavours about it;

on their journey
they surpass the whole world
with its Gods,
men and Asuras.

On their journey
they not only surpass the world
with its Gods,
men and Asuras,

but also
all the Streamwinners,
Once-Returners,
Never-Returners,
Arhats
and Pratyekabuddhas.

They surpass also
those Bodhisattvas
who are great almsgivers
but lack in perfect wisdom
and skill in means;

and equally those
whose morality is perfectly pure,
who possess a vast quantity of morality,

whose observation
of the moral rules is unbroken,
flawless,
unstained,
complete,
perfectly pure and unspotted,
but who lack in perfect wisdom
and skill in means;

and equally those
who have won patience

and peaceful calm,

whose thoughts are free from hostility,
 who feel no thought of malice
 even when burned at the stake,
 but who lack in perfect wisdom
 and skill in means

and equally those who have exerted vigour,
 who persist in trying,

who are free from sloth,
 and remain uncowed in all they do
 with body,
 voice and mind,
 but who lack in perfect wisdom
 and skill in means;

and equally those
 who are fond of the trances
 and delight in them,

who are strong and powerful in the trances,
 who are established in the trances,
 who are masters of the trances,
 but who lack in perfect wisdom
 and skill in means.

For, when he courses
 in the perfection of wisdom
 as it has been expounded,
 a Bodhisattva
 surpasses the world
 with its Gods,
 men and Asuras,

surpasses all those
 who belong to the vehicle
 of the Disciples and Pratyekabuddhas,
 surpasses also the

Bodhisattvas who are not skilled in means.
And they cannot surpass him.

For a Bodhisattva
who courses in the perfection of wisdom
as it has been expounded,
who complies with it,

has taken up his position
so that the lineage
of the all-knowing
should not be interrupted,
and he does not keep aloof
from the Tathagatas.

His journey will,
when he progresses in this way,
shortly bring him
to the terrace of enlightenment;

he will,
training himself in this way,
rescue the beings
who have sunk into the mud
of the defilements.

Training himself this way,
he trains in the training of a Bodhisattva,
and not in the training
of a Disciple
or Pratyekabuddha.

2. Rewards of Perfect Wisdom

And the four Great Kings,
the World Guardians,
will come to the Bodhisattva
who trains in this way
in the perfection of wisdom,
and they will say to him:

“Train yourself quickly
in this course of a Bodhisattva,
son of good family!
Nimbly train yourself!

Here are the four begging bowls
which you shall receive
when you are seated
on the terrace of enlightenment,
as one who then has won
full enlightenment.”

Not only the four World Guardians
will come to the Bodhisattva
who trains in perfect wisdom
as it has been expounded,
but I also,
not to mention the other Gods.

Constantly also
the Tathagatas will bring him to mind.

All the worldly ills
that might befall the Bodhisattva
who courses in perfect wisdom,
such as attacks from others,
etc.,
shall be prevented from affecting him
in any way.

This also, O Lord,
is a quality which a Bodhisattva
who courses in perfect wisdom
gains in this very life.

Ananda thereupon thought:
Is this speech of Sakra,
Chief of Gods,
due to his own insight,

or to the Buddha's might?

Sakra,
through the Buddha's might,
read his thoughts, and said:
To the Buddha's might, Ananda,
to the Buddha's sustaining power
should this be attributed.
For I myself
am quite incapable
of uttering anything relevant
on the subject of Bodhisattvas.

The Lord: So it is, Ananda.
What Sakra, Chief of Gods, has said
was due to the Tathagata's might,
to his sustaining power.

Chapter XXIV Conceit

1. Conditions Which Open a Bodhisattva to Mara's Influence

At the time when a Bodhisattva
 trains in perfect wisdom,
 makes endeavours about it
 and develops it,
 all the Evil Maras
 in the great trichiliocosm
 are in the state of uncertainty:

“Will this Bodhisattva
 prematurely realize the reality-limit
 on the level of Disciple or Pratyekabuddha,
 or will he know full enlightenment?”

Moreover,
 when a Bodhisattva dwells
 in the dwelling of perfect wisdom,
 the Evil Maras
 are pierced by the dart of sorrow.

When a Bodhisattva
 courses in perfect wisdom,
 makes endeavours about it
 and develops it,
 the Evil Maras
 think how they can hurt him.

They may,
 for instance,
 try to make him afraid
 by letting loose a shower of meteors
 in all directions,
 causing the impression
 that the horizon is all aflame.

They hope that then
 the Bodhisattva will become cowed,

that his hair will stand on end,
 so that
 at least one single thought
 directed on full enlightenment
 might get extinguished.

But Mara,
 the Evil One,
 does not attempt to hurt
 each and every Bodhisattva.

Some he tries to hurt,
 and others not.

Ananda: What kind of a Bodhisattva
 does Mara try to hurt?

The Lord: Mara tries to hurt a Bodhisattva who
 in the past,
 when the perfection of wisdom was being taught,
 did not produce a thought of firm belief,
 and he gains entry to him.

He tries to hurt Bodhisattvas who,
 when this deep perfection of wisdom
 is being taught,
 are seized by uncertainties,
 feel perplexed,
 and think that

“perhaps this perfection of wisdom is so,
 perhaps it is not so”;

or Bodhisattvas
 who lack the good friend,
 who have been taken hold of
 by bad friends,

who,
 when the perfection of wisdom

is being taught,
do not hear about the very deep stations,
remain in ignorance of them,
and do not ask
how the perfection of wisdom
should be developed;

or
Bodhisattvas who cling to someone
who upholds that which is not
the true dharma,
and say:

“I am his adherent,
and
in all things he does not abandon me.
There are many other Bodhisattvas
whom I might adhere to,
but they do not suit me.

I have taken this one
as my fitting companion
and he will suit me.”

Moreover,
a Bodhisattva might,
when this deep perfection of wisdom
is being taught,
say to another Bodhisattva:

“Deep, indeed,
is this perfection of wisdom!
What point is there
in your listening to it?

For even when I apply myself to it
in the way in which the Tathagata has taught
in the other Sutrantas,
even then
I do not get to the bottom of it,

nor derive any enjoyment from it.

What is the point in your hearing
and writing it?"

In that way
he tries to estrange other Bodhisattvas.

Mara comes also
to such a Bodhisattva,
tries to hurt him,
and gains entry to him.

Furthermore, Ananda,
Mara becomes contented,
elated and enraptured,
he is overjoyed,

exultant and glad,
thrilled,
delighted and jubilant,
in case a Bodhisattva
despises other Bodhisattvas,
and thinks:

"I dwell in the dwelling of detachment,
but not so they;
not theirs the dwelling in detachment."

And Mara is so joyful
because this Bodhisattva
keeps far away from full enlightenment.

Furthermore,
when a Bodhisattva takes on a name or clan,
or when his ascetic qualities are proclaimed,
he may regard that
as a sufficient reason
to despise other Bodhisattvas,
well-behaved and lovely in character

though they may be.

But he has not got the qualities
of irreversible Bodhisattvas
who course in perfect wisdom,
nor their attributes,
tokens or signs.

Since he has got not
the irreversible qualities,
he gives rise to defilement,

i.e.
he exalts himself,
deprecates others,
and thinks
that they are not equal to those dharmas,
as he is.

The Evil Maras then foresee
that the realms of Mara
will not remain empty,

that the great hells,
the animal kingdom,
the world of the Pretas,
and the assemblies of the Asuras
will be overcrowded.

And Mara,
the Evil One,
becomes still more determined,
and thinks:

“With this kind of start
those Bodhisattvas will soon
be smothered by gain and honour.

They will become plausible talkers,
and with their plausible talk

they will catch hold of many people.

Those people will decide to listen to them,
will imitate what they have seen and heard,
and in consequence
will not train in Thusness,
not progress in it,
not make endeavours about it.

Not training themselves in Suchness,
not progressing in it,
not making endeavours about it,
they will still further
increase their defilements.

So it will come about
that all the deeds
of body,
voice or mind
which they may undertake
with their perverted mentality

shall lead them to a rebirth
in conditions which are unserviceable,
disagreeable,
unpleasing, and unpleasant.

In consequence
the realms of Mara
will become overcrowded,
i.e.
the great hells,
the animal world,
the world of the Pretas,
and the assemblies of the Asuras.”

When he considers
this sequence of events,
Mara
the Evil One

becomes contented,
 elated,
 enraptured,
 overjoyed,
 exultant and jubilant.

Furthermore, Ananda,
 when a Bodhisattva fights
 with a person
 belonging to the vehicle of the Disciples,
 disputes and quarrels with him,
 abuses and reviles him,
 feels ill-will and hatred for him,
 then Mara thinks that

“surely, this son of good family
 will keep away from all-knowledge,
 he will remain far away from it.”

Mara becomes still more jubilant
 if a person belonging
 to the vehicle of the Bodhisattvas
 fights with someone else
 who also belongs to the vehicle
 of the Bodhisattvas,
 for he thinks that

“both these Bodhisattvas
 remain far from all-knowledge.”

But if a Bodhisattva
 who has had his prediction
 fights with another Bodhisattva
 who has also had his prediction,
 and cherishes malice for him

for a great many aeons he must,
 if he has such an attitude of mind,
 put on the armour
 [which enables him to struggle against it],

unless, of course,
he has abandoned all-knowledge completely.

2. The Bodhisattva's Right Attitude to Other Bodhisattvas

Ananda: Can he escape
from those attitudes of mind,
or is he definitely condemned
to go on putting on the armour
for all that length of time?

The Lord: I have, Ananda,
demonstrated a dharma
which includes the possibility of escape,
for persons of the Disciple-vehicle,
for persons of the Pratyekabuddha-vehicle,
for persons of the Bodhisattva-vehicle.

As to the person
who belongs to the vehicle of the Bodhisattvas
and who has quarreled with someone else
who also belongs to the vehicle of the Bodhisattvas,

if he does not confess his fault,
does not promise restraint in future,
harbours a latent bias towards hate,
and dwells tied to that bias,

of that person
I do not teach the escape
[i.e. from the consequence of his action],
but he is definitely condemned
to go on putting on the armour
for all that length of time.

But I teach his escape
if he confesses his fault,
promises restraint in future,
and reflects as follows:

“I
whose duty it is
to drive away,
to pacify and appease the quarrels,
disputes and
conflicts of all beings,
yet I myself engage in disputes!

It is indeed a loss to me,
and not a gain,
that I should answer back as I am spoken to.

When I should be
to all beings
a bridge across the sea of birth-and-death,
I nevertheless say to another,
‘the same to you,’
or return a harsh and rough answer.

This is not the way
in which I should speak.

In fights,
quarrels and disputes
I should behave like a senseless idiot,
or like a dumb sheep.

When I hear someone using offensive,
abusive,
insulting words towards me,
my heart should not cherish malice
for others.

It is not meet and proper for me
to perceive the faults of others,
or to think
that what is being said
about the faults of others
is worth listening to.

For I,
 since I am earnestly intent
 [on full enlightenment],
 should not do harm to others.

When I should make all beings happy
 by giving them
 everything that brings happiness,
 when I should lead them to Nirvana
 after having won full enlightenment,
 yet
 nevertheless
 I bear ill will!

I should not bear ill will
 even against those
 who have offended against me,
 and I must avoid getting into a rage,
 and I must make a firm effort
 in that direction.

Even when my life is in danger
 I must not get into a rage,
 and no frown should appear on my face.”

Of such a Bodhisattva
 I teach the escape.

This is the attitude
 which a Bodhisattva
 should adopt also towards persons
 who belong to the vehicle of the Disciples.

Never to get angry with any being,
 that is the attitude of mind
 one should adopt
 towards all beings.

What attitude then
 should a Bodhisattva have

towards other persons
 belonging to the vehicle
 of the Bodhisattvas?
 The same as towards the Teacher.

He should have the attitude that
 “these Bodhisattvas are my teachers.”

Surely,
 they have mounted on the same vehicle as I,
 have ascended by the same path,
 are of like intention with me,
 have set out in the same vehicle as I.

Wherein they should be trained,
 that is the method
 by which I should be trained.

But if some of them dwell
 in a dwelling contaminated
 [by the ideas of Disciples
 and Pratyekabuddhas],
 then I should not do likewise.

If,
 however
 they dwell in an uncontaminated dwelling,
 in mental activities
 associated with all-knowledge,
 then I also
 should train as they do.

No obstacles to full enlightenment
 can arise to a Bodhisattva
 who trains himself in this way
 in all-knowledge,
 and he quickly knows full enlightenment.

Chapter XXV Training

1. How a Bodhisattva is Trained in All Knowledge

Subhuti: Wherein, O Lord,
must a Bodhisattva train
to be trained in all-knowledge?

The Lord: He must train in Extinction,
in Non-production,
in Non-stopping,

in No-birth,
in the absence of positivity,
in Isolatedness,

in Dispassion,
in Space,
in the element of dharma,
and Nirvana.

Subhuti: For what reason
does that amount
to a training in all-knowledge?

The Lord: What do you think, Subhuti,
the Suchness of the Tathagata,
which is the prime cause
of the Tathagata being a Tathagata,
does that become extinct?

Subhuti: No, Lord.
For extinction cannot become extinct,
extinction being inextinguishable.

The Lord: The Suchness of the Tathagata,
which is the prime cause
of the Tathagata being a Tathagata,
is that now produced,
or stopped,

or born;
 or does it become
 or cease to become;

or does it become isolated;
 or impassioned
 or dispassionate;

or does it become like space,
 or does it become
 of the nature of dharma?

Subhuti: No, Lord.

The Lord: Does that Suchness
 then
 enter Nirvana?

Subhuti: No, Lord.

The Lord: Therefore then, Subhuti,
 a Bodhisattva who trains himself thus,
 he trains in [the conviction that]
 “Suchness does not get extinct.”

When he trains thus,
 he will reach the perfection of all training.
 He cannot be crushed by Mara,
 or by Mara’s associates
 or by Mara’s host.

Soon he shall reach
 the condition of irreversibility.
 Soon he shall sit
 on the terrace of enlightenment.
 He courses in his own range.

He is trained in the dharmas
 which make him into a saviour,
 in the great friendliness,

the great compassion,
 the great sympathetic joy,
 the great impartiality.

He trains
 for the turning of the wheel of dharma,
 with its three revolutions and twelve aspects.

He trains
 so as to save
 no fewer beings than he should.

He trains
 to ensure
 the non-interruption
 of the lineage of the Tathagatas.

He trains
 in order to open the door
 of the deathless element.

An inferior being is,
 however,
 incapable of this sublime training.

For a weakling cannot be trained
 in this training.
 Because those who are trained
 in this training
 are the very cream of all beings,
 are persons who want to save all beings.

They want to reach a state
 where they are elevated above all beings.

A Bodhisattva who trains thus
 is not reborn in the hells,
 nor among animals,
 nor in the realms of the Pretas,
 nor among the Asuras,

nor in outlying districts
[among barbarous populations],

nor in the families of outcasts or fowlers,
of hunters,
fishermen or butchers,

nor in the other low class families
of that kind,
in which
one is addicted to low deeds.

He does not become blind,
deaf,
or one-eyed;

he is not a cripple,
nor hunch-backed,
nor a man with withered hand
or arm,

nor limping,
nor lame,
or stunned,
not tremulous,
quivering or shaky;

his limbs are not puny,
nor incomplete,
nor abnormal:
he is not weak,
nor has he a bad complexion or shape;

his faculties are not inferior
nor incomplete,
but they are
in every way
perfect;
and he has a melodious voice.

He does not become a person who takes life,
 or who takes what is not given,
 or who goes wrong
 about his sense-desires,

or who speaks falsely,
 or maliciously,
 or harshly,
 or who prattles indistinctly,

or who is covetous,
 or who harbours ill will in his heart,
 or who has wrong views,

and he does not earn his livelihood
 in the wrong fashion.

He is not reborn among the long-lived Gods,
 he does not take up bad moral practices,
 does not take hold of unreal dharmas,
 and he does not get reborn
 through the influences of his trances
 and [formless] attainments.

For there
 is his skill in means,
 and endowed with that
 he does not get reborn
 among the long-lived Gods.

But what is that skill in means
 of a Bodhisattva?
 It is just this perfection of wisdom.

And he applies himself
 to this skill in means
 in such a way that,
 endowed with it,
 the Bodhisattva enters into the trances
 without being reborn

through the influence of the trances.

When he trains thus,
 a Bodhisattva incurs
 the perfect purity of the powers,
 of the grounds of self-confidence,
 of the Buddha-dharmas.
 He reaches all that.

Subhuti: But if, O Lord,
 as we all know,
 all dharmas are by nature perfectly pure,
 then with regard to what dharma
 does a Bodhisattva incur
 and reach
 the perfect purity of the powers,
 the grounds of self-confidence
 and the Buddha-dharmas?

The Lord: So it is, Subhuti.
 For all dharmas are just
 by [their essential original] nature
 perfectly pure.

When a Bodhisattva
 who trains in perfect wisdom
 does not lose heart
 and remains uncowed
 although all dharmas are
 by their nature
 perfectly pure,
 then that is his perfection of wisdom.

But the foolish common people
 do not know
 nor see
 that these dharmas
 are really so constituted,
 and they neither know
 nor see

the true nature of dharmas.

On behalf of those things
 the Bodhisattvas struggle on
 and exert vigour
 so that those who do not know
 may be enabled to know,
 so that those who do not see
 may be made to see.

In this training they train,
 and therefore
 [in the world of appearance]
 a Bodhisattva reaches the powers,
 the grounds of self-confidence,
 and all Buddha-dharmas.

When they train thus,
 Bodhisattvas wisely know
 the throbbing thoughts and actions
 of other beings,
 of other persons
 as they really are.
 And then they go beyond the knowledge
 of the thoughts and actions of others.

2. Fewness of Bodhisattvas

On this earth,
 few are the places
 free from stones,
 few the spots
 where gold and silver are found.

Much more numerous
 are saline deserts,
 arid deserts,
 places covered with grass,
 or thorns,
 or steep chasms.

Just so,
 in the world of beings
 few Bodhisattvas exist
 who train in this training
 in all-knowledge,
 i.e., in the training in perfect wisdom.

Much more numerous are those
 who train in the training
 characteristic of Disciples
 and Pratyekabuddhas.

Furthermore, Subhuti,
 in the world of beings
 few have done deeds
 which lead them to the authority
 of a universal monarch.

Much more numerous are those
 who have done deeds
 which lead them
 to the authority
 of a commander of a fort.

Just so,
 in the world of beings
 few are the Bodhisattvas
 who have mounted on this path
 of perfect wisdom,
 and who have resolved
 to know full enlightenment.

Much more numerous
 are those who have mounted on the path
 of Disciples
 and Pratyekabuddhas.

Furthermore,
 few only have done deeds

which permit them to become Sakra,
Chief of Gods.

Much more numerous
are those whose deeds
lead them to the world
of [the minor] Gods.

Just so,
few beings only are Bodhisattvas
who train in this training in perfect wisdom.

Much more numerous
are the Bodhisattvas
who train in the training of Disciples
and Pratyekabuddhas.

Furthermore,
few beings only have done deeds
which permit them to become Brahma.

Much more numerous are those
whose deeds lead them
to Brahma's assembly.

Just so,
few beings only
are irreversible to full enlightenment.

Much more numerous
are those Bodhisattvas
who turn away from full enlightenment.

Therefore then, Subhuti,
in the world of beings
few beings exist
who have set out for full enlightenment.

Fewer are those who progress in Thusness.

Still fewer are those very few
 who make endeavours
 about perfect wisdom.

Still fewer even
 are those very very few Bodhisattvas
 who are irreversible
 from full enlightenment.

A Bodhisattva who wants to be numbered
 among those very, very few
 irreversible Bodhisattvas
 should therefore train
 in just this perfection of wisdom,
 and make endeavours about it.

Moreover, Subhuti,
 no harsh thought arises
 to a Bodhisattva
 who thus trains in perfect wisdom,

nor a doubting thought,
 or an envious or mean thought,
 or an immoral thought,

or a thought of ill will,
 or a lazy thought,
 or a distracted thought,
 or a stupid thought.

3. The Perfection of Wisdom Comprehends All Perfections

It is thus
 that when a Bodhisattva trains
 in the perfection of wisdom,
 all the perfections
 are automatically incorporated,
 taken up,
 followed after and included.

The view of individuality
 includes all the sixty-two views,
 and
 even so,
 for a Bodhisattva
 who trains in the perfection of wisdom,
 all the perfections are included in that.

As long as someone's life-faculty goes on,
 all the other faculties are included in it.
 Even so
 for a Bodhisattva
 who trains in perfect wisdom
 all the other wholesome dharmas
 are included in that.

When someone's life faculty is stopped,
 all the other faculties are also stopped.
 Even so,
 for a Bodhisattva
 who trains in perfect wisdom,
 all the other unwholesome dharmas
 are stopped
 when only non-cognition is stopped,
 and all the other perfections
 are included in that,
 and automatically taken hold of.

4. Merit From Perfect Wisdom

Therefore then, Subhuti,
 a Bodhisattva
 who wants to take hold of all perfections
 should train in the perfection of wisdom.

When he trains in the perfection of wisdom,
 a Bodhisattva trains in that
 which is the highest possible degree
 of perfection for any being.
 For his merit is the greatest possible.

Subhuti,
 if you consider all the beings
 in the great trichiliocosm,
 are they many?

Subhuti: Even in Jambudvipa alone
 there are many beings,
 how many more would there be
 in the great trichiliocosm?

The Lord: If one single Bodhisattva were,
 during his entire life,
 to furnish all those beings with robes,
 alms bowl,
 lodging,
 medicinal appliances for use in sickness,
 and all that brings them happiness,
 would such a Bodhisattva
 on the strength of that
 beget a great deal of merit?

Subhuti: He would, O Lord.

The Lord: A much greater merit still
 would that Bodhisattva beget
 who would develop
 this perfection of wisdom
 for even the duration of a finger-snap.

So greatly profitable
 is the perfection of wisdom
 of the Bodhisattvas,
 because she feeds
 the supreme enlightenment.

A Bodhisattva
 should therefore train in perfect wisdom
 if he wants to know full enlightenment,
 to arrive at the supreme position

among all beings,
to become a protector of the helpless,

to reach the sphere of the Buddha,
to emulate the manliness of the Buddha,
to sport with a Buddha's sport,

to roar a Buddha's lion roar,
to reach the accomplishment of a Buddha,
and to explain the dharma
in the great trichiliocosm.

When a Bodhisattva
trains in the perfection of wisdom,
I do not see the accomplishment
in which he has not been trained.

5. Bodhisattvas and Disciples

Subhuti: Is then a Bodhisattva
also trained
in the accomplishment of a Disciple?

The Lord: He should also be trained in that.
But he does not train
with the intention
of always continuing
with the accomplishment of a Disciple,

or with the idea
of making it
in any way his own.
Not thus does he train.

He also knows the qualities of the Disciples,
but does not abide with them.
He assimilates them,
without opposing them.

He trains with the intention

that he should demonstrate
and reveal also
the virtues of the Disciples.

When he trains thus,
a Bodhisattva arrives at a condition
where he is worthy of receiving gifts
from the world with its Gods,
men and Asuras.

He surpasses all other people
who are worthy of gifts,
associated with Disciples
or Pratyekabuddhas.
And all-knowledge will be near to him.

When he trains thus,
a Bodhisattva does not part from
the perfection of wisdom,
but he courses in it,
is not lacking
in the dwelling of the perfection of wisdom.

When he courses thus
a Bodhisattva should be known as
“unfailing, definitely unfailing”
with regard to all-knowledge,
and he keeps away from the level
of a Disciple
or Pratyekabuddha.
He is near to full enlightenment.

If, however,
it occurs to him that
“this is the perfection of wisdom
which brings this all-knowledge,”
then one who has such a notion
does not course in the perfection of wisdom.

On the contrary

he has no notion even of perfect wisdom,
he does not perceive or review that
“this is the perfection of wisdom,”
or “his is
the perfection of wisdom,”
or “it shall feed all-knowledge.”

If he courses thus,
a Bodhisattva courses
in the perfection of wisdom.

Chapter XXVI Like Illusion

1. Sakra Praises the Bodhisattvas

Thereupon it occurred to Sakra,
 Chief of Gods:
 A Bodhisattva,
 even if he courses only just so far,
 surpasses all;
 how much more so
 when he has known full enlightenment!

A great gain has accrued to those beings,
 a good life do they live
 when their thought strides in all-knowledge;
 how much more so
 when they have raised their thought
 to full enlightenment!

To be envied are those beings,
 the very cream of all beings,
 who will know full enlightenment!

Thereupon Sakra,
 Chief of Gods,
 conjured up Mandarava flowers,
 saluted them reverently,
 scattered them over the Tathagata,
 and said:

May those persons
 who belong to the vehicle of the Bodhisattvas,
 and who have raised their thoughts
 to full enlightenment,

succeed in their resolve
 to know full enlightenment,
 and,
 after that,
 to transfer all beings

who are borne along by
 the great flood of birth and death
 to the smooth yonder shore!

May that thought of enlightenment
 which they have wished for,
 thought over and taken hold of,
 bring to fulfillment in them
 the dharmas of a Buddha,

and dharmas associated with all-knowledge,
 the dharmas of the Self-Existent,
 the insuperable dharmas!

I have not even the slightest suspicion
 that those Bodhisattvas,
 who are endowed
 with the great compassion,
 might turn away from full enlightenment,

or that those persons
 who belong to the vehicle of the Bodhisattvas,
 and who have set out for full enlightenment
 might turn away from it.

On the contrary,
 I am sure
 that this resolve to win full enlightenment
 will increase more and more in them,
 as they survey the ills
 which afflict beings
 on the plane of birth-and-death.

For through their great compassion
 they desire the welfare of the world
 with its Gods,
 men and Asuras,

desire to benefit it,
 are full of pity for it,

they,
 who are endowed with this attitude of mind,
 dwell in the attitude of mind
 which is expressed in their resolution
 that

“we have crossed over,
 we shall help beings to cross over!
 Freed,
 we shall free them!
 Recovered,
 we shall help them to recover!
 Gone to Nirvana,
 we shall lead them to Nirvana!”

2. Jubilation, Turning Over, and Merit

The son or daughter of good family
 who rejoices at the productions of thought
 of those Bodhisattvas
 who have just begun
 to set out in the vehicle,

as well as at the productions of thought
 of those who progress on the course,
 as well as at the irreversible nature
 of those who are irreversible,

as well as at the nature
 of those who are bound
 to one more birth only,
 to what extent is their merit a
 superior one?

The Lord: One might be able, Kausika,
 to grasp the measure of Sumeru,
 king of mountains,
 or of a world system,
 up to a great trichiliocosm,
 with the help of a tip of straw,

but one could not possibly grasp
 the measure of the merit
 coming to that son or daughter
 of good family,
 or to a Bodhisattva,
 from the production of a thought
 connected with that jubilation.

Sakra: Beset by Mara are those beings
 who do not come to hear
 of this immeasurable merit of that jubilation
 over the career of Bodhisattva

which begins with
 the first thought of enlightenment
 and which ends with full enlightenment

who do not know it,
 who do not see it,
 who do not bring that
 jubilation to mind.

They are partisans of Mara,
 deceased in Mara's realms.
 For those who have brought to mind
 those thoughts,
 who have turned them over
 into the supreme enlightenment,
 have rejoiced at them,
 they have done so
 in order to shatter Mara's realm.

One should, O Lord,
 rejoice at the various stages
 of the thought
 which the Bodhisattvas
 have raised to enlightenment.

Sons and daughters of good family
 who have not abandoned the Tathagata,

and the Dharma,
and the Community,
they should rejoice in those stages
of the thought of enlightenment!

The Lord: So it is, Kausika.
And those sons or daughters of good family
who have rejoiced in the stages
of the thought of enlightenment,

they shall
whether they belong
to the vehicle of the Bodhisattvas,
or that of the Pratyekabuddhas,
or that of the Disciples

soon please the Tathagatas,
and not displease them.

Sakra: So it is, O Lord.
Therefore,
wherever they may be reborn
as a result of the wholesome roots
[they have planted]

when their hearts
were filled with jubilation,
there they shall be treated with respect,
revered,
worshipped and adored.

They shall never see any unpleasant sights,
nor hear any unpleasant sounds,

nor smell any unpleasant smells,
nor taste any unpleasant tastes,
nor come into contact
with anything unpleasant to the touch.

One must expect them to be reborn

in the heavens,
 and not in the places of woe
 for they have rejoiced
 in the wholesome roots of countless beings,
 roots which bring happiness to all beings.

The thoughts of jubilation of those who,
 after they have produced
 an urge towards enlightenment,

have rejoiced over the successive stages
 of the thought of enlightenment
 in persons who belong
 to the vehicle of the Bodhisattvas,

shall,
 as they grow,
 become the nourishers of full enlightenment.

After they have won full enlightenment,
 they also shall lead countless beings
 to Nirvana.

The Lord: So it is, Kausika,
 as you have said it,
 through the Tathagata's might.

The wholesome roots of countless beings
 are rejoiced over,
 planted and consummated

as a consequence of the action
 of a son or daughter of good family
 who has rejoiced over the successive stages
 of the thought of enlightenment
 in those persons who belong
 to the vehicle of the Bodhisattvas.

3. The Nature of Illusion

Subhuti: But how can a thought
which is like illusion
know full enlightenment?

The Lord: Subhuti,
do you see the thought which is like illusion
as a separate real entity?

Subhuti: No, Lord.

The Lord: Do you see illusion
as a separate real entity?

Subhuti: No, Lord.

The Lord: When you see neither illusion,
nor the thought which is like illusion,
as a real separate entity,

do you then perhaps see that dharma
which knows full enlightenment
as something other than illusion,
or as something other than the thought
which is like illusion?

Subhuti: No, Lord. I do not.
In consequence,
to what dharma could I point,
and say that
“it is”
or
“it is not”?

But a dharma which is absolutely isolated,
to that one cannot attribute that
“it is”
or that
“it is not.”

Also
 an absolutely isolated dharma
 does not know full enlightenment,
 because a dharma which has no existence
 cannot know full enlightenment.

Therefore then, O Lord,
 perfect wisdom is absolutely isolated.

But a dharma which is absolutely isolated,
 that is not a dharma
 that should be developed,
 nor does it bring about
 or remove any dharma.

How then
 can a Bodhisattva,
 by resorting to an absolutely isolated
 perfection of wisdom,
 know full enlightenment?
 Even full enlightenment
 is absolutely isolated.

If, O Lord,
 the perfection of wisdom
 is absolutely isolated,
 and if full enlightenment
 is absolutely isolated,
 how can the isolated
 become known
 through the isolated?

The Lord: So it is, Subhuti.
 It is just because the perfection of wisdom
 is absolutely isolated
 that the absolutely isolated
 full enlightenment is known [by it].

But if a Bodhisattva forms the notion that

“the perfection of wisdom
is absolutely isolated,”
then that is not the perfection of wisdom.

It is thus certain
that it is thanks to perfect wisdom
that a Bodhisattva knows full enlightenment,
and that he cannot know it
without resorting to it.

The isolated
cannot be known by the isolated,

and nevertheless
a Bodhisattva knows full enlightenment,
and he does not know it
without resorting
to the perfection of wisdom.

Subhuti: As I understand the meaning
of the Lord’s teaching,
a Bodhisattva in this way
courses in a deep object.

The Lord: A doer of what is hard
is the Bodhisattva
who courses in a deep object,
and who yet does not realize that object
[or: gain],
i.e.
on the level of Disciple
or Pratyekabuddha.

Subhuti: As I understand the meaning
of the Lord’s teaching,
there is in this way
no Bodhisattva at all
who is a doer of what is hard.

For that very dharma is not got at

which could realize,
 nor that which could be realized,
 nor that
 by means of which
 one could realize.

If,
 when this is being taught,
 a Bodhisattva does not despond,
 become cowed or stolid,
 does not turn back,
 and remains unafraid,
 then he courses in perfect wisdom.

When he does not review it
 as a certain fact that he courses,
 then he courses in perfect wisdom.

If he does not review it
 as a real fact
 that he is near to full enlightenment,
 then he courses in perfect wisdom.

If it does not even occur to him
 that he has kept aloof
 from the level of Disciples
 and Pratyekabuddhas,
 then he courses in perfect wisdom.

It does not occur to space that
 "I am near to this,
 or,
 I am far from that."
 For space
 does not make such discriminations.

Just so
 it does not occur to a Bodhisattva
 who courses in perfect wisdom
 that

“full enlightenment is near to me,
the level of Disciple and Pratyekabuddha
is far from me.”

For the perfection of wisdom
does not make any discriminations.

It is
as with a man
created by magical illusion
to whom it does not occur that
“the conjurer is near to me,
but the assembled crowd of spectators
is far from me.”

For illusory men
make no such discriminations.

It is
as with the reflection of an object
in a mirror or in water,
to whom it does not occur that
“the object which produces the reflection
is near to me,
but those who come along in that mirror
or bowl of water,
are far from me.”

For that reflection of an object
makes no discrimination.

Just as a Tathagata,
because he has forsaken all constructions
and discriminations,
finds nothing dear or not dear,
just so a Bodhisattva
who courses in perfect wisdom.

For there is no discrimination
on the part of perfect wisdom.

Just as the Tathagata
is one who has forsaken all constructions
and discriminations,

even so
perfect wisdom
has forsaken all constructions
and discriminations.

It does not occur
to a fictitious creature
which the Tathagata
has magically conjured up
that
“the level of Disciples and Pratyekabuddhas is far from me,
full enlightenment is near to me.”

For that fictitious creature
does not make any discriminations.

In the same way
a Bodhisattva
who courses in perfect wisdom
does not think that
“the level of Disciples and Pratyekabuddhas is far from me,
full enlightenment is near to me.”

And that
simply because of lack
of all discrimination
on the part of the perfection of wisdom.

A fictitious creature
[who has been conjured up
by the Tathagata]
to do a certain work
[in converting beings],
performs that work,
but remains without discrimination.

Just because it is so constituted
that it lacks all discrimination.

Just so
a Bodhisattva performs the work
for the sake of which
he develops the perfection of wisdom,
but the perfection of wisdom
remains without discrimination.

Because it is so constituted
that it lacks all discrimination.

An expert mason,
or mason's apprentice,
might make of wood
an automatic man or woman,
a puppet
which could be moved
by pulling the strings.

Whatever action it were made to perform,
that action it would perform.
And yet that wooden machine
would have no discriminations.

Because it is so constituted
that it lacks all discrimination.

Just so
a Bodhisattva performs the work
for the sake of which he develops
the perfection of wisdom,
but the perfection of wisdom
remains without discrimination.

Because that perfection of wisdom
is so constituted
that it lacks all discriminations.

Chapter XXVII The Core

1. The Bodhisattva's Courage in Difficulties

Sariputra: In the core
and substance of things
verily courses a Bodhisattva
who courses in perfect wisdom!

Subhuti: In something unsubstantial,
verily courses a Bodhisattva
who courses in perfect wisdom.

Thereupon this occurred
to many thousands of Gods
of the realm of sense-desire:

Homage is due to those beings
who raise their thoughts to,
and who consummate their thoughts
in full enlightenment,

who course in this
deep perfection of wisdom,

and who,
when they course thus,
do not realize the reality-limit,
be it on the level of a Disciple
or that of a Pratyekabuddha.

In this way also
should the Bodhisattvas be known
as doers of what is hard,
when they course
in the true nature of dharma,
but do not realize it.

Subhuti read their thoughts,
and said to them:

Not that is hard
 for those Bodhisattvas
 that they do not realize the reality-limit.

This, however,
 is hard for them,
 this is most hard for them,
 that they put on the armour
 of the resolution
 to lead countless beings to Nirvana,
 when absolutely
 those beings do not exist.
 And since they do not exist,
 they cannot be got at.

Owing to the isolatedness of beings,
 those who should be disciplined
 do thus
 absolutely not exist.

It is in this spirit
 that the Bodhisattvas
 have set out for full enlightenment,
 and have decided to discipline beings.

One would decide to discipline space,
 if one were to decide to discipline beings.
 For the isolatedness of beings
 should be known
 after the pattern
 of the isolatedness of space.

In this way also,
 Bodhisattvas are doers of what is hard,
 when they put on the armour
 for the sake of beings
 who do not exist,
 who cannot be got at.

One would decide to put on space
 if one were to decide to put on the armour
 for the sake of beings.
 And yet this armour has been put on
 by the Bodhisattvas
 for the sake of beings.

But that non-apprehension of beings,
 in [ultimate and] absolute reality,
 has been taught by the Tathagata.

And this non-apprehension of beings
 can be inferred from their isolatedness,
 and from the isolatedness
 of those who should be disciplined
 should the isolatedness
 of a Bodhi-being be inferred.

If a Bodhisattva,
 when this is being taught,
 does not lose heart,
 then one should know
 that he courses in the perfection of wisdom.

For from the isolatedness of a being
 should be known the isolatedness of form, etc.,
 and of all dharmas.

Thus should the isolatedness
 of all dharmas be viewed.

When the isolatedness of all dharmas
 is thus being taught,
 a Bodhisattva does not lose heart,
 and because of that
 he courses in the perfection of wisdom.

The Lord: For what reason
 does a Bodhisattva not lose heart
 when the isolatedness of all dharmas

is thus being taught?

Subhuti: Because of isolatedness
no dharma can ever lose heart.
For one cannot get at any dharma
that would lose heart,
nor at any dharma
that would make a dharma lose heart.

The Lord: So it is, Subhuti.
It is quite certain
that a Bodhisattva courses in perfect wisdom if,
when this is being taught,

demonstrated,
expounded and pointed out,

he does not lose heart,
is not cast down or depressed,

does not become cowed or stolid,
does not turn his mind away from it,
does not have his back broken,
and remains unafraid.

2. The Bodhisattva Protected by the Gods and Against Mara

Subhuti: So it is.
If a Bodhisattva courses thus,
then he courses in perfect wisdom.

And the Gods round Indra,
round Brahman,
round Prajapati,

round Ishana,
and the crowds of men and women
round the Rishis
will
from a distance

pay homage with folded hands
to a Bodhisattva who courses thus.

The Lord: And not only they,
but also all the other Gods,
up to the Akanishta Gods,
shall pay homage to him.

And with their Buddha-eye
the Tathagatas
who at present
reside in countless world systems

behold the Bodhisattva
who thus courses in perfect wisdom,
and they help him,
and bring him to mind.

It is quite certain, Subhuti,
that the Bodhisattvas
who course in perfect wisdom,
and who are helped
and brought to mind by the Tathagatas,
should be borne in mind
as irreversible from full enlightenment.

No obstacle put up by Mara
or anyone else can stop them.

Even if all beings
in the great trichiliocosm
should become evil Maras,

and if each one of them
would conjure up
just as many diabolic armies,
then even they
all together
would not have the strength
to obstruct on his way to full enlightenment

that Bodhisattva
 who is brought to mind by the Buddhas,
 and who courses in perfect wisdom.

And that would remain true
 even if all the beings
 in all the countless trichiliocosms
 should become evil Maras,
 and if each one of them
 should conjure up
 just as many diabolic armies.

The endowment with two dharmas
 safeguards a Bodhisattva
 against all attacks from the Maras,
 or their hosts:

He does not abandon any being,
 and he surveys all dharmas from emptiness.

Two other dharmas
 have the same effect:
 As he speaks
 so he acts,
 and he is brought to mind by the Buddhas, the Lords.

When a Bodhisattva courses thus,
 the Gods also will decide
 to go up to him.

They will decide to ask questions
 and counter-questions,
 to honour him,
 and to strengthen his determination
 by saying to him:

“Soon, son of good family,
 shall you know full enlightenment!
 Therefore go on dwelling
 in this dwelling of perfect wisdom!

For thereby you shall become a saviour of the helpless,
a defender of the defenceless,

a refuge to those without refuge,
a place to rest to those without resting place,
the final relief of those who are without it,

an island to those without one,
a light to the blind,

a guide to the guideless,
a resort to those without one,

and you shall guide to the path
those who have lost it,
and you shall become a support
to those who are without support.”

3. The Buddhas Praise the Bodhisattva

For the Buddhas and Lords,
who reside in the countless world-systems,
and who,
surrounded by the congregation of monks
and attended by a multitude of Bodhisattvas,
demonstrate dharma,

will proclaim the name,
clan,
power,
appearance and form
of a Bodhisattva
who courses and dwells in perfect wisdom,
and who is endowed with the virtues
of roaming in perfect wisdom.

And they will,
when they demonstrate Dharma,
exult over that Bodhisattva,
proclaiming his name,

clan,
power,
colour and form.

Just here and now I demonstrate dharma,
and I proclaim the name, etc.,
of the Bodhisattva Ratnaketu,
and of the Bodhisattva Sikhin.

I exult over them,
and also over the other Bodhisattvas
who just now lead the holy life
with the Tathagata Akshobhya.

In a similar way,
the Buddhas in other Buddha fields
proclaim the name,
etc.,
of those Bodhisattvas
who just now lead the holy life

here in my Buddha-field,
and who dwell
in the dwelling of perfect wisdom.
And they exult over them.

Subhuti: Do the Buddhas
honour all Bodhisattvas
in such a manner?

The Lord: No, Subhuti.
But only those who are irreversible
and free from all attachment.

Subhuti: Are there,
apart from the irreversible Bodhisattvas,
any other Bodhisattvas
whom the Buddhas honour
in such a manner?

The Lord: Yes, there are.
 They are persons belonging
 to the vehicle of the Bodhisattvas,
 who are strong in resisting the enemy.

They are just now
 engaged in learning
 the course of a Bodhisattva
 under the Tathagata Akshobhya,
 and the Bodhisattva Ratnaketu,
 course there
 on the pilgrimage of a Bodhisattva,
 and dwell engaged in learning it.

In addition,
 those Bodhisattvas
 who course in perfect wisdom,
 and who resolutely believe that
 “all dharmas fail to be produced”
 without,
 however,
 having so far acquired definitely
 the patient acceptance of dharmas
 which fail to be produced;

as well as those who resolutely believe that
 “all dharmas are calmly quiet,”
 without,
 however,
 having entered into the attainment
 of the irreversible domain over all dharmas;

those Bodhisattvas
 who dwell in this dwelling
 are honoured by the Buddhas
 in the above manner.

But Bodhisattvas
 of whom the Buddhas proclaim the name, etc.,
 and over whom they exult,

must have forsaken the level
of the Disciples and Pratyekabuddhas,
and one must expect them
to be on the level of the Buddha.
And they shall be predicted
to full enlightenment.

For Bodhisattvas
of whom the Buddhas proclaim the name, etc.,
and over whom they exult,
they also shall stand in irreversibility.

4. Enlightenment and Suchness

Moreover, Subhuti,
Bodhisattvas will stand in irreversibility
if,
when they hear
this deep perfection of wisdom being taught,
they resolutely believe in it,
are not stupefied,
do not hesitate or doubt;

if
in the resolute belief that
“so it is,
as the Tathagata has taught”
they go on listening to it in greater detail;

and if they make up their minds
that they will want to listen
in still greater detail
to this perfection of wisdom
in the presence of the Tathagata Akshobhya;

and if they will resolutely believe
when they listen
to just this perfection of wisdom
in the presence of persons
belonging to the vehicle of the Bodhisattvas

who in his Buddha-field lead the holy life.

Thus I teach
that merely to hear the perfection of wisdom achieves much.

How much more will be achieved
by those who resolutely believe in it,
who, after that,
take up a position in relation to Thusness
and progress to Thusness,

and who, after that,
stand firmly in Suchness
and who,
standing firmly in Suchness
and in all-knowledge,
will demonstrate dharma.

Subhuti: If, O Lord,
one cannot get at any different dharma,
distinct from Suchness,
then what is that dharma
that will stand firmly in Suchness,
or that will know full enlightenment,
or that will demonstrate this dharma?

The Lord: One cannot get at
any different dharma,
distinct from Suchness,
that will stand firmly in Suchness.

The very Suchness,
to begin with,
is not apprehended,
how much less
he who will stand firmly in Suchness.

Suchness does not know full enlightenment,
and no dharma is got at
that has known full enlightenment,

that will do so,
or that does so.

Suchness does not demonstrate dharma,
and that dharma cannot be got at
which would be demonstrated.

5. Emptiness and Dwelling in Perfect Wisdom

Sakra: Deep, O Lord,
is the perfection of wisdom.
Doers of what is hard
are the Bodhisattvas
who want to know full enlightenment.

For, indeed,
no dharma stands in Suchness,
no dharma knows full enlightenment,
no one demonstrates dharma.
And yet that does not cow them,
nor do they hesitate,
nor are they stupefied.

Subhuti: You say, Kausika,
that “doers of what is hard
are the Bodhisattvas who,
when dharmas as deep as these
are being taught,
feel neither hesitation nor stupefaction.”
But where all dharmas are empty
who can therein
feel hesitation or stupefaction?

Sakra: Whatever the holy Subhuti
may expound,
that he expounds
with reference to emptiness,
and he does not get stuck anywhere.

The holy Subhuti’s

demonstration of dharma
 does not get stuck anywhere,
 no more than an arrow
 shot into the air.

Then perhaps, O Lord,
 I,
 if I take into consideration
 Subhuti the Elder,
 as he thus teaches and expounds,
 may become one
 who correctly preaches the Tathagata-truth,
 a preacher of Dharma,
 and one who declares also
 the logical sequence of dharma.

The Lord: So it is, Kausika.
 When you teach and expound as he does,
 then you become one
 who correctly preaches the Tathagata-truth,
 a preacher of dharma,
 and one who declares also
 the dharma's logical sequence.

For whatever the Elder Subhuti makes clear,
 that he makes clear
 with reference to emptiness.

Because the Elder Subhuti does not,
 to begin with,
 even review
 or apprehend the perfection of wisdom,
 how much less
 him who courses
 in the perfection of wisdom.

Even enlightenment,
 to begin with,
 he does not get at,
 how much less at him

who will know full enlightenment.

Even all knowledge,
he does not get at,
how much less
at him who will reach all-knowledge.

Even Suchness
he does not get at,
how much less
at him who will become a Tathagata.

Even nonproduction,
he does not get at,
how much less
at him who will fully awake
to enlightenment.

Even the powers
he does not get at,
how much less at him
who will possess the powers.

Even the grounds of self-confidence
he does not review,
how much less
him who will be self-confident.

Even the dharma
he does not get at,
how much less
at him who will demonstrate dharma.

For Subhuti the Elder
dwells in the dwelling
of the isolatedness of all dharmas,
in the dwelling
of the baselessness of all dharmas.

And it is quite certain

that this dwelling
 in the isolatedness and baselessness
 of all dharmas,
 on the part of Subhuti the Elder,
 is of infinitesimal value
 compared with the dwelling of a Bodhisattva
 who courses in perfect wisdom,
 and who dwells in it.

Because,
 except for the dwelling of a Tathagata
 this dwelling of a Bodhisattva
 who courses in perfect wisdom,
 who dwells in it,
 surpasses all other dwellings.

This dwelling has been described
 as the foremost of all dwellings,

as the best,
 the choicest,

the most excellent,
 the most sublime,

the highest,
 the supreme,

the unequalled,
 the incomparable.

It surpasses the dwellings
 of all Disciples and Pratyekabuddhas.

Therefore then, Kausika,
 a son or daughter of good family
 who wants to arrive
 at what is the highest possible
 degree of perfection for all beings,
 to arrive at the best state,

the choicest state,
the most excellent state,

the most sublime state,
the incomparable state,

they should dwell
in this dwelling of the Bodhisattvas
who course in perfect wisdom,
who dwell in it.

Chapter XXVIII Avakirnakusuma

1. Prediction of Avakirnakusuma

Thereupon, at that time,
 one of the Gods of the Thirty-three
 seized Mandarava flowers,
 magnificent Mandarava flowers,
 and came to where the Lord was.

And just at that time,
 six thousand monks were assembled
 and seated in that assembly.

They rose from their seats,
 put their upper robes over one shoulder,
 placed their right knees on the earth,
 and saluted the Lord
 with their folded hands.

Through the Buddha's might
 their hands were then filled
 Mandarava flowers,
 with magnificent Mandarava flowers.

They scattered those flowers over the Lord, and said:

“We, O Lord,
 shall course in this perfection of wisdom!”

We, O Lord,
 shall dwell in the supreme dwelling
 of perfect wisdom.”

Thereupon, on that occasion,
 the Lord smiled.

But such is the nature
 of the Buddhas and Lords that,
 when they manifest a smile

[in an assembly of Bodhisattvas],
 then various coloured rays
 issue from the Lord's mouth,

rays blue, yellow,
 red, white,
 crimson, crystal,
 silverish and golden.

These rays illuminate
 endless and boundless world systems
 with their luster,
 they rise right up to the world of Brahma,

again return from there to the Lord,
 circulate thrice 'round the Lord,
 and then vanish again
 in the head of the Lord.

Thereupon the venerable Ananda
 rose from his seat,
 put his upper robe over one shoulder,
 placed his right knee on the earth,
 bent his folded hands towards the Lord,
 and said:

It is not without reason
 that the Tathagatas manifest a smile.
 What is the reason for your smile, O Lord?

The Lord: Those six thousand monks, Ananda,
 shall in a future period,
 in the Starlike aeon,
 know full enlightenment,
 and after that
 demonstrate dharma to beings.

They all shall bear the same name.
 With Avakirnakuṣṣuma for their name
 these Tathagatas

shall be teachers in the world.

They shall all have
 an equal congregation of disciples.
 They shall all live the same length of time,
 i.e., twenty thousand aeons.

Each one of them shall have
 an extensive holy writ,
 that shall spread widely
 among Gods and men.

In each case
 their good law shall abide
 for the same length of time,
 for twenty thousand aeons.

And showers of flowers,
 of all the five colours,
 shall descend on all of them

wherever they may leave the home
 which they had in village,
 town or marketplace,
 wherever they may turn the wheel of dharma,
 wherever they may dwell,
 wherever they may appear [among people].

2. Praise of Perfect Wisdom

Therefore then, Ananda,
 Bodhisattvas who want to dwell
 in the highest dwelling,
 who want to dwell
 in the dwelling of the Tathagata,
 should dwell
 in the dwelling of perfect wisdom.

And with any Bodhisattva
 who courses in perfect wisdom

one can be quite certain that he had,
 before he was reborn here among men,
 deceased among men
 or among the heavenly hosts of the Tushitas.

For it is among men and the Tushita Gods
 that this perfection of wisdom
 circulates in its full extent.

One can be certain
 that the Tathagatas
 behold those Bodhisattvas
 who course in this perfection of wisdom,

who learn it,
 bear it in mind,

study, preach,
 repeat,
 or merely write it,

and who also instruct the other Bodhisattvas,
 admonish,
 instigate and encourage them.

One should know
 that they have planted wholesome roots
 with the Tathagatas.

They have not only
 in the presence of Disciples
 and Pratyekabuddhas
 planted wholesome roots
 so as to train in perfect wisdom,

but,
 without any doubt,
 those Bodhisattvas
 who train in this perfection of wisdom
 and remain unafraid,

they have planted wholesome roots
with the Tathagatas.

Those who take up
this perfection of wisdom,
bear it in mind,
study,
preach,
repeat and write it,

who pursue it,
its meaning,
contents and method

one should be quite certain
that they have been face to face
with Tathagatas.

If Bodhisattvas do not revile
this perfection of wisdom,
do not oppose,
deny or reject it,

then one should know
that they have fulfilled their duties
under the Jinas of the past.

But if a Bodhisattva
does not go back on his vow
to win full enlightenment,
then he does not give the wholesome root,
which he has planted
in the presence of the Tathagatas,
over to Discipleship or Pratyekabuddhahood
as his reward.

And as a rule
such Bodhisattvas are grateful
and practise the perfection of wisdom.

3. Transmission of the Sutra to Ananda

Therefore then, Ananda,
again and again
I entrust and transmit to you
this perfection of wisdom,

laid out in letters,
so that it may be available for learning,
for bearing in mind,

preaching,
studying and spreading wide,

so that it may last long,
so that it may not disappear.

If, Ananda,
you should again forget
all the demonstrations of dharma
which you have learned directly from Me

the perfection of wisdom alone
being excepted

should cast them away,
and allow them to be forgotten,
that would be but a slight offence
against Me.

But if you should forget,
cast away
and allow to be forgotten
only one verse
of the perfection of wisdom,
or merely a part of a verse,

that would be a very serious offence
against Me,
and it would displease Me greatly.

And if,
 after you have learned
 the perfection of wisdom,
 you again forget it,
 cast it away,
 allow it to be forgotten,

then you fail in the respect,
 reverence and worship
 which you owe to Me,
 and to the other Buddhas and Lords,
 past, future and present.

Therefore, Ananda,
 remember that it would be a serious offence against Me,
 if,
 after you had learned
 the perfection of wisdom,

you should again forget it,
 cast it away,
 and allow it to be forgotten,
 and that would greatly displease Me.

For the Tathagata has said that
 “the perfection of wisdom is the mother,
 the creator,
 the genetrix of the past,
 future and present Tathagatas,
 their nurse in all-knowledge.”

Therefore then, Ananda,
 do I entrust and transmit to you
 this perfection of wisdom,
 so that it might not disappear.

This perfection of wisdom
 should be learned,
 should be borne in mind,

studied,
repeated,
written and developed.

You should attend well
to this perfection of wisdom,
bear it well in mind,
study it well,
and spread it well.

And when one learns it,
one should carefully analyze it grammatically,
letter by letter,
syllable by syllable,
word by word.

For as the dharma-body of the past,
future and present Tathagatas
is this dharma text authoritative.

In the same way in which, you,
Ananda,
behave towards Me
who at present reside as a Tathagata

with solicitude,
affection,
respect and helpfulness,

just so,
with the same solicitude,
affection and respect,
and in the same virtuous spirit,
should you learn this perfection of wisdom,

bear it in mind,
study,
repeat,

write and develop it,

respect,
revere and worship it.

That is the way for you to worship Me,
that is the way to show affection,
serene faith
and respect for the past,
future and present Buddhas and Lords.

If Ananda,
I, the Tathagata,
am dear and pleasant to you,
and you do not abandon Me,
may thereby this perfection of wisdom
become dear and pleasant to you,

and may you not abandon it,
so that you may not forget
even one single word of it,
so that it may not disappear.

For long could I speak to you
about this bestowal
of the perfection of wisdom,

for one kalpa,
or for the remainder of a kalpa,
for one hundred kalpas,

for up to hundreds of thousands
of kotis of kalpas, and more.

But,
to cut it short,
in the same way in which I am your teacher,
so is the perfection of wisdom.

In the same way in which the past,
future and present Buddhas and Lords
are the teachers of the world

with its Gods, men and Asuras,
just so is the perfection of wisdom.

Therefore then, Ananda,
with a measureless bestowal
I entrust and transmit to you
the perfection of wisdom,
which itself is measureless,
for the benefit and happiness of the world
with its Gods, men and Asuras.

If one does not want
to abandon the Tathagata,
or the Dharma,
or the Samgha,

if one does not want to abandon
the enlightenment of the past,
future and present Buddhas and Lords,
may one not abandon
the perfection of wisdom!

And there is this further admonition
that those who learn
this perfection of wisdom,

bear it in mind,
study,
repeat,
write and develop it,

they assist in the enlightenment
of the past,
future and present Buddhas and Lords.

For, whoever assists
this perfection of wisdom
when it is crumbling away,
he assists the enlightenment of the past,
future and present Buddhas and Lords.

Because from the perfection of wisdom
 has the enlightenment
 of the Buddhas and Lords come forth.
 And that holds good of all the Tathagatas,
 whether past, future or present.

Therefore,
 a Bodhisattva who wants to know
 full enlightenment
 and to train in the six perfections
 should listen to this perfection of wisdom,

study,
 repeat and write it,

and he should train
 in this very perfection of wisdom,
 and make endeavours about it.

For this perfection of wisdom is the mother, creator
 and genetrix of the Bodhisattvas.

It is thanks to the perfection of wisdom
 that any Bodhisattvas ever train
 in the six perfections,
 and at any time go forth
 to full enlightenment.

It is thanks to just this perfection of wisdom
 that they all go forth
 in the six perfections.

Because all the perfections
 come to nourish the supreme enlightenment
 after they have come forth
 from the perfection of wisdom.

Therefore then, Ananda,
 again and again,
 for a second time,

for a third time,
do I entrust and transmit
this perfection of wisdom to you,
so that it might not disappear.

For this perfection of wisdom
is the inexhaustible storehouse
of dharma for the Tathagatas.

The dharma which the Buddhas and Lords
have demonstrated to beings
in the past period,

in the world of birth-and-death
which has no beginning or end,

all that came
from just this storehouse of dharma,
from the perfection of wisdom.

And also the dharma
which the Buddhas and Lords will,
after their full enlightenment,
demonstrate to beings in the future period,
in the measureless world of birth-and-death,
also that will come
from just this storehouse of dharma,
from the perfection of wisdom.

And also the Buddhas and Lords
who just now reside
in countless world systems,
and demonstrate dharma,

they also have derived their revelation
from just this storehouse of dharma,
from the perfection of wisdom.

Inexhaustible therefore
is this storehouse of dharma,

the perfection of wisdom.

If, Ananda,
you should demonstrate dharma
on the Disciple-level
to persons belonging
to the vehicle of the Disciples,

and if as a result
of your demonstration of dharma
all the beings in the great trichiliocosm
would realize Arhatship,

you would not have done your duty
as My disciple
if in that way
you would keep moving after Me
the wheel of dharma,
and demonstrate dharma.

But if,
on the other hand,
you would demonstrate and reveal
but one single verse of the dharma
associated with the perfection of wisdom
to a Bodhisattva,

then I should be pleased with you,
who as My disciple turns after Me
the wheel of dharma,
and demonstrates dharma.

If you consider that demonstration
of dharma of yours
through which
the beings in the great trichiliocosm
have all been induced to attain Arhatship,

and of those Arhats
the meritorious work founded on giving,

on morality,
and on meditational development,
would all that constitute
a great heap of merit?

Ananda: It would, O Lord.

The Lord: A person belonging
to the vehicle of the Disciples
begets a greater merit than that
if he demonstrates to Bodhisattvas
the dharma associated
with the perfection of wisdom.

The merit is still greater
if it is a Bodhisattva who demonstrates
to another Bodhisattva
[a verse of] dharma
associated with the perfection of wisdom,

for even one single day only,
for a morning,
for an hour,

for half an hour,
for a minute,
nay for a second,
for a moment,
for the incidence of a single moment.

For the gift of dharma
on the part of a Bodhisattva
surpasses all the wholesome roots
of all those
who belong to the vehicle of the Disciples
or Pratyekabuddhas.

It is quite impossible
that a Bodhisattva who is thus endowed
with wholesome roots,

who thus brings to mind
 that wholesome root,
 could possibly turn away
 from full enlightenment.
 That cannot be.

4. Akshobhya's Buddha-Field

Thereupon the Lord on that occasion
 exercised His wonderworking power.

The entire assembly
 monks, nuns,
 laymen and lay women,

Gods, Nagas,
 Yakshas, Gandharvas,

Asuras, Garudas,
 Kinnaras, Mahoragas,

men and ghosts

they all,
 through the Buddha's might,
 saw the Tathagata Akshobhya
 surrounded by the congregation of monks,

accompanied by a retinue of Bodhisattvas demonstrating dharma,
 in an assembly which was vast
 like the ocean,
 deep and imperturbable

surrounded and accompanied
 by Bodhisattvas who
 were endowed with unthinkable qualities,
 all of them Arhats,

their outflows exhausted,
 undefiled,

fully controlled,
quite freed in their hearts,
well freed and wise,

thoroughbreds,
great Serpents,

their work done,
their task accomplished,
their burden laid down,
their own weal accomplished,

with the fetters that bound them
to becoming extinguished,
their hearts well freed
by right understanding,
in perfect control of their entire hearts.

Thereupon the Lord again withdrew
His wonderworking power.

The Lord Akshobhya,
the Tathagata,
then no longer appeared,

and all those Bodhisattvas
and great Disciples,
and that Buddha-field
no longer came within the range of vision
of the members of the Lord's assembly.

For the Tathagata had drawn in
His wonderworking power.

And The Lord said to Ananda:

In the same way, Ananda,
all dharmas
do not come within the range of vision.

Dharmas
do not come within the range of vision
of dharmas,
dharmas do not see dharmas,
dharmas do not know dharmas.

For all dharmas are of such a nature
that they can be neither known nor seen,
and they are incapable of doing anything.

For all dharmas are inactive,
they cannot be grasped,
because they are as inactive as space.

All dharmas are unthinkable,
similar to illusory men.

All dharmas are unfindable,
because they are in a state of non-existence.

When he courses thus
a Bodhisattva courses in perfect wisdom
and he does not settle down
in any dharma.

When he trains thus,
a Bodhisattva trains in perfect wisdom.

If a Bodhisattva wants to attain
the great enlightenment,
which is the highest perfection
of all training,
then he should train in perfect wisdom.

For the training in perfect wisdom
has been described
as the foremost of all trainings,

as the best,
the choicest,

the most excellent,
the most sublime,

the highest,
the utmost,

the unequalled,
the incomparable,

it has been said to bring benefit
and happiness to all the world,

it has been described
as a protector of the helpless,
it has been ordained
and extolled by the Buddha.

The Tathagatas could,
as a result of training
in this perfection of wisdom,
of having stood in this training,
lift up this great trichiliocosm
with one big toe,
and then just let it drop again.

But it would not occur
to those Buddhas and Lords that
“this great trichiliocosm has been lifted up,
has been dropped again.”

For the perfect wisdom
is endowed with
immeasurable and incalculable qualities.

As a result of training in this training
of perfect wisdom,
the Buddhas and Lords
have reached a state of non-attachment to past,
future and present dharmas.

Of all the possible trainings in the past,
 future and present period,
 this training in perfect wisdom
 is the foremost,

the best,
 the choicest,

the most excellent,
 the most sublime,

the highest,
 the utmost,

the unequalled,
 the incomparable.

5. Extinction, Non-extinction, and Perfect Wisdom

For perfect wisdom has no limits,
 it is inexhaustible and boundless.
 Because limits,
 exhaustion and bounds
 are absent in perfect wisdom.

To attribute limits,
 exhaustion and bounds to perfect wisdom
 be like attributing them to space.

For the perfection of wisdom is unlimited,
 inexhaustible and boundless.

I have not taught
 that the perfection of wisdom
 has any limits,
 that it can be exhausted,
 that it has any bounds.

The sum total of the words
 contained in this Sutra

on perfect wisdom
 certainly has its limits
 but not so the perfection of wisdom itself

for the sum total of the words
 in this Sutra
 is not identical
 with the perfection of wisdom itself.

Perfect wisdom itself
 is not subject to any limitations,
 it is without any limits whatever.

Ananda: For what reason again
 has the Lord not taught any limits
 to perfect wisdom?

The Lord: Because it is inexhaustible
 and isolated.

One cannot even apprehend
 the isolatedness of an isolated dharma,
 how much less can there be
 a definite circumference to it?

Thus,
 as beyond all measurements
 the perfection of wisdom is unlimited,
 without any limits whatever.

The Tathagatas of the past
 have drawn their strength
 from just this perfection of wisdom,
 and yet it has not been exhausted,
 nor become extinct.

The Tathagatas of the future also
 shall draw their strength
 from just this perfection of wisdom,
 and yet it shall not be exhausted,

shall not become extinct.

Those Tathagatas also
 who just now reside
 in countless world systems,
 they also draw their strength
 from just this perfection of wisdom,
 and yet it does not become exhausted
 or extinct.

I also,
 who am a Tathagata just now,
 I also draw My strength
 from just this perfection of wisdom,
 and yet it does not become exhausted,
 or extinct.

One can exhaust the perfection of wisdom
 no more than one can exhaust space.
 This perfection of wisdom
 is therefore quite inexhaustible.

Thereupon it occurred to the venerable Subhuti:

Deep is this station
 which the Tathagata has taught.
 Let me then now question the Tathagata
 about this station.

And Subhuti said to the Lord:
 Inexhaustible, O Lord,
 is perfect wisdom!

The Lord: Because it cannot become extinct,
 since, like space,
 it cannot be extinguished,
 and since all dharmas
 have not been produced.

Subhuti: How should a Bodhisattva

consummate the perfection of wisdom?

The Lord:

Through the non-extinction of form, etc.

Through the non-extinction of ignorance,
of the karma-formations,
of consciousness,
of name and form,

of the six sense-fields,
of contact,
of feeling,
of craving,
of grasping,
of becoming,

of birth,
of decay and death,

of grief,
lamentation,
pain,
sadness and despair.

In this manner
the Bodhisattva surveys
conditioned coproduction in such a way
that he avoids the duality of the extremes.

He surveys it
without seeing any beginning,
end or middle.

To survey conditioned coproduction
in this manner,
that is the special dharma
of the bodhisattva
who is seated
on the terrace of enlightenment.

When he thus surveys conditioned coproduction
he acquires the cognition of the all-knowing.

For a Bodhisattva who,
while he courses in perfect wisdom
through this consummation
of non-extinction,
surveys conditioned coproduction,

cannot stand on the level of Disciple
or Pratyekabuddha,
but he must stand in all-knowledge.

Some Bodhisattvas may turn away
from supreme enlightenment,
if,
because they have failed to resort
to these mental activities
[which aspire to the consummation
of non-extinction]
and to this skill in means,

they do not know how a Bodhisattva
who courses in perfect wisdom
should consummate perfect wisdom
through the consummation
of non-extinction,

and how conditioned coproduction
should be surveyed
in the perfection of wisdom
through the consummation
of non-extinction.

All Bodhisattvas
who at any time
turn away from full enlightenment
do so
because they did not resort

to this skill in means.

All those Bodhisattvas
 who at any time
 do not turn away from full enlightenment,
 do so thanks to this perfection of wisdom.

In this way
 should a Bodhisattva
 who courses in perfect wisdom
 consummate perfect wisdom
 through the consummation
 of non-extinction.

And in this way
 should conditioned coproduction
 be surveyed in the perfection of wisdom,
 through the consummation
 of non-extinction.

A Bodhisattva
 who thus surveys conditioned coproduction,
 does certainly not review any dharma
 that is being produced without a cause

nor does he review any dharmas
 as permanent,
 stable,
 eternal,
 not liable to reversal,

nor does he review any dharmas
 as a doer
 or a feeler.

This is the surveying
 of conditioned coproduction
 on the part of a Bodhisattva
 who consummates this perfection of wisdom
 through the consummation of non-extinction,

and who courses
in this perfection of wisdom.

At the time when a Bodhisattva,
consummating the perfection of wisdom
through the consummation of non-extinction,
surveys conditioned coproduction,

at that time
he does not review form
as if it were a real separate entity,
nor feelings,
perceptions,
impulses or consciousness;

nor ignorance,
karma-formations, etc.,
to decay and death,

sorrow, lamentation,
pain, sadness, and despair;

nor does he review the fact that
“this is my Buddha-field”
as if it were real,
nor the fact that
“that is another Buddha-field,”

nor does he review as real
any dharma by which he could distinguish
between this
and other Buddha-fields.

This, Subhuti,
is the perfection of wisdom
of the Bodhisattvas,
the great beings.

6. Advantages Derived from Perfect Wisdom

When a Bodhisattva
 courses in perfect wisdom,
 Mara the Evil One
 feels struck with the dart of great sorrow,
 just as a man does
 when his mother or father have died.

Subhuti: Is this affliction
 confined to one Mara,
 or does it affect many
 Maras,
 or does it extend to all the Maras
 in the great trichiliocosm?

The Lord: At the time
 when Bodhisattvas dwell in the dwelling
 of perfect wisdom
 at that time
 all the Maras in the great trichiliocosm
 feel struck with the dart of great sorrow,
 and they cannot sit still
 on their respective thrones.

For the entire world,
 with its Gods,
 men and Asuras,
 cannot gain entry to a Bodhisattva
 who dwells within the dwelling
 of perfect wisdom,

it cannot gain a foothold
 which would allow it
 to take possession of him,
 to hurt him,
 to turn him away from full enlightenment.

Therefore then, Subhuti,
 a Bodhisattva who wants to know

full enlightenment
should course in perfect wisdom.

For in a Bodhisattva
who courses in perfect wisdom
the perfection of giving
arrives at its most perfect development,
and so do the perfections of morality,
patience,
vigour,
and concentration.

In him
all the six perfections
arrive at their most perfect development,
and also all the varieties of skill in means.

Whatever deeds of Mara
may arise in a Bodhisattva
who courses in perfect wisdom,
he shall wisely know them
when they are taking place,
and he shall get rid of them again.

A Bodhisattva who wants to acquire
all the varieties of skill in means
should course in perfect wisdom,
and develop it.

At the time when a Bodhisattva
courses in perfect wisdom,
and aspires for it,

he should bring to mind
not only the Buddhas and Lords
who reside in countless world systems,

but also their all-knowledge
which has come forth
from this perfection of wisdom.

He should then produce the thought that
 “also I shall reach those dharmas
 which those Buddhas and Lords
 have reached!”

For a day,
 or even down to the time
 taken up by a finger snap,
 should a Bodhisattva
 who courses in perfect wisdom
 raise such thoughts and aspire to them.

But a Bodhisattva who would
 even for one day,
 or even for the duration of a fingersnap,
 aspire for this perfection of wisdom
 would beget more merit
 than a Bodhisattva who leans on a basis,
 and who for countless aeons gives gifts.

Such a Bodhisattva
 will stand in irreversibility.

A Bodhisattva
 who courses in perfect wisdom
 and who,
 even for a day,
 or even for the duration of a finger snap,
 raises such thoughts,
 has,
 we know,
 been brought to mind by the Tathagatas.
 How much more so
 one who daily pursues such thoughts.

What future destiny
 should one expect a Bodhisattva to have
 whom the Tathagatas have brought to mind?
 No other destiny

except full enlightenment
can be expected of him.

He cannot be possibly reborn
in the states of woe.

One must expect
that he will be reborn in heaven,
and that even there
he will not be without the Tathagatas,
and that he will mature beings.

These are the qualities and advantages
of a Bodhisattva
who courses in perfect wisdom,

who aspires for perfect wisdom,
and who raises such thoughts,
if even for the length of a finger snap.

How much greater will be the advantage
of one who pursues such thoughts daily,
as for instance
the Bodhisattva Gandhahastin
who just now leads the holy life
in the presence of the Tathagata Akshobhya.

Chapter XXIX Approaches

Furthermore, Subhuti,
a Bodhisattva should approach
the perfection of wisdom as follows:

Through non-attachment to all dharmas.

From the nondifferentiatedness
of all dharmas.

From the fact that all dharmas
cannot possibly come about.

In the conviction that
“all dharmas are equal
in remaining unaffected by change.”

Because he has recognized by wisdom
that all dharmas,
as without self,
give us no hint
[about their true nature or intentions].

In the conviction that
“all talk about dharmas
[is extraneous to them],
consists in mere words,
mere conventional expressions,”

but the conventional expression
does not refer to anything real,
it is not derived from anything real,
nor is itself anything real.

In the conviction that
“all dharmas
lie outside conventional expression
and discourse,

that it is not they
that have been conventionally expressed
or uttered.”

From the unlimitedness of all dharmas.

By penetration into all dharmas.

From the fact that all dharmas
are perfectly pure in their original nature.

From the fact that all dharmas
are beyond words.

Because
all the different kinds of forsaking
are really equal [in value and kind],
since all dharmas have never been stopped.

Because Suchness is everywhere the same,
since all dharmas
have already attained Nirvana.

In the conviction that
“all dharmas do not come,
nor do they go;
they cannot be generated,
they are unborn,
their non-birth being absolute.”

Because he observes neither himself
nor others.

In the conviction that
“all dharmas are holy Arhats,
perfectly pure in their original nature.”

In the conviction that
“all dharmas have put down their burden,
because no burden

had ever been put on them.”

From the fact that
all dharmas have neither place
nor locality.
For form, etc., is without place and locality,
in accordance with the own-being
of its original nature.

Because he is exhilarated
by the cessation of all dharmas.

Because he feels neither content
nor discontent.

Because he becomes neither impassioned nor dispassionate.
For form, etc., in their nature reality,
in their own-being,
do not become either impassioned
or dispassioned.

In the conviction that
“the original nature [of all dharmas],
is perfectly pure.”

In the conviction that,
“all dharmas are non-attached,
free from both attachment
and non-attachment.”

In the conviction that
“all dharmas
are essentially enlightenment,
because they are all equally understood
by the Buddha-cognition.”

From the emptiness,
Signlessness
and Wishlessness of all dharmas.

In the cognition that
 “all dharmas are essentially
 a healing medicine,
 because they are controlled by friendliness.”

In the conviction that
 “all dharmas are dwellers in friendliness,
 dwellers in compassion,
 dwellers in sympathetic joy,
 dwellers in impartiality.”

In the conviction that
 “all dharmas are identified
 with the supreme universal spirit,
 because in their being no faults can arise,
 because in their essential being
 all faults remain unproduced.”

In the conviction that
 “all dharmas
 are equally neither hopeful nor hostile.”

One should approach the boundlessness
 of the perfection of wisdom
 through [the analogy
 of] the boundlessness of the ocean;

through [the analogy of]
 the multicolored brilliance of Meru.

One should approach the boundlessness
 of the perfection of wisdom:
 from the boundlessness of form,
 etc.;

through the [analogy
 of] boundless illumination
 shed by the circle of the sun’s rays;

from the boundlessness of all sounds;

from the boundlessness
of the final achievement
of all the dharmas of a Buddha;

from the boundlessness
[of the excellence]
of the equipment
of the whole world of beings with merit
and cognition;

from the boundlessness
of the element of earth;
and so from the boundlessness
of the elements of water,
fire,
air,
space and consciousness.

One should approach
the unlimitedness
of the perfection of wisdom
from the unlimitedness
of the collection
of wholesome and unwholesome dharmas;

from the unlimitedness
of the collection of all dharmas.

One should approach the boundlessness
of the perfection of wisdom:
through the acquisition
of the boundlessness

of the concentration
and all dharmas;

from the boundlessness
of all Buddha-dharmas;

from the boundlessness of all dharmas;

from the boundlessness of emptiness;

from the boundlessness of thought
and its constituents;

from the boundlessness of thoughts
and actions.

One should approach the measureless
of the perfection of wisdom
from the measureless of wholesome
and unwholesome dharmas.

One should approach
the resounding declarations
of the perfection of wisdom
through the [analogy
of the] roaring of the lion's roar.

One should approach the fact
that the perfection of wisdom
cannot be shaken by outside factors
from the fact
that all dharmas cannot be shaken
by outside factors.

For form, etc.,
is like the ocean.

Form,
and each skandha,
is like the firmament;

like the brilliant and multicolored Meru;

like the production of the rays
of the disk of the sun;

boundless like all sounds;

boundless like the whole world of beings;

boundless like the final achievement
of the dharmas of a Buddha;

boundless like the equipment
with merit and cognition of all beings
in the world;

it is like the earth,
like water,
fire,
air,
space and consciousness;

it has not definite boundary
like the collection of all wholesome
and unwholesome dharmas;

it has no definite boundary
like the collection of all dharmas.

Form is the departure [into Buddhahood],
the own-being of form
is the Buddha-dharmas
which are essentially the Suchness of form; etc.,

to:
consciousness is departure
[into Buddhahood],
the own-being of consciousness
is the Buddha-dharmas
which are essentially
the Suchness of consciousness.

Form,
and each skandha,
is the boundless true nature of all dharmas;

the empty,
boundless true nature [of things];

the boundlessness of thought
and its constituents;

it gives rise to thoughts and actions;
it is wholesome or unwholesome
until there is non-apprehension;

it is like the lion's roar;
it cannot be shaken by outside factors.

In such ways should a Bodhisattva
approach perfect wisdom.

If the Bodhisattva
approaches perfect wisdom in this way,

apperceives it,
enters into it,

understands it,
reflects on it,

examines,
investigates, and develops it,

with acts of mind that have abandoned
all deception and deceit,

all conceit,

the exaltation of self,

all laziness,
the deprecation of others,

the notion of self,
the notion of a being,

gain,
honour and fame,
the five hindrances,
envy and meanness,
and all vacillation,

then it will not be hard for him
to gain the full perfection
of all virtues,
of the Buddha-field
and of the supreme dharmas of a Buddha.

Chapter XXX Sadaprarudita

1. Sadaprarudita Sets Out to Find Perfect Wisdom

Furthermore, Subhuti,
 one should search for perfect wisdom
 as the Bodhisattva Sadaprarudita has done,
 who at present leads the holy life
 in the presence of the Tathagata Bhishmagarjitanirghoshasvara.

Subhuti: How then
 did the Bodhisattva Sadaprarudita
 search for the perfection of wisdom?

The Lord: First of all,
 Sadaprarudita,
 the Bodhisattva,
 searched for perfect wisdom in such a way
 that he did not care for his body,
 had no regard for his life,

and gain, honour and fame
 did not interest him.

He found himself
 in the seclusion of a remote forest,
 and a voice up in the air said to him:

Go East, son of good family!
 There you shall hear
 the perfection of wisdom!

And on your way
 you must not pay attention
 to the weariness of your body,

you must not give in to any fatigue,
 you must pay no attention to food or drink,
 to day or night,
 to cold or heat.

You must not make any definite plans,
 either about inward,
 or about outward things.

You must not look to the left or right,
 to the South,
 East,
 West or North,
 upwards or downwards,
 or in any of the intermediate directions.

And you must not allow yourself
 to be shaken by self or individuality,
 or by form
 or the other skandhas.

For one who is shaken by those,
 he is turned away
 from the Buddha-dharmas.

When he is turned away
 from the Buddha-dharmas,
 then he wanders in birth-and-death.
 And when he wanders in birth-and-death,
 then he does not course in perfect wisdom,
 then he cannot reach
 the perfection of wisdom.

Sadaprarudita said to the voice:
 That is how I shall act.
 Because I want to bring light to all beings,
 because I want to procure
 the dharmas of a Buddha.

The Voice answered: Well spoken,
 son of good family!

Thereupon the Bodhisattva Sadaprarudita
 again listened to the voice,

and what he heard was this:

Son of good family,
 you should search for perfect wisdom
 after you have produced the firm conviction
 that all dharmas are void,
 signless and wishless.

You must shun signs,
 existence,
 and the false view that there are beings.

You must shun bad friends.
 Good friends,

however,
 you should tend,
 love and honour.
 They are those who demonstrate dharma,
 and who teach that

“all dharmas are void,
 signless and wishless,
 not produced,
 not stopped and non-existent.”

When you progress like this,
 you shall before long
 be able to study the perfection of wisdom
 either from a book,
 or from the mouth of a monk
 who preaches dharma.

And you should treat as the Teacher
 that person from whom
 you may come to hear
 the perfection of wisdom,
 you should be grateful and thankful,
 and you should think :

“This is my good friend.
 When I have heard
 the perfection of wisdom from him,
 I shall soon become irreversible
 from full enlightenment,

shall be quite near the Tathagatas,
 shall be reborn in Buddha-fields
 in which Tathagatas are not lacking,

and,
 avoiding the unfortunate rebirths,
 I shall accomplish
 an auspicious rebirth!”

When you weigh up these advantages,
 you are bound to treat that monk
 who preaches dharma
 as the Teacher.

You should not follow him
 with motives of worldly gain,
 but from desire for dharma,
 out of respect for dharma.

You must also see through Mara’s deeds,
 for there is always Mara,
 the Evil One,
 who may
 suggest that you teacher tends,
 enjoys and honour things
 that can be seen, heard,
 smelled,
 tasted or touched,

when in actual fact he does so
 from skill in means,
 and has really risen above them.

You should therefore

not lose confidence in him,
but say to yourself:

“I do not know that skill in means
as he wisely knows it.

He tends,
enjoys and honours those dharmas,
in order to discipline beings,
in order to win wholesome roots for them.
For no attachment to objective supports
exist in Bodhisattvas.”

After that you should contemplate
the true reality of dharmas,

i.e.,
that all dharmas are without
both defilement and purification.

For all dharmas are empty
in their own-being,
they have none of the properties
of a living being,

they have no life,
no individuality,
no personality,

they are like an illusion,
a dream,
an echo,
a reflected image.

When you thus contemplate
the true reality of all dharmas,
and follow the preacher of dharma,
you shall
before long
go forth into the perfection of wisdom.

But you must watch out
for yet another deed of Mara.

If the preacher of dharma
should dishearten you by what he says,
that should not make you averse
to the perfection of wisdom;

but
with a mind that desires only dharma,
that respects only dharma,
you should,
unwearied,
follow the monk who preaches dharma.

After receiving this admonition
from the voice,
the Bodhisattva Sadaparudita
journeyed East.

Before long it occurred to him
that he had not asked the voice
how far he ought to go.
He stood still just where he was,
cried,
sorrowed and lamented.

For seven days he stayed in that very spot
waiting to be told where he could hear
the perfection of wisdom,
and all that time he paid no attention
to anything else,
and took no food,
but simply paid homage
to perfect wisdom.

A man, Subhuti,
who had lost his only child,
would be very sad and unhappy,

and he could think of one thing only,
his son,
and the sorrow he feels from him.

Even so
the Bodhisattva Sadaprarudita
could at that time
think of nothing else, except

“when then shall I hear
this perfection of wisdom?”

2. Description of Gandhavati, and of Dharmodgata’s Life

When Sadaprarudita thus sorrowed
and pined away,
a Tathagata-frame
[suddenly] stood before him,
gave his approval and said:

Well spoken, son of good family!
For the Tathagatas of the past,
when they were Bodhisattvas,
have also searched for perfect wisdom
in the same spirit
in which you just now search for it.

In this same spirit of vigour
and determination,
of zeal and zest,
do you go East!

There,
five hundred leagues away from here,
is a town called Gandhavati.
It is built of the seven precious things.

It is twelve leagues long
and twelve leagues broad,
and enclosed by seven walls,

seven moats
and seven rows of palm trees.

It is prosperous and flourishing,
secure from attack,
contains abundant provisions
and is full of beasts and men.

Five hundred rows of shops
run through the town
from one end to the other,

beautiful to behold
like a well-coloured painting,
arranged one by one in regular succession,

and in between them
well-constructed sites
and passages are erected,
respectively for vehicles drawn by animals,
for palanquins,
and for pedestrians,
so that there is plenty of room for all.

The walls all round that town
are made of the seven precious substances.
Their well-founded copings
slope into the golden river Jambu.
And on each coping grows a tree,
made of the seven precious things,
laden with various fruits,
also made of precious things.

All around
between each tree and the next,
hangs a string,
also made of precious substances.

A network of small bells
is fastened on the strings,

and thus surrounds the entire city.
 When stirred by the wind,
 the small bells give out a sweet,
 charming and delightful sound,
 just like the sound
 from the five musical instruments
 when they are played in harmony
 by the Gandharvas,
 skilled in songs.

And that sound causes those beings to divert,
 enjoy and amuse themselves.

The moats all around the city
 are full of water which flows gently along,
 neither too cold nor too hot.

The boats on that river are brilliant
 with the seven precious things,
 beautiful to behold,

and their existence
 is a reward of the past deeds
 of the inhabitants
 who,
 aboard them,
 divert,
 enjoy and amuse themselves.

The water is everywhere covered
 with blossoms of the blue lotus,
 of the pink lotus,
 of the white lotus
 and with other most beautiful
 and fragrant flowers.

There is no species of flowers
 in the great trichiliocosm
 that is not found there.

All around that city
 there are five hundred parks,
 beautiful to behold,
 brilliant with the seven precious things.

Each park has five times five hundred
 large lotus ponds,
 covered with beautiful blossoms,
 each of the size of a cartwheel,
 fragrant,
 blue, yellow,
 red and white.

The sounds of geese, cranes,
 ducks, curlews
 and other birds
 fill the air over the ponds.

And the existence of those parks
 which they do not regard
 as their own private property

is a reward
 for the past deeds of those beings,
 for they had coursed for a long time
 in the perfection of wisdom,

their minds faithfully devoted
 to the Guide of the Buddhas
 and
 bent on listening to her
 and understanding her,
 and
 for a long time
 they had been intent on deep dharmas.

And there,
 in that city of Gandhavati,
 at a place where four roads meet,
 is the house

of the Bodhisattva Dharmodgata,

one league all round,
 bright with the seven precious things,
 beautiful to behold,
 enclosed by seven walls
 and seven rows of palm trees.

There are four parks near the house,
 for the enjoyment of those who live in it.
 They are called Nityapramudita, Asoka,
 Sokavigata, and Pushpacitra.

Each park has eight lotus ponds,
 called Bhadra, Bhadrottama,
 Nandi, Nandottama,
 Kshama, Kshamottama,
 Niyata and Avivaha.

One side of each pond is gold,
 the second of silver,
 the third of vaidurya,
 the fourth of crystal.

The ground at the bottom
 consists of quartz,
 with golden sand over it.

Each pond has eight stairs to it,
 decorated with steps,
 made of variegated jewels.

In the gaps between the steps,
 inside the golden river Jambu,
 grows a plantain tree.

The ponds are covered
 with various kinds of water flowers,
 and the air above them
 is filled with the sounds of various birds.

Round these ponds
 grow various flowering trees,
 and
 when they are stirred by the wind,
 their flowers drop into the ponds.

The water in the ponds
 has the scent, colour,
 taste, and feel of sandalwood.

In this mansion
 lives the Bodhisattva Dharmodgata,
 with his retinue,
 among them
 sixty-eight thousand women.

He diverts,
 enjoys and amuses himself,
 he feels and tastes
 the five kinds of sense-pleasure.

All the inhabitants of that city,
 both women and men,
 divert,
 enjoy and amuse themselves,

they have constant joy in the parks
 and on the ponds
 and they feel and taste
 the five kinds of sense-pleasure.

The Bodhisattva Dharmodgata,
 however,
 with his retinue,
 diverts,
 enjoys and amuses himself
 only for a certain time,
 and thereafter he always demonstrates
 the perfection of wisdom.

And the citizens of that town
 built a pulpit
 for the Bodhisattva Dharmodgata
 in the central square of the town.

It has a golden base,
 then a cotton mattress is spread on that,
 then a woolen cover,
 a cushion
 and a silken cloth
 are put on top of that.

High up in the air,
 half a Kos high,
 there an awning,
 shining with pearls,
 even and firm.

All round that pulpit
 flowers of the five colours
 are strewed and scattered,
 and the pulpit itself
 is scented with various perfumes.

So pure is the heart of Dharmodgata,
 so great the respect
 of his hearers for dharma.

Seated on that pulpit
 the Bodhisattva Dharmodgata
 demonstrates the perfection of wisdom.

The citizens of that town
 listen to his teaching
 with great respect for dharma,
 with trust in dharma,
 with faith in what is worthy of faith,
 with minds that are lifted up in faith.

In addition

many hundreds,
 many thousands,
 many hundreds of thousands
 of living beings,
 Gods and men,
 assemble there to listen.

Some of them
 explain the perfection of wisdom,
 some repeat it,
 some copy it,
 some follow it with wise attention.

All those beings
 are no longer doomed
 to fall into the states of woe,
 and they are irreversible
 from full enlightenment.

Son of good family,
 go to that Bodhisattva Dharmodgata!
 From him you shall hear
 the perfection of wisdom.

For he has been for a long time
 your good friend,
 he has summoned,
 instigated and encouraged you
 to win full enlightenment.

He also has,
 in the past,
 searched for the perfection of wisdom
 in the same way in which
 just now
 you search for it.

Go forth, son of good family,
 go on day and night,
 giving your undivided attention

to the task!
 Before long
 you shall hear the perfection of wisdom!

When the Bodhisattva Sadaprarudita
 had heard this,
 he became contented,
 elated,
 joyful,
 overjoyed and jubilant.

A man,
 hit with a poisoned arrow,
 could not think of anything else except:

“Where shall I find a surgeon,
 a skilled physician,
 who can pull out this arrow,
 and free me from this suffering.”

Just so
 the Bodhisattva Sadaprarudita
 at that time
 pays no attention to any dharma except:

”When shall I see that son of good family
 from whom
 I shall hear the perfection of wisdom?
 When I have heard that dharma,
 I shall forsake all attentions to a basis.”

Without leaving the place where he was
 Sadaprarudita then heard
 the Bodhisattva Dharmodgata
 demonstrating the perfection of wisdom.

3. List and Significance of Concentrations

As a result
 he produced a perception

which did not lean on any dharma.
 And he came face to face
 with many doors to concentration.

The names of the concentrations
 were as follows:

“It surveys the own-being of all dharmas,”

“The non-apprehension of the own-being
 of all dharmas,”

“Entrance to the cognition
 of the own-being of all dharmas,”

“Non-differentiation of all dharmas,”

“Spectator of the unchangeability
 of all dharmas,”

“Illuminator of all dharmas,”

“From all dharmas darkness has vanished,”

“It shatters the cognition of all dharmas,”

“It tosses all dharmas about,”

“The non-apprehension of all dharmas,”

“Bedecked with flowers,”

“Within its body
 it consummates all dharmas,”

“Having abandoned illusion,”

“Calling forth images
 reflected in a mirror,”

“Calling forth
the sounds of all beings,”

“Without any dirt,”

“Gladdening all beings,”

“A follower
of the vocal sounds of all beings,
from skill in means,”

“Consummation of the whole variety
of letters, words and vocal sounds,”

“The state which comes
from feeling no rigidity,”

“Inexpressible in its essential nature,”

“Attainment of unobstructed emancipation,”

“Visit from the king,”

“Grammatical analysis of speech
into words and letters,”

“It has insight into all dharmas,”

“It has left the sphere of all dharmas behind,”

“The unobstructed limit of all dharmas,”

“Fashioned like the firmament,”

“Like a thunderbolt,”

“The king is near,”

“The unrivalled king,”

“Victorious,”

“One cannot avert the eye,”

“Fixed on the element of dharma,”

“Come out of the element of dharma,”

“Granter of consolation,”

“It has roared like a lion,”

“No world for beings to be reborn in,”

“Free from dirt,”

“Undefined,”

“Lotus-array,”

“Annihilation of hesitation,”

“Follower of all substantial excellence,”

“Elevated above all dharmas,”

“Attainment of the super-knowledges,
the powers
and the grounds of self-confidence,”

“Piercer of all dharmas,”

“Seal of the desisting from becoming
on the part of all dharmas,”

“The ocean in which
all dharmas lose their becoming,”

“Spectator of all dharmas
without distinction,”

“It has left behind
the jungle of all views and actions,”

“Without darkness,”

“Without a sign of all dharmas,”

“Freed from all attachment,”

“Without a trace of laziness,”

“It sheds light on deep dharmas,”

“Fashioned like Meru,”

“Irresistible,”

“It shatters the circle of Mara’s army,”

“No inclination for anything
in the triple world,”

“Emission of rays,”

“Sight of the Tathagata,”

“Spectator of all Tathagatas.”

Established in these concentrations,
he saw the Buddhas and Lords
in the countless worlds
in the ten directions,
as they revealed
this very perfection of wisdom
to Bodhisattvas.

And those Tathagatas
applauded and comforted him,
and they said to him:

We also have
in the past,
when we were Bodhisattvas,
searched for the perfection of wisdom
in just the same way.

We also,
while we were searching,
acquired just those concentrations
which you have acquired just now.

After we had acquired them
we have gone on our route,
established in the perfection of wisdom
and the irreversible dharmas of a Buddha.

But when we survey
the original essential nature
and the own-being of these concentrations,
then we do not see any real dharma
that enters into them,
or that emerges from them,
that would course towards enlightenment,
or that would know full enlightenment.

This absence of imaginings
about any dharma whatsoever,
that is this perfection of wisdom.

Because we have stood firm
in the absence
of all self-conceited imaginings,

we have acquired our bodies
of golden color,
the thirty-two marks of the superman,
the eighty accessory marks,
and the splendid haloes around us,

and we have reached the unthinkable
and supreme cognition of Buddhas,

the wisdom of Buddhas,
the supreme concentration of Buddhas,

and
the perfection of all the dharmas
and qualities of Buddhas.

Even the Tathagatas
cannot grasp the measure,
nor define the boundary,
of that perfection of qualities,
how much less the Disciples
and Pratyekabuddhas.

You should therefore
fill your mind with respect
for these dharmas of the Buddhas,
so that you should increasingly desire them,
so that you should become more and more zealous for them.
Because the supreme enlightenment
is not hard to get for one who desires it,
who is zealous for it.

For the good friend also
should you arouse
intense respect and affection,
and serene should be
your confidence in him.

For it is when they have been
taken hold of by the good friend
that Bodhisattvas shall quickly know
full enlightenment.

Sadaprarudita asked the Tathagatas:
Who is our good friend?

The Tathagatas replied:
 The Bodhisattva Dharmodgata
 has for a long time matured you
 for the supreme enlightenment,
 he has upheld you,
 he has been your preceptor
 in perfect wisdom,
 in skill in means,
 and in the dharmas of a Buddha.

It was he who has upheld you,
 and for that friendly deed
 you must honour him
 in gratitude and thankfulness,
 and you must bear in mind
 what he has done for you.

If, son of good family,
 you should
 for one aeon,
 or for two aeons,

or for up to one hundred thousand aeons,
 or more,
 carry about the Bodhisattva Dharmodgata
 like a turban on your head,

would furnish him
 with everything that makes beings happy,
 and would present him with as many forms,
 sounds, smells,
 tastes and touchables
 as there are in the great trichilocosm, –

even then
 you would not have repaid
 that son of good family
 for what he has done for you.

For it has happened through his might

that you have acquired these concentrations,
 that you have heard of
 the perfection of wisdom
 and of skill in means,
 and that you have gained
 the perfection of wisdom.

4. Sadaprarudita and the Merchant's Daughter

After the Tathagatas had comforted
 the Bodhisattva Sadaprarudita,
 they again disappeared.
 But Sadaprarudita
 emerged from his concentrations,
 and asked himself

“whence have those Tathagatas come,
 and whither have they gone?”

Since he could no longer see
 those Tathagatas,
 he was worried and pined away for them.

He thought to himself:

“The holy Bodhisattva Dharmodgata
 has acquired the dharanis,
 he possesses the five superknowledges,

he has performed his duties
 under the Jinas of the past,
 he is my patron and good friend,
 who for a long time
 has done good to me.

When I have come to him
 I must ask him about this matter,
 ask him to explain
 whence those Tathagatas have come,
 and whither they have gone.”

Sadaprarudita thereupon
 nursed affection and confidence,
 esteem and respect
 for the Bodhisattva Dharmodgata.

He then reflected:

“With what kind of honoring gift
 could I now approach
 the Bodhisattva Dharmodgata?
 But I am poor,
 and have nothing of any value
 with which I could express my respect
 and reverence for him.

It would not be seemly
 for me to come without anything at all.
 But I am poor,
 and that now makes me sad
 and regretful.”

Such were the feelings,
 such was the attitude of reverence,
 with which the Bodhisattva Sadaprarudita
 proceeded on his journey.

In due course
 he reached a town,
 went to the midst of the marketplace,
 and decided
 that he would sell his own body,
 and with the price thereof
 do honour to the Bodhisattva Dharmodgata.

“For through the long night of the past,
 in the measureless cycle of birth-and-death,
 thousands of bodies of mine
 have been shattered,
 wasted,

destroyed and sold,
again and again.

I have experienced
measureless pains in the hells
for the sake of sense pleasures,
as a result of sense pleasures,
but never yet
on behalf of dharmas of this kind,
never yet for the purpose
of doing honour
to beings of such a kind.”

Sadaprarudita then went
to the middle of the marketplace,
lifted up his voice, and cried:

“Who wants a man?
Who wants a man?
Who wants to buy a man?”

Thereupon Mara,
the Evil One
thought to himself:

“Let's obstruct
this Bodhisattva Sadaprarudita.
For if he succeeds in selling himself
out of concern for dharma,
if he then goes on
to honour the Bodhisattva Dharmodgata,
and to ask him,
with regard to the perfection of wisdom
and to skill in means,
how a Bodhisattva
coursing in perfect wisdom
may quickly achieve full enlightenment,
then he is bound to reach the ocean
of sacred knowledge,

shall become inaccessible
to Mara and his host,
and will reach the perfection of all qualities,

after which
he will work the weal of all beings,
and take them away from my sphere,
and others again
he will take away
after he has known full enlightenment.”

Mara,
the Evil One,
thereupon so disposed the Brahmins
and householders in that town
that they could not hear the voice
of Sadaprarudita.

When Sadaprarudita
could not find a buyer for himself,
he went on one side,
wailed,
shed tears, and said:

“Alas, it is hard on us
that we do not find a buyer
even for our body,
so that we could,
after selling our body,
honour the Bodhisattva Dharmodgata.”

Thereupon Sakra, Chief of Gods,
thought to himself:

“Let me weigh up
the Bodhisattva Sadaprarudita.
Will he now,
filled with earnest intention,
renounce his body

out of concern for dharma,
or will he not?”

Sakra then conjured up
the guise of a young man,
went to the Bodhisattva Sadaprarudita,
and said to him:

“Why do you,
son of good family,
stand there dejected,
pining away and shedding tears?”

Sadaprarudita replied:

“I want to sell myself,
but I cannot find anyone to buy my body.”

Sakra,
in the form of the young man, said:

“On behalf of what
do you want to sell yourself?”

Sadaprarudita replied:

“From love for dharma I want to sell myself,
so as to do worship to dharma,
and to honour
the holy Bodhisattva Dharmodgata.

But I do not find a buyer
for this body of mine.
I have therefore thought to myself that,
alas,
I must be a person
of exceedingly small merit indeed.”

The young man said:

“I myself have not need of a man.
 But my father is due to offer sacrifice.
 For that
 I require a man’s heart,
 his blood and the marrow of his bones.
 Those you may give me,
 and I shall pay for them.”

Sadaprarudita then thought to himself:

“I have exceedingly easily got
 what I desired.
 Now I know that my body
 is sufficiently perfect for me
 to win perfect wisdom,
 skill in means
 and the dharmas of a Buddha,
 since in this young man
 I have now found a buyer for my heart,
 blood and marrow.”

With his mind bristling with joy,
 and all ready, he said:

“I will give you my body,
 since you have need of it!”

The young man asked:

“What price do I give you?”

Sadaprarudita answered:

“Give me whatever you will!”

Sadaprarudita then took
 a sharp sword,
 pierced his right arm,
 and made the blood flow.
 He pierced his right thigh,

cut the flesh from it,
and strode up to the foot of a wall
in order to break the bone.

A merchant's daughter,
from her upper window, saw this,
and she thought to herself:

“Why should this son of good family
do that to himself?
Let me go to him, and ask him.”

She went up to Sadaprarudita,
and said:

“Why do you inflict such fatal treatment
on yourself?
What shall you do with this blood,
and with the marrow of your bones?”

Sadaprarudita said:

“When I have sold them
to this young man,
I shall go to worship
the perfection of wisdom,
and to do honour
to the holy Bodhisattva Dharmodgata.”

The merchant's daughter said:

“What is the kind of quality,
what is the excellence of the qualities,
which you will create in yourself
by your wish to honour
the Bodhisattva Dharmodgata
after you have sold your own heart,
blood and marrow?”

Sadaprarudita replied:

“Dharmodgata will explain to me
the perfection of wisdom
and the skill in means.

In them
I shall train myself,
and,
as a result,
I shall become a refuge to all beings;

and,
after I have known full enlightenment,
I shall acquire a body of golden colour,

the thirty-two marks of the superman,
the eighty accessory marks,
the splendor of a halo
the rays of which extend to infinitude,

the great friendliness,
the great compassion,
the great sympathetic joy,
the great impartiality,

the four grounds of self-confidence,
the four analytical knowledges,
the eighteen special dharmas
of a Buddha,

and I shall acquire
the five superknowledges,

an unthinkable purity of conduct,
and unthinkable purity of concentration,
an unthinkable purity of wisdom,
and the ten powers of a Tathagata.

I shall fully awake
to the supreme cognition of a Buddha,
and acquire the supremely precious

jewel of the dharma,
which I shall share with all beings.”

The merchant’s daughter replied:

“It is wonderful,
son of good family,
how exalted and sublime
are the dharmas
which you have proclaimed.

For the sake of even one of these dharmas
should one be willing
to renounce one’s bodies
even for countless aeons,
how much more so
for the sake of many of them.

These dharmas
which you have proclaimed
please me also,
and seem good to me.

But see, son of good family,
I shall give you whatever you require,
and with that you may then honour
that Bodhisattva Dharmodgata!
But do not inflict
such treatment on yourself!

I also will come with you
to the Bodhisattva Dharmodgata!
I also will,
together with you,
plant wholesome roots,
which will help
to win such dharmas!”

Sakra, Chief of Gods,
thereupon threw off his disguise

as a young man,
 and in his own proper body
 he stood before
 the Bodhisattva Sadaprarudita,
 and said to him:

“I applaud your firm sense of obligation.
 In the past also
 the Tathagatas
 have had so great a desire for dharma,

and it was that which helped them
 to know full enlightenment
 and to gain
 the precious jewel of the Dharma,

after they had first coursed
 in the course of a Bodhisattva,
 and asked questions about
 the perfection of wisdom
 and skill in means.

I have no need of your heart,
 blood or marrow.
 I only came here to test you.
 Now choose a boon.
 I shall give you any boon whatever!”

Sadaprarudita answered:

“Give me the supreme dharmas
 of a Buddha!”

Sakra, Chief of Gods, replied:

“That lies not within my province.
 That lies within the province
 of the Buddhas, the Lords.
 Choose another boon!”

Sadaprarudita replied:

“Do not trouble your mind
about the mutilated condition of my body!
I shall myself
now make it whole again
by the magical power
of my enunciation of the Truth.

As I am in truth irreversible,
have been predicted to full enlightenment,
and am known to the Tathagatas
by my unconquerable resolution,

may through this Truth,
through this utterance of the Truth
this my body
be again as it was before!”

That every moment,
instant and second,
through the Bodhisattva’s might
and through the perfect purity
of the Bodhisattva’s resolution,
the body of the Bodhisattva Sadaprarudita
became again as it had been before,
healthy and whole.

And Sakra, Chief of Gods,
and Mara, the Evil One,
reduced to silence,
just vanished from that place.

The merchant’s daughter
then said to Sadaprarudita:

“Come on, son of good family,
let us go up to my house.
I shall ask my parents
to give you the riches

with which you can express your desire
to worship that perfection of wisdom,
and to honour
that Bodhisattva Dharmodgata,
a desire which is due
to your love for dharma.”

The Bodhisattva Sadaprarudita
and the merchant’s daughter
went together to her house.

When they got to it,
Sadaprarudita remained standing
on the threshold,
while the merchant’s daughter
went into the house,
and said to her parents:

“Mummy and daddy,
you must give me a part of your wealth!
I want to go away
with the five hundred maidens
you gave me for servants!

Together with Bodhisattva Sadaprarudita
I want to go
to the Bodhisattva Dharmodgata,
in order to worship him.
And he shall demonstrate dharma to us,
and that way
we shall acquire the dharmas of a Buddha.”

Her parents replied:

“Who then is this
Bodhisattva Sadaprarudita,
and where is he just now?”

The merchant’s daughter said:

“This son of good family
stands at the threshold
of the door to our house.

And he has set out
determined to know full enlightenment,
in other words,
he wants to set all beings free
from the immeasurable sufferings
of birth-and-death.”

And she told them
all that she had seen and heard,

how Sadaprarudita had sold his body,
and mutilated it,
and how she asked him for his reason,
and how he praised and revealed to her
the unthinkable qualities of a Buddha
and the immeasurable dharmas of a Buddha,
which he had in mind as his goal.

She went on to say that

“When I had heard
of those unthinkable qualities of a Buddha,
I felt exceeding joy and elation.
And I thought to myself:

‘It is wonderful to what an extent
this son of good family
is a doer of what is hard,
and how much he must love the dharma
to endure oppression and pain in his body.

For it is from love for dharma
that he renounced himself.

How can we fail to worship dharma,
and to make a vow to reach such stations,

we who have
vast and abundant possessions?’

So I said to that son of good family:
‘Do not inflict
such fatal treatment on yourself!

I shall give you abounding riches,
which you may use to worship and honour
that holy Bodhisattva Dharmodgata,

I also shall go together with you
to that Bodhisattva,
and I shall worship him, too.

I also shall accomplish
those supreme dharmas of a Buddha
which you have proclaimed!’

Mummy and daddy,
allow me to go,
and give me the riches I have asked for!’”

Her parents replied:

“It is wonderful
how well you have related the hardships
of that son of good family.

Unthinkable, for sure,
must be the dharmas
for the sake of which
he endures these hardships,
they must be the most distinguished
in the whole world,
a source of happiness to all beings!

We will give you our permission to go.
We also should like to come with you,
to see, to salute,

to honour, to worship
that Bodhisattva Dharmodgata.”

The daughter replied:

“Do as you say.
I would not oppose those
who are on the side of what is right.”

5. The Meeting with Dharmodgata

It was thus
that the merchant’s daughter
set out to worship and honour
the Bodhisattva Dharmodgata.

She took five hundred carriages
and ordered her five hundred servant girls
to get ready.

She took abundant riches,
and ample provisions,

mounted one carriage
together with the Bodhisattva Sadaprarudita,
and proceeded East,
surrounded by the five hundred maidens
on their five hundred carts,

accompanied by a huge retinue,
and preceded by her parents.

After some time
the Bodhisattva Sadaprarudita
saw the city of Gandhavati from afar.

In the middle of the marketplace
he saw the Bodhisattva Dharmodgata
on his pulpit,
demonstrating dharma,

surrounded and revered
 by an assembly of many hundreds,
 of many thousands,
 of many hundreds of thousands.

The moment he saw him
 he was filled he was filled
 with that kind of happiness
 which a monk feels
 when with one-pointed attention
 he has obtained the first trance.

He looked upon him and thought to himself:

“It would not be seemly for me
 to approach the Bodhisattva Dharmodgata
 seated on a carriage.
 Let me therefore alight from it!”

Thereupon he alighted from his carriage,
 and the merchant’s daughter
 with her five hundred maidens
 followed suit.

Sadaprarudita,
 with the merchant’s daughter
 and her five hundred maidens
 then went up to where
 the Bodhisattva Dharmodgata sat
 amidst a magnificent display
 of religious aspirations.

For the Bodhisattva Dharmodgata
 had at that time created,
 for the perfection of wisdom,
 a pointed tower,
 made of the seven precious substances,
 adorned with red sandalwood,
 and encircled by an ornament of pearls.

Gems were placed into the four corners
of the pointed tower,
and performed the functions of lamps.

Four incense jars made of silver
were suspended on its four sides,
and pure black aloe wood
was burning in them,
as a token of worship
for the perfection of wisdom.

And in the middle of that pointed tower
a couch made of the seven precious things was put up,
and on it
a box made of four large gems.

Into that
the perfection of wisdom was placed,
written with melted vaidurya
on golden tablets.

And that pointed tower was adorned
with brightly coloured garlands
which hung down in strips.

The Bodhisattva Sadaprarudita
and the merchant's daughter
with her five hundred maidens
looked upon that pointed tower,
so magnificently decorated
as a display of religious aspirations.

They saw thousands of Gods,
with Sakra, Chief of Gods,
scattering over that pointed tower
heavenly Mandarava flowers,

heavenly sandalwood powder,
heavenly gold dust,
and heavenly silver dust,

and they heard the music
of heavenly instruments.

Sadaprarudita then asked Sakra,
Chief of Gods:

“For what purpose do you,
together with many thousands of Gods,
scatter over that pointed tower,
which consists of precious substances,
heavenly Mandarava flowers, etc.,
and why do the Devas up in space
play heavenly music on their instruments?”

Sakra answered:

“Do you not know the reason,
son of good family?
This is the perfection of wisdom,
the mother and guide of the Bodhisattvas.

When Bodhisattvas train in it,
they soon reach the perfection
of all qualities,
and,
consequent on that,
all the dharmas of a Buddha
and the knowledge of all modes.”

Sadaprarudita replied:

“Where is this perfection of wisdom,
the mother and guide of the Bodhisattva?”

Sakra answered:

“The holy Bodhisattva Dharmodgata
has placed it
in the middle of this pointed tower,
after he had written it on golden tablets

with melted Vaidurya,
and sealed it with seven seals.
We cannot easily show it to you.”

Thereupon the Bodhisattva Sadaprarudita
and the merchant’s daughter,
with her five hundred maidens,
all paid worship to the perfection of wisdom
with the flowers
which they had brought along,

and with garlands, wreaths,
raiment, jewels,
incense, flags
and golden and silvery flowers

and, one after another,
they deposited their portion in front of it,
for the greater honour
of the Bodhisattva Dharmodgata.

They then worshipped
the Bodhisattva Dharmodgata
by scattering flowers,
etc., over him,
and played heavenly music
on their instruments
motivated by a desire to worship dharma.

The flowers then rose high above the head
of the Bodhisattva Dharmodgata
and formed a pointed tower of flowers.
And those flowers of various colours,
golden and silvery,
stood high in the air,
like a canopy.

And also the robes,
raiment and jewels
stood high up in the air,

like a pavilion in the clouds.

When the Bodhisattva Sadaparudita
and the merchant's daughter
with her five hundred maidens
beheld this wonder,
they thought to themselves:

“It is wonderful
to see how much wonderworking power
this Bodhisattva Dharmodgata possesses,
how great a might,
how great an influence.

So far he courses
but in the course of a Bodhisattva,
and now already
he possesses so much power
to work wonders.
How much more will he have
after he has known full enlightenment!”

The merchant's daughter
and the five hundred maidens
thereupon felt a longing
for the Bodhisattva Dharmodgata.

All of one mind,
they resolutely raised their hearts
to the supreme enlightenment,
and said:

“May we,
through this wholesome root,
become Tathagatas in a future period!
May we come to course
in the course of Bodhisattvas,
and may we receive those very dharmas
which this Bodhisattva Dharmodgata
has received!

And may we just so honour and respect
 the perfection of wisdom
 as this Bodhisattva Dharmodgata
 honours and respects it,
 and may we reveal it to the many
 just as he has done!

And may we become as endowed
 with perfect wisdom and skill in means,
 and as accomplished in them
 as this Bodhisattva Dharmodgata is!”

The Bodhisattva Sadaprarudita,
 and the merchant’s daughter
 with her five hundred maidens,

after they had worshipped
 the perfection of wisdom
 and honored the Bodhisattva Dharmodgata
 with their heads,
 respectfully saluted him
 with their folded hands,
 and stood on one side.

The Bodhisattva Sadaprarudita
 then told the whole story of his quest
 for the perfection of wisdom,
 beginning with the voice
 he had heard in the forest,
 that bid him go East.

He told Dharmodgata
 how he has stood in many concentrations,
 and how the Buddhas and Lords
 of the ten directions
 had comforted and applauded him,
 and had said:

“Well done, son of good family!

These concentrations have issued
 from the perfection of wisdom.
 By firmly standing
 in the perfection of wisdom
 have we achieved
 all the dharmas of a Buddha.”

He went on to relate that:

“The Tathagatas then vanished again,
 and I emerged
 from that state of concentration.

I then asked myself
 ‘wherefrom now did these Tathagatas come,
 and whither have they gone?’

I thought to myself that
 ‘the holy Bodhisattva Dharmodgata
 has received the dharanis,

he possesses the five superknowledges,
 he has done his duties
 under the Jinas of the past,

he has planted wholesome roots,
 and is well trained
 in perfect wisdom and skill in means.

He will explain to me this matter
 as it really is,
 and tell me where those Tathagatas
 have come from
 and whither they have gone to.’

Now I have come to you,
 and I ask you,
 son of good family:

‘Where have those Tathagatas come from,

and whither have they gone to?’

Demonstrate to me,
son of good family,
the coming and going of those Tathagatas,
so that we may cognize it,
and so that we may become not lacking
in the vision of the Tathagatas.”

Chapter XXXI Dharmodgata

1. The Coming and Going of the Tathagatas

Dharmodgata:

Tathagatas

certainly do not come from anywhere,
nor do they go anywhere.

Because Suchness does not move,
and the Tathagata is Suchness.

Non-production does not come nor go,
and the Tathagata is nonproduction.

One cannot conceive
of the coming or going
of the reality-limit,
and the Tathagata is the reality-limit.

The same can be said of emptiness,
of what exists in accordance with fact,

of dispassion,
of stopping,
of the element of space.

For the Tathagata
is not outside these dharmas.

The Suchness of these dharmas
and the Suchness of all dharmas,
and the Suchness of the Tathagata
are simply
this one single Suchness.

There is no division within Suchness.
Just simply one,
single,
is this Suchness,

not two,
nor three.

Suchness has passed beyond counting,
because it is not.

A man,
scorched by the heat of the summer,
during the last
month of summer,
at noon might see a mirage floating along,
and might run towards it,
and think
'there I shall find some water,
there I shall find something to drink.'

What do you think, son of good family,
has that water come from anywhere,
or does that water go anywhere,
to the Eastern great ocean,
or the Southern,
Northern or Western?

Sadaprarudita:
No water exists in the mirage.
How could its coming or going
be conceived?

That man again is foolish and stupid if,
on seeing the mirage,
he forms the idea of water
where there is no water.

Water in its own being
certainly does not exist in that mirage.

Dharmodgata: Equally foolish
are all those who adhere to the Tathagata
through form and sound,
and who in consequence

imagine the coming or going of a Tathagata.

For a Tathagata cannot be seen
 from his form body.
 The Dharmabodies are the Tathagatas
 and the real nature of dharmas
 does not come or go.

There is no coming or going
 of the body of an elephant,
 horse,
 chariot or foot-soldier,
 which has been conjured up by a magician.

Just so
 there is neither coming nor going
 of the Tathagatas.

A sleeping man
 might
 in his dreams
 see one Tathagata,
 or two,
 or three,
 or up to one thousand,
 or still more.

On waking up he would, however,
 no longer see even one single Tathagata.

What do you think, son of good family,
 have these Tathagatas come from anywhere,
 or gone to anywhere?

Sadaprarudita: One cannot conceive
 that in that dream
 any dharma at all
 had the status of a full and perfect reality,
 for the dream was deceptive.

Dharmodgata: Just so
the Tathagata has taught
that all dharmas are like a dream.

All those who do not wisely know
all dharmas as they really are,
i.e. as like a dream,
as the Tathagata has pointed out,

they adhere to the Tathagatas
through their name-body
and their form-body,
and in consequence
they imagine that the
Tathagatas come and go.

Those who
in their ignorance
of the true nature of dharmas
imagine a coming or going
of the Tathagatas,
they are just foolish common people,

at all times they belong to birth-and-death
with its six places of rebirth,

and they are far
from the perfection of wisdom,
far away from the dharmas of a Buddha.

On the contrary, however,
those who know
as they really are
all dharmas as like a dream,

in agreement
with the teaching of the Tathagata,

they do not imagine
the coming or going of any dharma,

nor its production or stopping.

They wisely know the Tathagata
in his true nature,
and they do not imagine
a coming or going of the Tathagatas.

And those who wisely know this true nature
of a Tathagata,
they course near to full enlightenment
and they course in the perfection of wisdom.

These disciples of the Lord
do not consume their alms fruitlessly,
and they are worthy of the world's gifts.

The gems which are in the great ocean
do not come from any place in the East,
or West,
or in any other of the ten directions,
but they owe their existence
to the wholesome roots of beings.

They are not produced without cause.
And when,
dependent on cause,
condition and reason,
these gems have been coproduced
and stopped by conditions,
they do not pass on to any place
anywhere in the world
in any of the ten directions.

And nevertheless,
when those conditions exist,
the gems are augmented;
when those conditions are absent,
no augmentation takes place.

Just so

the perfect body of the Tathagatas
 has not come from any place
 anywhere in the ten directions,
 and it does not go to any
 place anywhere in the world
 with its ten directions.

But the body of the Buddhas and Lords
 is not without cause.
 It has been brought to perfection
 by their conduct in the past,

and it has been produced
 dependent on causes and conditions,
 coproduced by subsidiary conditions,
 produced as a result of karma
 done in the past.

It is,
 however,
 not in any place anywhere in the world
 with its ten directions.

But when those conditions exist,
 the accomplishment of the body takes place;
 when those conditions are absent,
 the accomplishment of the body
 becomes inconceivable.

When the sound of a boogharp
 is being produced,
 it does not come from anywhere.
 When it is stopped,
 it does not go anywhere,
 nor does it pass on to anywhere.
 But it has been produced
 conditioned by the totality of its causes
 and conditions,

namely

the boat-shaped hollow body of the harp,
the parchment sounding board,

the strings,
the hollow arm of the boogharp,

the bindings,
the plectrum,

the person who plays it,
and his exertions.

In that way
this sound comes forth from the boogharp,
dependent on causes,
dependent on conditions.

And yet that sound does not come forth
from that hollow body of the harp,

nor from the parchment sounding board,
nor from the strings,

nor from the hollow arm,
nor from the bindings,

nor from the plectrum,
nor from the person who plays it,
nor from his exertions.

It is just the combination of all of them
that makes the sound conceivable.
And when it is stopped,
the sound also does not go anywhere.

Just so
the perfect body of the Buddhas and Lords
is dependent on causes,
dependent on conditions,
and it has been brought to perfection

through exertions
which have led to many wholesome roots.

But the augmenting of the Buddha-body
does not result from one single cause,
nor from one single condition,
nor from one single wholesome root.

And it is also not without cause.
It has been coproduced
by a totality of many causes and conditions,
but it does not come from anywhere.

And when the totality
of causes and conditions has ceased to be,
then it does not go to anywhere.

It is thus that you should view
the coming and going of those Tathagatas,
and that you should conform
to the true nature of all dharmas.

And it is just because you will wisely know
that the Tathagatas,
and also all dharmas,
are neither produced nor stopped,
that you shall become fixed
on full enlightenment,
and that you shall definitely course
in the perfection of wisdom
and in skill in means.

When this disquisition
on the fact that the Tathagatas
neither come nor go had been taught,
the earth
and the entire great trichiliocosm
shook in six ways,

it stirred,

quaked,
was agitated,

resounded and rumbled.
And all the realms of Mara
were stirred up and discomfited.

All the grasses,
shrubs,
herbs and trees
in the great trichiliocosm
bent in the direction
of the Bodhisattva Dharmodgata.

Flowers came up out of season.
From high up in the air
a great rain of flowers came down.

And Sakra, Chief of Gods,
and the Four Great Kings
scattered and poured
heavenly sandalwood powder
and heavenly flowers
over the Bodhisattva Dharmodgata,
and said:

“Well spoken, son of good family.
Through your might
we have heard a sermon
which has issued from ultimate reality,

which is contrary to the whole world,
and which gives no ground
to any of those beings
who are established in any of the views which involve
the assumption of an individuality,

or who have settled down
in any of the views
which assume the existence

of something that is not.”

Sadaprarudita then asked Dharmodgata:

“What is the cause,
what is the reason
why this great earthquake
is manifested in the world?”

Dharmodgata:
In consequence of your asking
for this disquisition
on the not-coming and non-going
of the Tathagatas,

and through my exposition of it,
eight thousand living beings have acquired
the patient acceptance of dharmas
which fail to be produced,

eighty niyutas of living beings
have raised their hearts
to full enlightenment,

and
of sixty-four thousand living beings
has the dispassionate,
unstained dharma-eye
been purified for the vision of dharmas.

2. Sadaprarudita’s Self Sacrifice

The Bodhisattva Sadaprarudita
then had a supreme,
a most sublime feeling
of zest and joy:

“It is a gain to me,
a very great gain that,
by asking for the perfection of wisdom

and for this disquisition,
I have wrought the weal of so many beings.

That alone should bring me merit
sufficient for the accomplishment
of full enlightenment.
Unquestionably I shall become a Tathagata.”

In his zest and joy
he rose seven palm trees high into the air, and,
standing at the height of seven palm trees, he reflected:

“How can I,
standing here in the air,
do honour
to the Bodhisattva Dharmodgata?”

Sakra, Chief of Gods,
saw him,
and read his thoughts,
presented him
with heavenly Mandarava flowers,
and said to him:

“Honour the Bodhisattva Dharmodgata
with these heavenly flowers!

For we feel that we should honour the man who helped you.

Today your might has wrought the weal
of many thousands of living beings.

Rare are the beings who,
like you,
have the strength,
for the sake of all beings
through countless aeons
to bear the great burden.”

The Bodhisattva Sadaprarudita

then took the Mandarava flowers
 from Sakra, Chief of Gods,
 and scattered them over the Bodhisattva Dharmodgata.

He presented the Bodhisattva Dharmodgata
 with his own body,
 and said to him:

“I give you myself as a present,
 and I shall be your attendant
 and servant from today onwards.”

And with folded hands he stood
 before Dharmodgata.

The merchant’s daughter
 and her five hundred maidens
 then said
 to the Bodhisattva Sadaprarudita:

“We in our turn
 make a present of ourselves to you,
 son of good family.

Through this wholesome root
 we also shall become recipients
 of just those dharmas,
 and together with you we shall
 again and again
 honour and revere the Buddhas and Lords,
 and the Bodhisattvas,
 and we shall remain near to you.”

Sadaprarudita replied:

“If you,
 maidens,
 in imitation of my own earnest intention,
 give yourselves
 with earnest intentions to me,

then I will accept you.”

The maidens replied:

“We imitate you,
and with earnest resolution
we give ourselves as presents to you,
to do with us as you will.”

Thereupon the Bodhisattva Sadaprarudita
presented the merchant’s daughter
and her five hundred maidens,
embellished and adorned,
together with their five hundred
well-decorated carriages,
to the Bodhisattva Dharmodgata,
and said:

“All these I present to you
as attendants and servants,
and also the carriages for your own use.”

Sakra, Chief of Gods,
applauded him and said:

“Well done, son of good family!
A Bodhisattva must renounce
all his property.

Through that thought of renunciation
he soon wins full enlightenment,
and the worship he pays thus
to the preachers of dharma
enables him to hear about
the perfection of wisdom and skill in means.

Also in the past
the Tathagatas,
when they still were Bodhisattvas,
have,

by the fact that they renounced everything,
procured a claim to full enlightenment;

and they also have asked questions
about perfect wisdom
and about skill in means.”

The Bodhisattva Dharmodgata
accepted Sadaprarudita’s gift,
so that his wholesome root
might reach fulfillment.

Immediately afterwards
he returned it to Sadaprarudita.

After that,
the Bodhisattva Dharmodgata
went into his house.
The sun was about to set.

The Bodhisattva Sadaprarudita
then thought to himself:

“It would not indeed be seemly for me,
who have come here out of love for dharma,
to sit or to lie down.
I will remain either standing or walking,
until the time
when the Bodhisattva Dharmodgata
shall again come out of his house,
in order to reveal dharma to us.”

The Bodhisattva Dharmodgata
then remained for seven years
immersed in one uninterrupted
state of trance,

and he dwelt in countless
thousands of concentrations,
peculiar to Bodhisattvas,

issued from perfection of wisdom
and skill in means.

For seven years
Sadaprarudita never adopted
any other posture
than the two just mentioned,
and he did not fall into sloth and torpor.

For seven years
he never felt any preoccupation
with sense desires,

or with ill will,
or with harming others,

he never felt any eagerness for tastes,
or any self-satisfaction.
But he thought:

“When then
will the Bodhisattva Dharmodgata
emerge from his trance,
so that we may spread out a seat for him,
whereon he may demonstrate dharma,

and so that we may sprinkle well
the place where he will reveal
the perfection of wisdom
and skill in means,
anoint it well
and bedeck it with manifold flowers?”

And the merchant’s daughter
with her five hundred maidens
followed his example,
passed their time in two postures only,
and imitated all his works.

One day the Bodhisattva Sadaprarudita

heard a heavenly voice which said:

“On the seventh day from today
the Bodhisattva Dharmodgata
will emerge from his trance,
and he will then,
seated in the center of the town,
demonstrate dharma.”

When Sadaprarudita
heard the heavenly voice,
he was contented,
elated,
joyous,
overjoyed and jubilant.

Together with the merchant’s daughter
and her five hundred maidens
he cleansed the ground,
spread out the seat
made of the seven precious things,
took off his upper garment,
and spread it on top of the seat.

The maidens also took off
their upper garments,
spread their five hundred upper garments
on that seat,
and thought:

“Seated on that seat
will the Bodhisattva Dharmodgata
demonstrate dharma.”

And they also were contented,
elated,
elated,
joyous,
overjoyed and jubilant.

When the Bodhisattva Sadaprarudita
 wanted to sprinkle the ground
 he could not find any water,
 though he searched all round.
 For Mara, the Evil One,
 had hidden all the water.

And he did this so that Sadaprarudita,
 if he could not find any water,
 should become depressed and sad,
 or change his mind,
 with the result
 that his wholesome root would vanish,
 or the fervour of this worship be dimmed.

The Bodhisattva Sadaprarudita
 then thought to himself:

“Let me pierce my own body,
 and sprinkle the ground with my blood.

The ground is full of rising dust,
 and I fear that some of it
 may fall on the body
 of the Bodhisattva Dharmodgata.

What else can I do with this body
 which is of necessity
 doomed to break up?

Better surely that this my body
 should be destroyed by such an action
 rather than by an ineffectual one.

For the sake of sense pleasures,
 as a result of sense pleasures
 many thousands of frames of mine
 have again and again,
 while I wandered in birth-and-death,
 been broken up,

but never in conditions
 as favourable as these,
 never for the sake of gaining the good law.

If they must once more be broken up,
 let them
 in any case
 be broken up in a holy cause.”

He then took a sharp sword,
 pierced his body on every side,
 and everywhere sprinkled
 that piece of ground with his own blood.

The merchant’s daughter
 with her five hundred maidens
 followed his example,
 and did as he did.

But there was no alteration of thought
 in either the Bodhisattva Sadaprarudita,
 or in all those maidens,
 which would have given Mara,
 the Evil One,
 a chance of entering
 in order to obstruct their wholesome roots.

Sakra, Chief of Gods,
 then thought to himself:

“It is wonderful how much
 this Bodhisattva Sadaprarudita
 loves dharma,

how firm is his sense of obligation,
 how great the armour he has put on,
 and how he disregards his body,
 his life,
 and his pleasures,

and how resolutely he has set out
with the goal of knowing
full enlightenment,

in his desire
to set free all beings
from the measureless sufferings
of birth-and-death,
after he has known full enlightenment.”

Sakra then changed
by magic
all that blood
into heavenly sandalwood water.

And all round that piece of ground,
for one hundred leagues,
an inconceivably sublime scent,
the scent of that heavenly sandalwood water,
filled the air.

And Sakra said to Sadaprarudita:

“Well done, son of good family!
I applaud your inconceivable vigour,
your supreme love and search for dharma.

The Tathagatas in the past
also have procured
the right to full enlightenment
through this kind of earnest intention,
vigour,
and love for dharma.”

The Bodhisattva Sadaprarudita
then thought to himself:

“I have spread out the seat
for the Bodhisattva Dharmodgata,
and I have well swept

and sprinkled this piece of ground.
 Now I must still get flowers
 with which to cover this peace of ground,
 and to scatter over
 the Bodhisattva Dharmodgata
 when he demonstrates dharma.”

Sakra then said to Sadaprarudita:

“Accept these heavenly Mandarava flowers
 for that twofold purpose!”

And he presented him
 with a thousand heavenly Khara measures
 of heavenly flowers.

And the Bodhisattva Sadaprarudita
 accepted those flowers,
 and used some of them
 to cover the piece of ground,

and,
 later on,
 he strewed others
 over the Bodhisattva Dharmodgata.

3. Dharmodgata’s Demonstration of Dharma

After the lapse of seven years
 the Bodhisattva Dharmodgata
 emerged from his trance,
 went up to the seat spread out for him,
 sat down on it,
 and,
 surrounded and attended
 by an assembly
 of many hundreds of thousands,
 he demonstrated dharma.

The moment the Bodhisattva Sadaprarudita

saw the Bodhisattva Dharmodgata,
 he was filled with that kind of happiness
 which a monk feels
 when,
 with one-pointed attention,
 he has obtained the first trance.

And this is the demonstration
 of the perfection of wisdom
 by the Bodhisattva Dharmodgata:

“The perfection of wisdom is self-identical,
 because all dharmas are the same.

Perfect wisdom is isolated
 because all dharmas are isolated.

Perfect wisdom is immobile
 because all dharmas are immobile.

Perfect wisdom is devoid of mental acts
 because all dharmas
 are devoid of mental acts.

Perfect wisdom is unbenumbed,
 because all dharmas are unbenumbed.

Perfect wisdom has but one single taste
 because all dharmas
 have one and the same taste.

Perfect wisdom is boundless
 because all dharmas are boundless.

Perfect wisdom is non-production
 because all dharmas are non-production.

Perfect wisdom is non-stopping
 because all dharmas are not stopped.

As the firmament is boundless,
so is perfect wisdom.

As the ocean is boundless,
so is perfect wisdom.

As Meru shines in multicolored brilliance,
so does the perfection of wisdom.

As the firmament is not fashioned,
so is perfect wisdom not fashioned.

Perfect wisdom is boundless,
because form,
and the other skandhas
are boundless.

Perfect wisdom is boundless
because the element of earth,
and the other elements,
are boundless.

Perfect wisdom is self-identical,
because the adamant dharma
is self-identical.

Perfect wisdom is undifferentiated
because all dharmas are undifferentiated.

The non-apprehension of perfect wisdom follows from
the non-apprehension of all dharmas.

Perfect wisdom remains the same
whatever it may surpass
because all dharmas remain the same
whatever they may surpass.

Perfect wisdom is powerless to act
because all dharmas are powerless to act.

Perfect wisdom is unthinkable
because all dharmas are unthinkable.”

Thereupon on that occasion
there was born
in the Bodhisattva Sadapararudita
the king of concentrations called
“the sameness of all dharmas,”
and,
consequent on that,
the concentrations called

“isolation of all dharmas,”

“immobility of all dharmas,”

“absence of all mental acts in all dharmas,”

“lack of numbness in all dharmas,”

“the one taste of all dharmas,”

“the boundlessness of all dharmas,”

“the non production of all dharmas,”

“the non stopping of all dharmas,”

“boundless like the firmament,”

“boundless like the ocean,”

“brilliant and multicolored like Meru,”

“not fashioned, like the firmament,”

“boundless like form, etc.,”

“boundless like the element of earth, etc.,”

“adamantine,”

“non-differentiatedness of all dharmas,”

“non-apprehension of all dharmas,”

“sameness of all dharmas
whatever they may surpass,”

“all dharmas are powerless to act,”

“all dharmas are unthinkable.”

Beginning with these,
the Bodhisattva Sadaprarudita
acquired six million concentration doors.

Chapter XXXII Entrusting

1. End of the Story of Sadaprarudita

In conjunction with the acquisition
of the six million concentration doors,
the Bodhisattva Sadaprarudita
saw the Buddhas and Lords,
in all the ten directions
in countless trichiliocosms –

surrounded by their congregations
of monks,
accompanied by multitudes of Bodhisattvas,
teaching just this perfection of wisdom,

through just these methods,
in just these words,
in just these letters,

even as I just now
in this great trichiliocosm
demonstrate dharma, -
surrounded by the congregation of monks,
accompanied by multitudes of Bodhisattvas,
and teaching just this perfection of wisdom,

through just these methods,
in just these words,
in just these letters.

He became endowed
with inconceivable learning
and a sacred knowledge
vast like the ocean.

In all his births
he never again was deprived of the Buddha.

He was reborn only where he could be
face to face with the Buddhas, the Lords.

Even in his dreams,
he was not lacking in the Buddhas,
the Lords.

All unfortunate rebirths he had abandoned,
and he had secured the circumstances
which allowed him to accomplish
one auspicious rebirth after another.

2. The Perfection of Wisdom Entrusted to Ananda

The Lord thereupon said
to the Venerable Ananda:

In this manner also
should you know this perfection of wisdom
as the one who nurses
the cognition of the all-knowing
in the Bodhisattvas.

Therefore then, Ananda,
a Bodhisattva who wants to acquire
the cognition of the all-knowing
should course in this perfection of wisdom,

hear it,
take it up,

study,
spread,
repeat and write it.

When,
through the Tathagata's sustaining power
it has been well written,
in very distinct letters,

in a great book,
one should honour,
revere,
adore and worship it,
with flowers,
incense,

scents,
wreaths,
unguents,
aromatic powders,

strips of cloth,
parasols,
banners,

bells,
flags
and with rows of lamps all round,
and with manifold kinds of worship.

This is our admonition to you, Ananda.

For in this perfection of wisdom
the cognition of the all-knowing
will be brought to perfection.

What do you think, Ananda,
is the Tathagata your teacher?

Ananda: He is, O Lord.

The Lord: The Tathagata is your teacher, Ananda.
You have ministered to me, Ananda,
with friendly acts of body,
acts of speech,
acts of mind.

Therefore then, Ananda,
just as you have given affection,

faith and respect to me
 as I am at present in this incarnation,
 just so, Ananda,
 should you act after my decease
 towards this perfection of wisdom.

For the second time,
 for the third time,
 I entrust and transmit to you
 this perfection of wisdom,
 so that it may not disappear.
 No other man would be as suitable
 as you are.

As long as this perfection of wisdom
 shall be observed in the world,
 one can be sure that
 “for so long does the Tathagata abide in it,”
 that
 “for so long does the Tathagata
 demonstrate dharma,”

and that the beings in it
 are not lacking
 in the vision of the Buddha,
 the hearing of the dharma,
 the attendance of the Samgha.

One should know that those beings
 are living in the presence of the Tathagata
 who will hear this perfection of wisdom,

take it up,
 study,

spread,
 repeat and write it,

and who will honour,
 revere,

adore and worship it.

Thus spoke the Lord.

Enraptured, the Bodhisattvas,
headed by Maitreya,
and the Venerable Subhuti,
and the Venerable Ananda,
and Sakra, Chief of Gods,

and the entire world
with its Gods,
men,
Asuras,
Garudas and Gandharvas,
delighted in the Lord's teaching.

Verses on the Perfection of Wisdom

Prajñāpāramitā-Ratnagūṇasamcayagāthā

Homage to all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas!

Thereupon the Lord,
in order to gladden the four assemblies,
and to further lighten up
this perfection of wisdom,
preached at that time the following verses:

Chapter I

Preliminary Admonition

“Call forth as much as you can of love,
of respect and faith!
Remove the obstructing defilements,
and clear away all your taints!
Listen to the Perfect Wisdom of the gentle Buddhas,
Taught for the weal of the world,
for heroic spirits intended!

The Source of Subhuti’s Authority

The rivers all in this Roseapple Island,
Which cause the flowers to grow,
the fruits, the herbs and trees,
They all derive
from the might of the king of Nagas,
From the Dragon residing in Lake Anopatapta,
his magical power.

Just so,
whatever Dharmas the Jina’s disciples establish,
Whatever they teach,
whatever adroitly explain
concerning the work of the holy
which leads to the fullness of bliss,
And also the fruit of his work,
it is the Tathagata’s doing.

For whatever the Jina has taught,
 the Guide to the Dharma,
 His pupils,
 if genuine,
 have well been trained in it.

From direct experience,
 derived from their training,
 they teach it,
 Their teaching stems
 but from the might of the Buddhas,
 and not their own power.

The Basic Teachings

No wisdom can we get hold of,
 no highest perfection,
 No Bodhisattva,
 no thought of enlightenment either.

When told of this,
 if not bewildered and in no way anxious,
 A Bodhisattva courses
 in the Well-Gone's wisdom.

In form,
 in feeling,
 will,
 perception and awareness
 Nowhere in them they find
 a place to rest on.

Without a home they wander,
 dharmas never hold them,
 Nor do they grasp at them-
 the Jina's Bodhi they are bound to gain.

The wanderer Srenika
 in his gnosis of truth
 could find no basis,

though the skandhas had not been undone.

Just so the Bodhisattva,
 when he comprehends the dharmas
 as he should
 does not retire into Blessed Rest.
 In wisdom then he dwells.

What is this wisdom,
 whose and whence, he queries,
 and then he finds that all these dharmas
 are entirely empty.

Uncowed and fearless
 in the face of that discovery
 not far from Bodhi
 is that Bodhi-being then.

To course in the skandhas,
 in form,
 in feeling,
 in perception,
 will and so on,
 and fail to consider them wisely;

Or to imagine these skandhas
 as being empty;
 means to course in the sign,
 the track of non-production ignored.

But when he does not course in form,
 in feeling,
 or perception,
 in will or consciousness,
 but wanders without home,
 remaining unaware of coursing firm in wisdom,
 his thoughts of non-production,
 then the best of all the calming trances
 cleaves to him.

Through that
 the Bodhisattva now dwells tranquil
 in himself,
 His future Buddhahood
 assured by antecedent Buddhas.

Whether absorbed in trance,
 or whether outside it,
 he minds not.
 For of things as they are
 he knows the essential original nature.

Coursing thus
 he courses in the wisdom of the Sugatas,
 and yet he does not apprehend the dharmas in which he courses.

This coursing he wisely knows
 as a no-coursing,
 that is his practice of wisdom,
 the highest perfection.

What exists not,
 that non-existent the foolish imagine;
 Non-existence as well as existence
 they fashion
 As dharmic facts
 existence and non-existence
 are both not real.

A Bodhisattva goes forth
 when wisely he knows this.

If he knows the five skandhas
 as like an illusion,
 but makes not illusion one thing,
 and the skandhas another;
 If, freed from the notion of multiple things, he courses in peace
 then that is his practice of wisdom,
 the highest perfection.

Those with good teachers
 as well as deep insight,
 cannot be frightened on hearing the Mother's deep tenets.
 But those with bad teachers,
 who can be misled by others,
 are ruined thereby,
 as an unbaked pot
 when in contact with moisture.

Three Key Terms Defined

What is the reason why we speak of 'Bodhisattvas'?
 Desirous to extinguish all attachment,
 and to cut it off,
 true non-attachment,
 or the Bodhi of the Jinas
 is their future lot.
 'Beings who strive for Bodhi'
 are they therefore called.

What is the reason why 'Great Beings'
 are so called?
 They rise to the highest place
 above a great number of people;
 And of a great number of people
 they cut off mistaken views.
 That is why we come to speak of them
 as 'Great Beings.'

Great as a giver,
 as a thinker,
 as a power,
 He mounts upon the vessel
 of the Supreme Jinas.
 Armed with the great armour
 he'll subdue Mara the artful.
 These are the reasons why
 'Great Beings' are so called.

This gnosis shows him

all beings as like an illusion,
 resembling a great crowd of people,
 conjured up at the crossroads,
 by a magician,
 who then cuts off many thousands of heads;
 He knows this whole living world
 as a mock show,
 and yet remains without fear.

Form,
 perception,
 feeling,
 will and awareness
 are ununited,
 never bound,
 cannot be freed.

Uncowed in his thought
 he marches on to his Bodhi,
 that for the highest of men
 is the best of all armours.

What then again is
 ‘the vessel that leads to the Bodhi’?
 Mounted upon it
 one guides to Nirvana all beings.

Great is that vessel,
 immense,
 vast like the vastness of space.
 Those who travel upon it
 are carried to safety,
 delight and ease.

The Transcendental Nature of Bodhisattvas

Thus transcending the world,
 he eludes our apprehensions.
 ‘He goes to Nirvana,’
 but no one can say where he went to.

A fire's extinguished, but where,
do we ask, has it gone to?
Likewise, how can we find him
who has found the Rest of the Blessed?

The Bodhisattva's past,
his future and his present must elude us,
time's three dimensions nowhere touch him.
Quite pure he is,
free from conditions,
unimpeded.

That is his practical of wisdom,
the highest perfection.

Wise Bodhisattvas,
coursing thus,
reflect on non-production,
and yet,
while doing so,
engender in themselves
the great compassion,
which is, however,
free from any notion of a being.

Thereby they practise wisdom,
the highest perfection.

But when the notion of suffering
and beings leads him to think:
'Suffering I shall remove,
the weal of the world I shall work!'
Beings are then imagined,
a self is imagined,
the practice of wisdom,
the highest perfection, is lacking.

He wisely knows
that all that lives
is unproduced as he himself is;

He knows that all that is
no more exists than he or any beings.
The unproduced and the produced
are not distinguished,

That is the practice of wisdom,
the highest perfection.

All words for things in use in this world must be left behind,
All things produced and made
must be transcended –
The deathless,
the supreme,
incomparable gnosis is then won.

That is the sense in which
we speak of perfect wisdom.

When free from doubts
the Bodhisattva carries on his practice,
As skilled in wisdom he is known to dwell.
All dharmas are not really there,
their essential original nature is empty.

To comprehend that
is the practice of wisdom,
perfection supreme.

Chapter II

Where Bodhisattvas Stand

He does not stand in form,
 perception or in feeling,
 in will or consciousness,
 in any skandhas whatsoever.
 In Dharma's true nature alone he is standing.

Then that is his practice of wisdom,
 the highest perfection.

Change and no change,
 suffering and ease,
 the self and not-self,
 the lovely and repulsive
 just one Suchness
 in this Emptiness they are.

And so he takes not his stand
 on the fruit which he won,
 which is threefold
 that of an Arhat,
 a Single Buddha,
 a Buddha fully enlightened.

The Leader himself
 was not stationed in the realm
 which is free from conditions,
 nor in the things which are under conditions,
 but freely he wandered without a home.

Just so,
 without a support or basis
 a Bodhisattva is standing.
 A position devoid of a basis
 has that position been called by the Jina.

Wherein Bodhisattvas Train

Those who wish to become
 the Sugata's Disciples,
 or Pratyekabuddhas,
 or likewise, Kings of the Dharma –
 without resort to this Patience
 they cannot reach their respective goals.
 They move across,
 but their eyes are not on the other shore.

Those who teach dharma,
 and those who listen when it is being taught;
 Those who have won the fruit of an Arhat,
 a Single Buddha,
 or a world saviour;

And the Nirvana obtained
 by the wise and the learned –
 mere illusions,
 mere dreams –
 so has the Tathagata taught us.

Four kinds of persons are not alarmed by this teaching:
 Sons of the Jina skilled in the truths;
 saints unable to turn back,
 Arhats free from defilements and taints,
 and rid of their doubts;
 Those whom good teachers mature are reckoned the fourth kind.

Coursing thus,
 the wise and learned Bodhisattva,
 trains not for Arhatship,
 nor on the level of Pratyekabuddhas.
 In the Buddha-dharma alone
 he trains for the sake of all-knowledge.

No training is his training,
 and no one is trained in this training.

Increase or decrease of forms
 is not the aim of this training,
 Nor does he set out
 to acquire various dharmas.
 All-knowledge alone
 he can hope to acquire by this training.

To that he goes forth
 when he trains in this training,
 and delights in its virtues.

The Facts of Existence

Forms are not wisdom,
 nor is wisdom found in form,
 in consciousness,
 perceptions,
 feeling,
 or in will.

They are not wisdom,
 and no wisdom is in them.

Like space it is,
 without a break or crack.

Of all objective supports
 the essential original nature is boundless;
 Of beings likewise the essential original nature is boundless.

As the essential original nature of space
 has no limits,
 Just so the wisdom of the World-knowers
 is boundless.

‘Perceptions’ –
 mere words,
 so the Leaders have told us;

Perceptions forsaken and gone,

and the door is open to the Beyond.

Those who succeed
in ridding themselves of perceptions,
They,
having reached the Beyond,
fulfill the Teacher's commandments.

If for aeons
countless as the sands of the Ganges,
The Leader would himself
continue to pronounce the word 'being',
still, pure from the very start,
no being could ever result
from his speaking.

That is the practice of wisdom,
the highest perfection."

Conclusion

And so the Jina concludes his preaching, and finally tells us:
"When all I said and did
at last agreed with perfect wisdom,
Then this prediction I received from Him who went before me:
'Fully enlightened,
at a future time thou shalt a Buddha be!'"

Chapter III

The Merit Derived from Perfect Wisdom

“One who will take up this Perfection of Wisdom,
Wherein the Saviours course, and constantly study it;
Fire, poison, sword and water cannot harm him,
And also Mara finds no entrance, nor his host.

Someone may for the Sugata who went to rest build Stupas,
Made of the seven precious things, and worship him;
Until thousands of kotis of fields are filled with these Stupas
Of the Sugata, countless as the sands of the Ganges;

And like him as many beings again as there are in endless kotis of fields,
They all would do worship, without doing anything else,
With heavenly flowers and the best perfumes and unguents,
Let us reckon for aeons in the three periods, and still more than that:

But if someone else had copied the book, the Mother of Sugatas,
From which come forth the Guides with the ten powers,
Would bear it in mind, revere it with flowers and unguents,
An infinitesimal portion of his merit would have those who had given worship
to the Stupas.

Perfect Wisdom a Great Lore

This Perfection of Wisdom of the Jinas is a great lore,
Appeasing dharmas making for sorrow and ill in many a world of beings.
The Saviours of the World in the past, and in the future, and those [now] in
the ten directions,
They have, by training in this lore, become the supreme physicians.

And [also] those who course in the practice of pity and concern for the
welfare of others,
They, the wise, by having trained in this lore, will experience enlightenment.
Those who have conditioned happiness, and those who have unconditioned

happiness,
All their happiness should be known as having issued from this.

Perfect Wisdom and the Other Five Perfections

Gems exist potentially scattered in the earth,
And, when conditions are favorable, they grown in great variety:
They all grow from the perfection of wisdom.

Wherever, we know, the Universal Monarch may travel,
There is all the army of all the seven precious things:
Wherever there is this perfection of wisdom of the Jinas,
There also all dharmas of good quality are brought along.”

Chapter IV

Relative Value of Relics and Perfect Wisdom

Asked a question by the Jina, Sakra answered:
 “If I could have Buddhafields like the sands of the river Ganges,
 All of them filled to the top with the relics of the Jinas:
 Nevertheless I would still take this wisdom, the foremost of the perfections.

For what reason? It is not that I lack respect for the relics,
 But they are worshipped because they are fostered by wisdom.
 Just as every man who is supported by the king gets worship,
 Just so the Buddha-relics, because they are supported by the perfection of
 wisdom.

Simile of the Wishing Jewel

A precious gem, in possession of all qualities, priceless,
 The basket in which it may be, should be paid homage to;
 Even when it has been taken out, the basket continues to emit its radiance:
 Such are the qualities of that gem.

Just so it is with the qualities of wisdom, the foremost perfection,
 Which gain worship for the relics of the Jina even after he has gone to rest.
 Therefore let him who wants to win the Jina-qualities
 Take up the perfection of wisdom. She is the liberation.”

Perfection of Wisdom and Other Five Perfections

[The Lord then said:] “Wisdom controls who gives gifts,
 And also morality, patience, vigour and concentration.
 She takes hold of the wholesome dharmas so that they may not be lost.
 She alone is also the one who reveals all dharmas.

Simile of the Shadows

There are in Jambudvipa many thousands of kotis of trees,
 Of different species, manifold and different in form;
 And yet there would not also be a difference between their shadows,
 But when one speaks they are all equally reckoned as shadows:

Just so do these five perfections of the Jinas
Have their name from the perfection of wisdom:
When they are being turned over into all-knowledge,
The name of enlightenment provides one single principle for all the six of them.

Chapter V

The Counterfeit and the True Perfection of Wisdom

When a Bodhisattva [falsely] reveals form, perception, feeling, will,
Or thought as impermanent [claiming that they are destroyed], In
the counterfeit [perfection of wisdom] he courses, considering not wisely;
Because the learned never effect the destruction of a dharma.

Wherein of form, of feeling, or perception,
Or consciousness, or will there is no apprehension:
By the method of emptiness and non-production [he] cognizes all dharmas.
This is the practice of wisdom, the foremost perfection.

Perfect Wisdom Greater Than Any Other Spiritual Gift

If someone would discipline in Arhatship as many beings
As there are in fields equal to the sands of the river Ganges:
And if someone else, having copied this perfection of wisdom,
Would give the book to another being, - his would be the more distinguished
merit.

For what reason? The supreme Teachers, trained in this,
Make all dharmas intelligible in this emptiness.
When they have learned that the Disciples speedily experience their own
kind of emancipation,
Others experience Pratyekabuddha-enlightenment, others gain the Buddha
enlightenment.

Importance of the Thought of Enlightenment

Where there is no sprout, there can in the world be no tree.
How can therein be the production of branches, leaves, fruits or flowers?
Without aspiration for enlightenment there is no possibility of a Jina in
the world.
How then could Sakra, Brahma, fruit and disciples manifest themselves?

When the orb of the sun sends forth a multitude of light,
Then beings exert themselves in doing their work:
So, when the thought of enlightenment has come into being for the sake of

knowing the world,
Through its cognition all the dharmas of quality are assembled.

If there were no Chief of the Serpents in his Anavatapta [Lake],
How could there be here in Jambudvīpa a flowing along of the rivers?
And if there were no rivers, fruits and flowers could not possibly be,
And there would also be no manifold jewels in the oceans.

So, if there were no thought of enlightenment, how could there be
The flowing along of the cognition of the Tathagata in all these worlds?
And if there is no cognition, there can be no growth of the virtues,
No enlightenment, nor the oceanlike dharmas of the Buddha.

The Sun and the Firefly

If all the light-emitting animals everywhere in this world
Would, for the purpose of illumination, shed light:
One single ray, issued from the orb of the sun, outshines them all,
And infinitesimal would be all the luster of the hosts of light-emitting animals.

Chapter VI

Supreme Merit of Dedication and Jubilation

However much merit the hosts of Disciples may beget,
 Associated with giving, morality, and [meditational] development:
 But if a Bodhisattva rejoices with a single thought,
 There would [by comparison] be no mass of merit in all the hosts of the
 Disciples

The Range of Jubilation

If we take the nyutas of kotis of Buddhas, who have gone by in the past
 period of time,
 And those who just now abide in endlessly many thousands of kotis of
 Buddha-fields;
 And also those Saviours of the world who, having gone to Parinirvana,
 Will demonstrate the jewel of Dharma for the sake of the complete extinction
 of suffering;

If we consider the merit of those Jinas during the period
 Beginning with the first production of the thought of the foremost
 enlightenment,
 Until the time of the extinction of the good Dharma of the Guides, And
 the dharmas connected with the perfections, and also the Buddha- dharmas;

And also the merit of the offspring of the Buddhas, and of the Disciples,
 Be they in training or adepts, with outflows or without, Having
 heaped it all up, the Bodhisattva rejoices at it,
 And turns it all over to the enlightenment which is linked with the weal of
 the world.

True and False Turning over

When in one who turns over there proceeds the perception of a thought,
 Or if the turning over of the perception of enlightenment involves the
 perception of a being:
 Established in perception, false views, and thought, it is tied by the
 triple attachment.
 It does not become turned over to those who apprehend it.

But when he thus cognizes: These dharmas are extinct and stopped,
 And therein they are turned over, that is also extinct;
 Nor is ever anywhere a dharma turned over into a dharma:
 Then it does become turned over in one who thus considers wisely.

When he makes a sign, he does not turn over [to enlightenment],
 But if [he turns to it as] the signless, [that] becomes turned over into
 enlightenment.
 Just as though food mixed with poison were good to eat,
 So has the taking of pure dharmas as a basis been spoken of by the Jina

Therefore thus should one train in turning over:
 As the Jinas wisely know that wholesome [root], Its
 class as it is, its origin as they are, its characteristics as they are, Thus
 do I rejoice [in that wholesome root], thus do I turn [it] over.

And thus turning merit over into enlightenment,
 He does not upset the Buddha, one who preaches what the Jina has taught.
 As many as there are in the world Bodhisattvas who lean on a basis
 All of them surpasses the hero who turns over in this way.

Chapter VII

Perfect Wisdom Guides the Other Perfections

How can those niyutas of kotis of born-blind, who are without a guide
 Who are not conversant with the way, find an entrance to the city?
 Without wisdom these five perfections are eyeless:
 Those who are without the guide are unable to experience enlightenment.

When they are taken hold of by wisdom,
 Then, having gained the eye, do they get that designation [i.e. 'perfection']
 It is like a [religious] painting [of a deity or a saint] which is complete
 except for the eyes.
 Only after the eyes are painted in does one get one's fee.

The Attitude to Dharmas and to the Self

When one who develops wisdom to the end does not seize on the least dharma,
 Conditioned or unconditioned, dark or bright;
 Then one comes to speak in the world of the perfection of wisdom,
 [Which is like] space, wherein nothing real whatsoever is established.

When he thinks, 'I course in the wisdom of the Jinas,
 I will set free niyutas of beings touched by many ills':
 This Bodhisattva is one who imagines the notion of beings,
 And this is not the practice of wisdom, the foremost perfection.

Faith in the Perfection of Wisdom

The Bodhisattva who has observed this foremost perfection,
 When in the past he served [the Buddhas], is learned and does not doubt:
 As soon as he has heard it he will again recognize the Teacher,
 And he will swiftly understand the Peaceful Calm of enlightenment.

Though in the past he has honoured millions of Buddhas, and served them
 If without faith in the Jina's perfection of wisdom,
 Hearing of it, he will cast it away, one of small intelligence;
 After he cast it away, he will go to the Avici Hell, and non one can save him.

Therefore, have faith in this Mother of all the Jinas,
If you wish to experience the utmost Buddha-cognition:
Let him be like a merchant, who has traveled to the treasure island,
And who, having lost his goods would [nevertheless] again return [to it].

Chapter VIII

The Meaning of Purity

The purity of form should be known from the purity of fruit.
 From the purity of form and fruit is the purity of all-knowledge.
 The purity of all-knowledge and of the fruit, and the purity of form:
 As with the sameness of the space-element, they are not broken nor cut apart.

Having transcended what belongs to the triple world, the Bodhisattvas,
 [Although their] defilements [are] removed, exhibit [their] rebirth;
 [Although] freed from decay, illness and death, they exhibit decease, This
 is the perfection of wisdom in which course the constantly wise.

This world is attached to the mud of name-and-form.
 The wheel of birth-and-death revolves, similar to a wind-wheel.
 Having cognized the revolving world as like a snare for wild beasts
 The wise roam about similar to the birds in space.

He who, coursing in perfectly pure, does not course in form,
 Nor in consciousness, perception, feeling or will;
 Thus coursing he shuns all attachments.
 Freed from attachments he courses in the wisdom of the Sugatas.

Chapter IX

All-round Purity

Thus coursing, the wise and learned Bodhisattva,
Having cut off his attachments, marches on unattached to the world.
As the sun, released from the planet Rahu, blazes forth,
Or, as fire, let loose, burns up grass, log and forest.

The Bodhisattva sees that all dharma and the Perfection of Wisdom
Are pure, perfectly pure, in their essential original nature.
But he does not seize on one who sees, nor on all dharmas.
This is the practice of wisdom, the foremost perfection.”

Chapter X

Qualifications for Perfect Wisdom

Sakra, King of Gods, asks the Jina:

“Coursing in wisdom, how is the Bodhisattva ‘engaged in’ it?”

“Who is ‘joined’ to not the least thing whatsoever, be it skandhas, or element,
He who is ‘engaged’ thus, the Bodhisattva is ‘joined’ [to wisdom]

As one set out for long in the vehicle should that being be known,
As one who has done his duty under many niyutas of kotis of Buddhas,
Who, when he has heard that these dharmas are fictitious and like an illusion,
Do not hesitate, but makes efforts to train himself.

The Simile of a Village

If a man [coming out of] a wilderness extending over many miles
Would see cowherds, or boundary lines, or woods:
He [then] regains his breath, and has no [more] fear of thieves:
[For he knows that] these are signs that a village or city is quite near:

Just so the one who searches for enlightenment, when he learns of this wisdom,
The foremost perfection of the Jinas, and gets hold of it:
He regains his breath, and he has no [more] fear,
Not even that of [falling on] the level of an Arhat or the level of a Pratyekabuddha.

The Simile of the Ocean

As long as a man who travels to the watery ocean in order to see it,
Still sees the trees and forests of the Himalayas, [he is far from it].
But when he no longer sees these signs, he comes free from doubt, [and knows
that]
‘Quite near is the great ocean, it is not too far away’:

Just so should be known one who has set out for the foremost enlightenment,
And who is learning about this perfection of wisdom of the Jinas.
Although he is not one who has face to face been predicted by the Leader,
He knows that ‘before long I will experience the Buddha-enlightenment.’

The Simile of Spring

In beautiful springtime, when the stalks and leaves have come out,
From the branches will, before long, come forth [more] leaves, and fruits
and flowers:

One who has been taken in hand by this perfection of wisdom,
Before long he will attain the foremost enlightenment of the Leaders.

The Simile of the Pregnant Women

When a pregnant woman is still astir with pains,
One should know that the time has come for her to give birth:
Just so will the Bodhisattva, if on hearing of the wisdom of the Jinas
He beholds her with delight and zest, speedily experience enlightenment.”

How to Dwell in Perfect Wisdom

“When the Yogin is coursing in wisdom, the supreme perfection,
He does not see the growth of form, nor its diminution.
If someone does not see dharma, nor no-dharma, nor the Dharma-element
And if he does not experience the Blessed Rest, then he dwells in wisdom.

When he courses therein, he does not imagine the Buddhadharmas,
Nor the powers, nor the roads to psychic power, nor does he imagine the
peaceful calm of enlightenment.
Not discriminating, free from construction, coursing on resolutely,
This is the practice of wisdom, the foremost perfection.”

Chapter XI

The Theme

Subhuti asks the Buddha, the moon of the Doctrine:
 “Will there be any obstacles to the precious qualities?”
 “Many obstacles there will be,” preaches the Teacher.
 “Of them I will proclaim only a few:

Various Obstacles

Diverse and manifold flashes of ideas will arise in him
 When he copies out this wisdom, the perfection of the Jinas.
 Then again they will speedily vanish, like lightning,
 Without benefit to the weal of the world. This is one deed of Mara.

And he may have some doubts when it is being taught:
 ‘My name is not proclaimed by the Leader therein;
 Nor are the circumstances of my birth; nor my birthplace or clan.’
 Because of what they will not listen, and reject it. That also is Mara’s deed.

The Bodhisattva-path and the Disciple-path

Just as, in his ignorance, someone would give up the root,
 And prefer, the deluded, the branches and foliage;
 [Or] as one who, when he had got an elephant, would want an elephant’s foot
 instead; Thus would be one who, having heard the Prajnaparamita, would wish for
 the Sutras [of the Disciples instead].

Just as one who had got superior food of a hundred [different] tastes,
 Would, although he has got the best food of all, nevertheless seek for
 inferior food.
 So would be a Bodhisattva who, having got this perfection,
 Would seek for enlightenment on the level of an Arhat.

More Obstacles

They will want honour, they will want gain,
 In their hearts longing for them, intent on familiarity with the families
 [of the faithful].

Having spurned what is right [Dharma], they will do what is wrong;
 Having left the right path, they have gone on to a wrong road. This also is
 Mara's deed.

Even though at first they have produced faith,
 Keen to hear this most excellent dharma;
 When they find that the dharma-preacher is disinclined to do his work,
 They will go away, devoid of joy and very sad.

Mara's Deeds and the Buddha's Help

When these deeds of Mara will take place,
 Together with many other diverse and manifold obstacles,
 Then many monks will be troubled thereby,
 And will not bear in mind this Prajnaparamita.

Where there are jewels which are priceless
 And hard to get, their owners invariably have many foes.
 Just so this wisdom, the foremost perfection of the Jinas,
 Is the Dharma-jewel hard to get, and [connected with] many troubles.
 When a being has newly set out in the vehicle, and is limited in his
 intelligence,
 He does not [at once] obtain this Dharma-jewel, hard to get.
 Mara will then be zealous to cause obstacles.
 But in the Buddhas in the ten directions will be intent on helping.

Chapter XII

Perfect Wisdom the Mother of the Buddhas

If a mother with many sons had fallen ill,
 They all, sad in mind, would busy themselves about her:
 Just so also the Buddhas in the world-systems in the ten directions
 Bring to mind this perfection of wisdom as their mother.

The Saviours of the world who were in the past, and also those that are
 [just now] in the ten directions,
 Have issued from her, and so will the future ones be.
 She is the one who shows the world [for what it is], she is the genetrix,
 the mother of the Jinas,
 And she reveals the thoughts and actions of other beings.

How the Tathagata Knows the World

The Suchness of the world, the Suchness of the Arhats,
 The Suchness of Pratyekabuddhas, and the Suchness of the Jinas,
 As just one single Suchness free from existence, unaltering.
 Has the perfection of wisdom been understood by the Tathagata.

Whether the wise abide in the world, or whether they have gone to final
 Nirvana, Firmly established remains this fixed sequence of Dharmahood:
 ‘Dharmas are empty.’
 It is that Suchness (tathata) which the Bodhisattva understand.
 Therefore then have the Buddhas been given the name of ‘Tathagatas.’

This is the sphere of the Guides, with their own powers,
 Who reside in the delightful forests of the perfection of wisdom.
 Although they fetch suffering beings out of the three places of woe,
 Yet they never have anywhere the notion of being.

Similes about the Buddha

When a lion, residing in his mountain cave,
 Roars fearlessly, the lesser beasts are made to tremble:
 Likewise, when the Lion of Men, depending on the perfection of wisdom,
 Roars fearlessly, the many heretics are made to tremble.

Just as the rays of the sun, supported by the ether,
Dry up this earth, and do reveal its form:
Just so the king of the Dharma, supported by the perfection of wisdom,
Dries up the river of craving and reveals the dharma.

The Tathagata's Vision of Dharma

Wherein there is no vision of form, no vision of feelings,
No vision of perception, no vision of will,
No vision of consciousness, thought or mind,
This has been expounded as the vision of Dharma by the Tathagata.

A vision in space is a being, so they declare.
A vision like that of space, so should you consider that object!
Thus has the vision of Dharma been expounded by the Tathagata.
But it is not possible to report on that vision by definite statements [that differ from it].

Chapter XIII

Simile of the King and his Ministers

Who sees thus, he sees all dharmas.

When the minister does everything, the king is evenminded.

Whatever Buddha-actions there are, whatever dharmas of the Disciples,

It is the perfection of wisdom which effects them all.

A king does not travel to villages or into the countryside;

But in his own home is the meeting-place where he assembles all:

Just so the Bodhisattva does not move away from the dharmic nature of dharmas,

But he assembles all the qualities in the Buddha-dharmas.

Chapter XIV

The Bodhisattva and Enlightenment

The Bodhisattva who has firm faith in the Sugata,
 Who is resolutely intent on the supreme perfection of wisdom;
 Gone beyond the two levels of the Disciples and Pratyekabuddhas,
 He will swiftly attain, unhindered, the enlightenment of the Jinas.

The Simile of the Ship

When a ship breaks up in the ocean,
 Those who do not get hold of a corpse, a stick or a log,
 Go to their destruction in the midst of the water, without having gained the
 shore;
 But those who hold on to something, travel to the other shore and reach it:

Just so those who, although endowed with some faith and in possession of
 some serenity,
 Reject the perfection of wisdom, the mother:
 In the ocean of birth-and-death they must wander about for ever and ever,
 In birth, decay, death, sorrow, turmoil, and the breaking up [of limbs].

But those who have been taken hold of by the supreme wisdom,
 Skilled in seeing the own-being of existence, seers of ultimate reality:
 They are persons worthy of the vehicle who have collected the wealth of
 merit and cognition.
 They will speedily experience the exceedingly wonderful Sugata enlightenment.

The Simile of the Jar

It is as if someone would transport water in an unbaked jar;
 One should know that it will break quickly, because it does not hold the
 water well.
 But when water is transported in a fully baked jar, that on the way
 It might break there is no fear, and it gets safely to the house:

Although the Bodhisattva full of faith,
 If deficient in wisdom he swiftly reaches destruction.
 But when taken hold of by both faith and by wisdom,

Gone beyond the two levels he will attain the supreme enlightenment.

The Simile of the Two Ships

A ship, which is not well got ready, in the ocean
 Goes to destruction, together with its goods and merchants.
 But when a ship is well got ready, and well joined together,
 Then it does not break up, and all the goods get to the [other] shore.

Just so a Bodhisattva, exalted in faith,
 But deficient in wisdom, swiftly comes to a failure in enlightenment.
 But when he is well joined to wisdom, the foremost perfection,
 He experiences, unharmed and uninjured, the enlightenment of the Jinas.

The Simile of the Aged Man

An aged man, ailing, one hundred and twenty years old,
 Although he may have got up, is not capable of walking on his own;
 But when two men, both to his right and left, have taken hold of him
 He does not feel any fear of failing, and he moves along at ease:

Just so a Bodhisattva, who is weak in wisdom,
 Although he sets out, he breaks down midway;
 But when he is taken hold of by skilful means and by the best wisdom,
 Then he does not break down: he experiences the enlightenment of the
 mightiest of men.

Chapter XV

The Beginner and the Good Friends

The Bodhisattvas who stand on the stage of beginners,
 Who with resolute intention have set out for the supreme Enlightenment of
 Buddha,
 They, the discerning, should, as good pupils intent on respect for their Gurus,
 Always tend their spiritual teachers [who are their ‘good friends’].

For what reason? From that [tending] come the qualities of the learned.
 They [the good friends] [are those who] instructs in the perfection of wisdom.
 Thus preaches the Jina, the holder of all the best qualities:
 ‘Dependent on the good friend are the Buddha-dharmas.’

How a Bodhisattva Helps Beings

Giving, morality, also patience and vigour,
 The concentrations and wisdom should be turned over into enlightenment.
 But one should not grab at enlightenment, having considered [it as belonging
 to] the skandhas.
 It is thus that it should be demonstrated to beginners.

Coursing thus, the Oceans of Qualities, the Moons of the doctrine
 Become the shelter of the world, its refuge, and its place of rest;
 The means of salvation [route], the intelligence, the islands, leaders who
 desire its welfare;

The light, the torch, teachers of the foremost Dharma, imperturbable.
 An armour difficult to wear the greatly determined put on;
 But they are not armed with the skandhas, elements or sense-fields;

They are free from the notion of the three vehicles, and have not taken hold
 of it;
 They are irreversible, immovable, and steadfast in their character.
 Being thus endowed with dharma, unimpeded,

Freed from hesitations, perplexity and consternation, intent on what is
 beneficial,
 Having heard the perfection of wisdom, they do not despair.

They should be know as incapable of being led astray by others, as irreversible.

Perfect Wisdom and Its Conflict with the World

Deep is this dharma of the Leaders, hard to see,
Nor is it obtained by anyone, nor do they reach it.
For that reason, when he has obtained enlightenment,
the Benevolent and Compassionate
Becomes unconcerned, - 'what body of beings will cognize this?'

For beings delight in a place to settle in, they are eager for sense-objects,
Bent on grasping, unintelligent, and quite blinded.
The Dharma should be attained as nothing to settle in and as nothing to grasp.
Its conflict with the world is manifest.

Chapter XVI

On Suchness

The space-element in the eastern direction, and in the southern,
And so in the western and northern directions is boundless;
Above and below, in the ten directions, as far as it goes
There is no multiplicity, and no difference is attained.

Past Suchness, future Suchness,
Present Suchness, the Suchness of the Arhats,
The Suchness of all dharmas, the Suchness of the Jinas, All
that is the Dharma-Suchness, and no difference is attained.

Wisdom and Skill in Means

If a Bodhisattva wishes to reach this
Enlightenment of the Sugatas, free from differentiated dharmas,
He should practise the perfection of wisdom, joined to skill in means.
Without wisdom there is not the attainment of the Leaders of men.

A bird with a frame one hundred and fifty miles large
Would have little strength if its wings were lost or feeble:
If it should jump down to Jambudvīpa from the abodes of the Gods of the
Thirty-three,
It would travel to its destruction.

Even if he would procure these five perfections of the Jinas
For many niyutas of kotis of aeons,
And would all the time tend the world with an infinite abundance of vows;
If he is without skill in means, deficient in wisdom, he falls into Discipleship.

The Desirable Attitude to Other Beings

If he wishes to go forth into this Buddha-cognition,
He [should have] an even mind towards the whole world, the notion of father
and mother [towards all beings];
He should exert himself with a thought of benevolence, and a friendly mind;
Amenable and straight, he should be soft in his speech.”

Chapter XVII

The Theme

The Elder Subhuti questions the Saviour of the World:

“Teach the characteristics of those who are secluded in Peace, of the Oceans of Qualities,

How they become irreversible, and of great might.

Declare, O Jina, their qualities, merely by way of outline!”

Qualities of Irreversible Bodhisattva

“They are free from the perception of multiplicity, they speak suitably;

They do not take refuge with outside Sramanas or Brahmanas.

The wise have avoided for all time the three places of woe,

And they are practiced in the ten wholesome paths of action.

Free from self-interest they instruct the world in Dharma.

They take delight in the Dharma. They always speak gently.

Standing, walking, lying down, sitting, they are fully conscious [of what they are doing].

They walk along looking ahead only one yoke, their thoughts not wandering about.

They wear garments clean and unsoiled. They become pure through the threefold detachment.

Majestic men they want no gain, but always Dharma.

They have passed beyond Mara’s realms. Others cannot lead them astray.

They meditate in the four trances, but they do not use those trances as a support [for a better rebirth].

They do not want fame, their hearts are not overcome by anger.

As householders they remain constantly unattached to their entire property.

They do not seek to earn their livelihood in the wrong way,

Through bewitchment-spells, or the spells which are the work of women.

Nor do they [earn a living by] tell[ing] plausible lies to men and women.

Practised in the quite detached wisdom, the best of perfections,

Free from quarrels and disputes, their thoughts firmly friendly,

They want [to see] the all-knowing, their thoughts always inclined towards the religion.

They have avoided the barbarous populations of outlying districts, of the border regions.

They are free from doubts about their own stage, always fashioned like Meru. For the sake of Dharma they renounce their very life, intent on their practice.

These should be wisely known as the characteristics of the irreversible.

Chapter XVIII

Deep Stations

Deep are form, feeling and will,
 Consciousness and perception; signless in their essential original nature,
 and calm.

Like one who tries to reach the bottom of the ocean with a stalk,
 So, when the skandhas have been considered with wisdom, one does not get to
 the bottom of them.

When a Bodhisattva thus understands that these dharmas
 In the deep vehicle are in the ultimate sense stainless;
 Wherein there is neither skandha, nor sense-field, nor element,
 How can there be to him the attainment of his own merit anywhere?

The Simile of the Woman

As a man, preoccupied with matters of greed, had made a date
 With a woman, and would, not having met her, indulge in many thoughts;
 As many preoccupations as he would have [in his mind] during a day,
 For so many aeons does a Bodhisattva strive to reach his goal.

Considerations of Merit

If a Bodhisattva would for many thousands of kotis of aeons
 Give spotless gifts, and would equally guard his morality.
 And if another one were to preach the dharma associated with wisdom, the
 foremost perfection,
 The merit from giving and morality would [by comparison] be infinitesimal.

When a Bodhisattva, having meditated on the foremost wisdom,
 Emerged therefrom [i.e. that meditation] preaches the stainless Dharma,
 And turns over also [the merit from] that to the enlightenment linked to the
 weal of the world:
 There is nothing that is lovely in the triple world that could become equal
 to him.

And just that merit is declared to be just worthless,
 And likewise empty, insignificant, void and unsubstantial.

Thus coursing he courses in the wisdom of the Sugatas.
Coursing [thus] he acquires immeasurable merit.

No Growth or Diminution

As mere talk he cognizes all these dharmas
Which the Buddha has demonstrated, practised and revealed.
Though he may teach for many nyutas of kotis of aeons,
Yet the Dharma-element does not get exhausted nor does it increase.

And as to these five perfections of the Jinas.
These dharmas also have been proclaimed as mere words.
The Bodhisattva who turns over, without putting his mind to it,
Does not fail; but he experiences the supreme Buddha-enlightenment.

Chapter XIX

Conditioned Coproduction and the Simile of the Lamp

The wick of a burning oil lamp, -it is not by the first incidence [of the flame]
That the wick is burned [away]; not is it burned [away] when [that incidence] is
not, without it.

Nor is the wick burned [away] by the last incidence of the flame,
And also when that last flame is not does the lamp wick not burn away.

By the first thought [of enlightenment] one does not experience the foremost
enlightenment,

And again, when that is not there, one is not able to experience it;

Nor does the last thought arrive at the Bliss,

Nor again, when it is not there, is one able to reach it.

The Simile of the Seed and the Fruit

From a seed trees, fruits, and flowers come forth;

When it is obstructed, or absent, then there is no tree from it.

Just so the first thought is, of course, the foundation of enlightenment;

But when it is obstructed or absent, there is no enlightenment from it.

Conditioned by seeds grow barley, rice and so on;

Their fruits are in these [seeds], and yet they are not in them.

When this enlightenment of the Jinas arises,

What takes place is an illusion, which in its own-being is without existence.

The Simile of the Water Drops

Water drops fill a water jar drop by drop,

Gradually, from the first incidence to the last one.

Just so the first thought is the [initial] cause of supreme enlightenment;

Gradually are the bright qualities fulfilled in the Buddhas.

The Meaning of Emptiness

He courses in dharmas as empty, signless and wishless;

But he does not experience the Blessed Rest, nor does he course in a sign:

As a skilful ferryman goes from his [shore] to the other shore,

But does not stand at either end, nor does he stand in the great flood.

Thus coursing, the Bodhisattva also does not think:
'Predestined by those who have the ten powers, may I experience enlightenment!'
Nor is he trembling [because he sees that] enlightenment is here not anything.
Thus coursing he becomes one who courses in the wisdom of the Sugatas.

The Attitude to Places Which Might Inspire Fear

When they have seen a world which is a wilderness, full of famine and disease,
They have no fear, and go on putting on the armour.
For the wise are always joined to the limit which is further on.
They do not produce the least fatigue in their minds.

Chapter XX

The Three Doors to Deliverance, and the Buddha-dharmas

Furthermore, the Bodhisattva who courses in the wisdom of the Jinas
 Cognizes these skandhas as unproduced, as empty from the beginning.
 Even during the time that unconcentrated he views in compassion the world of
 beings,
 He does not become destitute of the Buddha-dharmas.

The Simile of the Hero

A skillful man, endowed with all qualities,
 Powerful, unassailable, well-qualified, instructed in many arts,
 Perfect in archery, devoted to many crafts,
 Perfect in knowing the various forms of magical illusion, keen on the
 welfare of the world

He takes his mother and father, together with his sons and daughters
 And enters a wilderness, full of many hostile forces.
 He conjures up many men, heroic champions,
 Gets away safely, and again goes back to his home;

Just so at that time when a wise Bodhisattva
 Extends the great friendliness to all in the world of beings,
 Having passed beyond the four Maras, and the two levels,
 He permanently abides in the best of concentration, but he does not
 experiences enlightenment.

The Simile of the Cosmos

Supported by space is air, and [by that] the mass of water;
 By that again is supported this great earth and the [living] world.
 If the foundations of the enjoyment of the deeds of beings
 Is thus established in space, how can one think of that object?

Just so the Bodhisattva, who is established in emptiness
 Manifests manifold and various works to beings in the world,
 And his vows and cognitions are a force which sustains beings.
 But he does not experience the Blessed Rest; for emptiness is not a place to

stand on.

At the time when the wise and learned Bodhisattva
 Courses in this most excellent quietude of the concentration on emptiness,
 During that time no sign should be exalted,
 Nor should he stand in the signless; for he is one who course calm and quiet.

The Simile of the Flying Bird

A flying bird has no footing in the intermediate space.
 It does not stand on it, nor does it fall to the ground.
 So the Bodhisattva who courses in the doors to freedom
 Neither experiences the Blessed Rest, nor does he course in the sign.

The Simile of the Archer

As a man trained in archery shoots an arrow upwards,
 And then again other arrows in [quick] succession,
 Without giving [a chance] to the first one to fall to the ground
 Until he wishes the arrow to fall to the ground.
 Just so someone who courses in wisdom, the best of perfections,
 And who accomplishes wisdom, skill in means, the powers and the ability to
 work wonders:
 As long as these wholesome roots remain unfulfilled
 So long he does not obtain that most excellent emptiness.

The Simile of the Twin Miracle

A monk endowed with the most excellent ability to work wonders

Standing in the sky performs the twin miracle:
 He exhibits the coming and going, the lying down and the sitting;
 But he cannot be made to desist, nor does he feel exhausted however long he
 may be in it.

Just so the wise Bodhisattva, standing in emptiness,
 Perfect in cognition and the ability to work wonders, wandering without a
 home,
 Manifests an endless variety of works to the world,
 But he cannot be worn down, nor does he feel exhausted for kotis of aeons.

The Simile of the Parachutes

It is as with some men who have stood on a high cliff;
 If they held a parachute in each hand and would jump off into space,
 Their bodies, once they had left the high cliffs,
 Would go on falling until they had reached the ground.

Just so the wise Bodhisattva, having stood in compassion,
 Having taken hold of the two parachutes of skill in means and of wisdom,
 Considers dharmas as empty, signless and wishless;
 Though he does not experience the Blessed Rest, he nevertheless sees the
 dharmas.

The Simile of the Merchant and the Jewel Island

Someone, desirous of jewels, has traveled to the treasure island,
 And, having obtained the jewels, he would again return home.
 Although in those circumstances the merchant's lives quite happily,
 Yet he bears in mind the hosts of his suffering kinsmen:

Just so the Bodhisattva who has traveled to the treasure isle of Emptiness,
 And has obtained the trances, faculties and powers;
 Although he could experience the Blessed Rest, wholly delighting in it,
 He would bear in mind all suffering beings.

The Simile of the Merchant and His Journey

As a merchant, interested in business, goes into the cities,
 Markets towns and villages, which he come across on his way, so as to get
 acquainted with them;
 But he neither abides therein, nor in the treasure island;
 But he, the discerning, becomes skillful in the path [which leads] to his
 home.

Just so the wise Bodhisattvas who become skillful everywhere
 In the cognition and emancipation of the Disciples and Pratyekabuddhas,
 They abide not therein, nor in the Buddha-cognition,
 Nor in what is conditioned. Wise as to the path becomes the one who knows
 the method.

The Bodhisattva Undefinable

At the time when he has communed with the world in friendliness,
 And courses in the concentration on emptiness, the signless and the wishless:
 It is impossible that he either would [have an inclination to] reach the
 Blessed Rest,
 Or that he could be defined by the conditioned.

As a magically created man, or one who has made his body invisible,
 Cannot be defined by words:
 Just so the Bodhisattva who courses in the doors to freedom
 Can also not be defined by words.

The Doors to Deliverance and the Irreversible Stage

If on being questioned about the practice and the faculties
 A Bodhisattva does not effect the revelation of deep dharmas
 Which are empty and signless, if he fails to indicate the dharmas peculiar to
 The irreversible stage, he should not be known as one who has been predicted.

Tokens of Irreversibility

Not the level of an Arhat nor the Pratyekabuddha-level,
 Nor what belongs to the triple world does he long for in his dreams;
 But he sees the Buddhas, and himself as one who preaches Dharma to the
 world:
 Predicted as 'irreversible' should he then be known.

Having seen in this dreams the beings who are in the three places of woe,
 He makes the vow, 'May I that very instant abolish the places of woe!'
 If, through the power of his declaration of the Truth, he appeases even a
 mass of fire:
 Predicted as 'irreversible' should he then be known.

Those possessed by ghosts, with various diseases, in the world of mortals,
 Through the power of his declaration of the Truth he appeases them, he who
 is benevolent and compassionate.
 Nor does there arise to him any self-consciousness or pride:
 Predicted as 'irreversible' should he then be known.

Chapter XXI

Pride and Other Deeds of Mara

But when there arises in him the conceit, ‘I have been predestined
[Because] by [my] declaration of the Truth manifold things get accomplished,’
When a Bodhisattva sets himself above other [Bodhisattvas] as one who has
been predestined,
One should know that he stands in conceit, and has little intelligence.

Again, as to the power of the name, Mara, having approached,
Will say [to him]: ‘This is your name.’
The lineage of [your] father and mother for seven generations backwards he
runs through;
‘When you are a Buddha, this will then be your name!’

If he is one who has behaved in accordance with the ascetic practices, a
devoted Yogin,
[Mara will tell him:] ‘Formerly [in your past lives] you have also had these
very same qualities.’
The Bodhisattva who, on hearing this, becomes conceited,
One should know him to be possessed by Mara, of little intelligence.

Faults in Connection with Detachment

Though he might practise quite detached from villages or cities in a
mountain cave,
In a remote forest, or in isolated woods, The
Bodhisattva who exalts himself, who deprecates others,
One should know him to be possessed by Mara, of little intelligence.

Although they may constantly dwell in a village, a royal city [or] a market town;
If therein they do not generate longing for the vehicle of the Arhats and
Pratyekabuddhas,
But are devoted to enlightenment for the sake of maturing beings:
Then this has been preached as the detachment of the Sugata’s sons.

Though he may reside in mountain caves, five hundred miles wide,
Infested with wild beasts, for many kotis of years:

That Bodhisattva does not know this [true] detachment
If he dwells contaminated by conceit.

When he feels superior to Bodhisattvas who practise for the weal of the world.
And who have attained the concentrations, emancipations, faculties, trances
and powers,
On the ground that they do not course in the detachment of the remote forest, Of
him the Jina has said that 'he is established in Mara's sphere.'

Whether he dwells in the neighbourhood of a village, or in the remote forest:
If he is free from the thought of the twofold vehicle and fixed on the
supreme enlightenment,
Then this is the detachment of those who have set out for the weal of the world.
As one whose self is extinct should that Bodhisattva be considered.

Chapter XXII

The Good Friends and the Perfections

Therefore then the learned who has slain pride,
 Who seeks with weighty resolution for the best enlightenment,
 Should, as one attends upon a physician to be cured of a multitude of ailments,
 Attend upon the good friend, undaunted.

The Buddhas, the Bodhisattvas who have set out for the best enlightenment,
 And [those who have] these perfections have been enumerated as ‘the good friends.’

It is they who instruct them [i.e. the Bodhisattvas] in these progressive stages,
 For a double reason they [quickly] understand the Buddha-enlightenment.

The past and future Jinas, and those who stand [just now] in all the ten directions,
 They all [have] this perfection for their path, and no other.
 As a splendid illumination, as a torch, as a light, as the Teacher
 Have these perfections been described to those who have set out for the best enlightenment.

As he cognizes the perfection of wisdom through the mark of emptiness,
 So by the same mark he cognizes all these dharmas;
 When he wisely knows dharmas as empty, as without marks,
 In coursing thus he courses in the wisdom of the Sugatas.

Defilement and Purification

In want of food, indulging in imagination, beings
 Always wander about in birth-and-death, their minds attached.
 Both I and Mine as dharmas are unreal and empty.
 By his own self has the fool become entangled in space.

As someone who suspects that he has been poisoned
 May well be struck down, although no poison has got into his stomach;
 Just so the fool who has admitted into himself [the notion of] I and Mine
 Is forced by that quite unreal notion of an I to undergo birth and death
 again and again.

Where one takes notice, there is defilement, so it has been revealed;
 The non-apprehension of I and Mine has been called purification.
 But there is herein no one who is defiled or who is cleansed.
 Then the Bodhisattva has understood the perfection of wisdom.

The Supreme Merit of Perfect Wisdom

If as many beings as there are here in the entire Jambudvīpa
 Would all, having aspired for the foremost enlightenment,
 And having given gifts for many thousands of kotis of years
 Dedicate it all to the enlightenment linked to the weal of the world;

But if someone else, practiced in wisdom, the foremost perfection,
 Would for even a single day comply with it:
 And infinitesimal merit would here that heap of giving bring.
 Therefore the undaunted should always plunge into wisdom.

Compassion and Perfect Wisdom

When the Yogin courses in wisdom, the best of perfections,
 He engenders the great compassion, but no notion of a being.
 Then the wise becomes worthy of the offerings of the whole world,
 He never fruitlessly consumes the alms of the realm.

The Bodhisattva who wishes to set free the gods and men,
 Bound for so long, and the beings in the three places of woe,
 And to manifest to the world of beings the broad path to the other shore,
 Should be devoted to the perfection of wisdom by day and by night.

The Simile of the Pearl of Great Price

A man who had gained at some time a very fine jewel
 Which he had not got before, would be contented.
 If, as soon as he had gained it, he would lose it again through
 carelessness,
 He would be sorry and constantly hankering after the jewel.

Just so the Yogin who has set out for the best enlightenment
 Should not get parted from the perfection of wisdom, which is
 comparable to a jewel,

Seizing the jewel which he has gained, with growing energy
He moves forward, and swiftly he comes to the [state of] Bliss.

Chapter XXIII

The Superior Position of Bodhisattvas

When the sun rises, free from clouds and one blaze of rays,
 Having dispelled the entire blinding and confusing darkness,
 It outshines all animals such as glowworms,
 And also all the hosts of stars, and the luster of the moon.

Just so the wise Bodhisattva, who courses in wisdom, the foremost
 perfection:
 Having destroyed the jungle of views,
 The Bodhisattva who courses in emptiness and the signless
 Very much surpasses the whole world, as well as the Arhats and
 Pratyekabuddhas.

The Simile of the King and the Crown Prince

Just as the son of a king, a giver of wealth, desiring the welfare [of others],
 Becomes a person of authority among all, much sought after.
 For even now he makes [many] beings happy,
 How much more so when he will be established as the resourceful [ruler] of
 the kingdom!

Just so the wise Bodhisattva, who courses in wisdom,
 A donor of the deathless, dear to gods and men.
 Already now he is interested in the happiness of [many] beings,
 How much more so when he will be established as king of the Dharma!

Chapter XXIV

How Mara is Discomforted and Defeated

But Mara at that time becomes like one who feels a thorn in his flesh,
 Afflicted with sorrow, miserable, displeased, of little stamina.
 [He manifests] a conflagration on the horizon, the hurls a meteor, in order
 to cause fear,
 ‘How can this Bodhisattva be made to become despondent in his mind!’

When the wise become resolutely intent,
 Day and night beholding the meaning of wisdom, the foremost perfection,
 Then their bodies, thoughts and speech become [free] like a bird in the sky.
 How can the Kinsman of Darkness gain entrance to them?

What Makes Mara Contented

When a Bodhisattva has taken to quarrels and disputes,
 And when the thoughts [of two Bodhisattvas] become mutually conflicting and
 angry,
 Then Mara becomes contented, and supremely elated, [thinking:]
 ‘Both these remain far distant from the cognition of the Jinas.

Both these remain far distant [from it], comparable to malignant demons;
 Both these will effect for themselves a waning of their pledge.
 Those who are full of hate, deficient in patience, how can they have
 enlightenment?’ Then Mara becomes contented, together with his host.

The Bodhisattva’s Pride and Repentance

If a Bodhisattva who has not had his prediction
 Should have angry thoughts for one who has had it, and should bring about a
 dispute:
 For as many moments as he persists in his obstinate faulty thoughts,
 For so many aeons he must again put on the armour.
 Then he sets up mindfulness, and [he reflects], ‘These are unwholesome
 thought;
 By means of the perfection of patience do the Buddhas experience
 enlightenment.’

He confess his fault, and afterwards he restrains himself,
Or he desists, and trains himself in this Buddha-dharma.

Chapter XXV

How a Bodhisattva Is Trained

When he trains himself, he does not anywhere approach a training,
Nor does he get at one who trains, nor at the dharma which [constitute]
training.

Who trains himself, without discriminating between both, -training and notraining,
He trains himself in this Buddha-dharma.

The Bodhisattva who thus cognizes this training,
He does not ever become deficient in training, or immoral.
Having found pleasure in them, he trains himself in these Buddha-dharmas.
He trains himself, skilful in [the superior] training, but without
apprehending anything,

When they train thus in wisdom, to the wise shedders of light
Not even one single thought arises that is unwholesome:
As when the sun goes through the sky, before the impact of its rays
No darkness can maintain itself in the intermediate space.

Perfect Wisdom Comprehends All the Perfections

For those who have effected a training in the perfection of wisdom
All the [other] perfections are comprehended in it.
As in the false view of individuality all the sixty-two false views
Are included, so are these perfections [included in the perfection of
wisdom].

As when the life faculty has been stopped
Also all the other faculties that may exist are stopped:
Just so, when the best of the wise course in wisdom,
All these perfections have been said to be therein comprehended.

Bodhisattvas and Disciples

In all the qualities of the Disciples and likewise of the Pratyekabuddhas,
The wise Bodhisattva becomes trained:
But he does not stand in them, nor does he long for them.
'In that [also] should I be trained,' [he thinks]. In that sense he trains

himself [in them].

Chapter XXVI

Rejoicing and Perfect Wisdom

If someone resolutely rejoices in the production of thought
 [Of a Bodhisattva who] has set out for the best enlightenment and is
 irreversible [from it];
 One might [measure] the Merus in up to a trichiliocosm by comparing them
 [with a tip of straw],
 But not that merit derived from rejoicing.

They rejoice at the heap of merit of all beings that there are,
 Who desire what is wholesome, [and] who want emancipation.
 When for the weal of beings they have reached and the infinite qualities of
 a Jina,
 They will give the Dharma to the world for the complete extinction of suffering.

The Bodhisattva who, not discriminating, comprehends
 All dharmas as empty, signless and unimpeded,
 Without any dualism he seeks in wisdom for enlightenment.
 Devoted to the foremost perfection of wisdom is that Yogin.

The Simile of Space and the Firmament

An obstruction of the space-element by the firmament
 Cannot be found anywhere by anyone.
 Just so the wise Bodhisattva, coursing in wisdom,
 It is just like open space, and he courses calmly quiet.

The Simile of the People Created by Magic

As it does not occur to a man whom a magician has conjured up [when he
 looks at the audience]:
 ‘I will please those people,’ and nevertheless he performs his work;
 They see him exhibiting manifold illusory works,
 Although he has no body, thought, or name.

Just so it never occurs to one who courses in wisdom:
 ‘Having known enlightenment I will set free the world!’
 In his various rebirths he is associated with manifold works,

Which he manifests like magical illusions, but he does not course in false discrimination.

The Simile of the Buddha's Magical Creations

As a Buddha's magical creation performs a Buddha's work,
But, when he does so, no thought of self-conceit arises in him:
Just so the wise Bodhisattva, who courses in wisdom,
Manifests all works, comparable to a fictitious magical illusion.

The Simile of the Machine

An expert and experienced mason has made a wooden apparatus;
Comparable to a man or a woman it performs here all its works.
Just so the wise Bodhisattva, coursing in wisdom,
Performs all his work by his cognition, but without discrimination.

Chapter XXVII

The Bodhisattva Worthy of Homage

To the wise, who courses thus, many congregations of gods,
Having bent forth their outstretched hands, in respectful salutation, will
pay homage.

The Buddhas also, as many as there are in the world-systems in the ten
directions,

Effect the proclamation of the garland of the praises of his qualities.

Mara is Powerless against Certain Bodhisattvas

If as many beings as there are in the fields countless like the sands of the
Ganges

Would all, let us assume, become Maras;

And if every single hair on their bodies would again magically create a snare,
They all could not hinder the wise.

For four reasons does the powerful and wise Bodhisattva

Become unassailable by the four Maras, [and] unshakable:

He becomes one who dwells in the empty; and yet he is not one who abandons
beings;

He acts as he speaks; he is sustained by the Sugatas.

The True Attitude to Suchness

The Bodhisattva who resolutely believes when this perfection of wisdom,

The mother of the Tathagatas, is being taught,

And who practices the progressive path with resolution,

He should be known as having well set out towards all-knowledge.

But he does not come to a standing place in the Suchness of the Dharma element.

He becomes as one who, like a cloud, stands in the sky without anywhere to
stand on,

As a sorcerer who, like a bird, rides on the wind which offers him no
support,

Or as one who, by the force of his spells, miraculously produces on a tree
full-blown flowers out of season.

The Bodhisattva Dwells Supreme

The wise and learned Bodhisattva who courses thus
 Does not get at one who wakes up to enlightenment, nor also at the Buddha
 dharmas,
 Nor at one who demonstrates, nor also at one who loves and sees the Dharma.
 This is the dwelling of those who desire calm, of those who delight in the
 precious qualities.

As many as there are the dwellings of Disciples and Pratyekabuddhas,
 Associated with the peace and happiness of calm concentrations:
 With the exception of the Arhat-liberation of the Tathagatas
 This dwelling is among all the foremost and the unsurpassed.

How and Why One Should Dwell in Emptiness

A bird dwells in space, but does not fall down.
 A fish dwells amidst water, but does not die.
 Just so the Bodhisattva who through the trances and powers has gone beyond,
 Dwells in the empty, but does not reach the Blessed Rest.

One who wants to get to the summit of the qualities of all beings,
 To experience the best, the exceedingly wonderful, Buddha-cognition,
 To give the best gift of the highest and supreme Dharma,
 He should resort to this best dwelling of those who bring benefit.

Chapter XXVIII

Who Trains in Perfect Wisdom Trains in Buddhahood

Of all the teaching which have been revealed by the Leader,
 This teaching is the best and unsurpassed
 One who, wise in all trainings, wishes to go Beyond,
 He should train in this perfection of wisdom, in the Buddha-training.

Inexhaustibility of Perfect Wisdom

This is the best receptacle, the storehouse of the supreme Dharma,
 The treasury of happiness and ease of those people who belong to the clan of
 the Buddhas.
 The past and future world saviours, [and those who are at present] in the
 ten directions,
 They have come forth from this, and yet the Dharma-element does not get
 exhausted.

As many trees, fruits, flowers and forests trees as there are,
 They all have come out of the earth and originate in it.
 And yet the earth does not undergo exhaustion, or growth,
 It does not get tired, does not dwindle away, making no discrimination.³²

The Buddha's offspring, the Disciples and Pratyekabuddhas,
 The gods, and the dharmas which lead to the ease and happiness of all the
 world, -as many as there are,
 They all have issued from wisdom, the foremost perfection,
 And yet wisdom does not ever get exhausted, nor does it increase.

As many beings as there are in the low, middle and high [regions of the] world,
 They have all, so has the Sugata said, been brought about by ignorance.
 The machinery of ill is kept going by the full complement of the conditions,
 And yet the machinery of ignorance does not get exhausted, nor does it grow.

As many roots of skillful devices as there are, or doors and methods of
 cognition,
 They all have issued from wisdom, the foremost perfection.
 The machinery of cognition is kept going by the full complement of
 conditions,

And yet the perfection of wisdom does not increase or become diminished.

Conditioned Coproduction

But the Bodhisattva who understands conditioned coproduction as non production
And this wisdom as non-extinction:
As the rays of the sun freed from the covering of the clouds,
So he has dispelled the covering of ignorance, and become one Self-Existent.

Chapter XXIX

The Perfection of Concentration

Those of great might who dwell in the four Trances
 Do not make them into a place to settle down in, nor into a home.
 But these four Trances, with their limbs, will in their turn become
 The basis for the attainment of the supreme and unsurpassed enlightenment.
 One who is established in the Trances becomes one who obtains the foremost
 wisdom;

And also when he experiences the four most excellent Formless Trances,
 He makes these Trances subservient to the best and foremost enlightenment.
 But it is not for the extinction of the outflows that the Bodhisattva trains
 himself in these.

Astonishing and wonderful is this accumulation of precious qualities.
 When they have dwelled in Trance and Concentration, there is then no sign
 When the personality of those who have stood therein breaks up,
 They are reborn again the world of sense-desire, as [and where] they had
 intended.

As some man from Jambudvipa who had in the past been a god,
 Would, after reaching again the highest abodes of the gods,
 See the apartments contained in them
 And would then again come back, and not make his home therein;

Just so those Bodhisattvas, bearers of the best qualities,
 Having dwelt in Trance and Concentration, Yogins who have exerted
 themselves,
 Become again established in the sense-world, unstained
 As the lotus in water, independent of the dharmas of the fools.

Except in order to mature beings, to purify the [Buddha-] field,
 To fulfil these perfections, the Great-souled ones
 Do not strive after rebirth in the formless world,
 Lest there be a loss of the perfections and of the qualities of
 enlightenment therein.

It is as if some man, having found deposit of jewels,

Would not generate longing in his intelligence with regard to it.
 At some other time he may acquire a few of them;
 Having taken hold them, having entered his home, he would not be covetous
 [for any more?].

Just so the wise Bodhisattvas who have gained
 The calm concentrations of the four Trances, which gives joy and ease,
 Having let go the acquisition of the joy and ease of Trance and concentration,
 They enter again into the sensuous world, compassionate for all that lives.

When a Bodhisattva dwells in the concentration of the Trances,
 He generates no longing in his intelligence for the vehicle of the Arhats
 and Pratyekabuddhas:
 [For then] he becomes unconcentrated, in his thought distracted and puffed up,
 He has lost the qualities of a Buddha, a sailor who suffers shipwreck.

Although he applies himself to the five sense-qualities, To
 form and sound, and likewise smell, and taste, and touch, When
 free from the vehicle of the Arhats and Pratyekabuddhas, the joyous
 Bodhisattva
 Should, a hero, be wisely known as being constantly concentrated.

The Perfection of Vigour

The have pure and courageous minds and are linked to other beings and
 persons,
 [When] they are practising the excellent perfection of Vigour.
 As a maid servant is submissive to her master who is not subject to anyone else,
 So do the firmly wise submit to subjection by all beings.

The servant does not answer back to her master,
 Even when abused, struck, or beaten.
 Exceedingly trembling in mind, and overcome by fear,
 She thinks, 'He surely will kill me for that!'

Just so the Bodhisattva who has set out for the foremost enlightenment,
 Should behave towards the entire world like a true servant.
 Thereupon he obtain enlightenment, and the fulfillment of the qualities
 takes place.

Fire, which has arisen from grass and sticks, [then] burns them up.
Having renounced a happy destiny for himself,
Practising his duty towards other beings, day and night, in his thought
free from hesitation:

Like a mother, ministering to [her] only child,
He abides in his resolute intention unexhausted.

Chapter XXX

The Perfection of Vigour (Continued)

The Bodhisattva who intends to wander about in birth-and-death for [a] long [time],

A Yogin devoted to the purification of the [Buddha-] field for the welfare of beings,

And who does not produce the least thought of fatigue,

He is endowed with the perfection of vigour, and undaunted.

If the unwise Bodhisattva counts the kotis of aeons,

And has the notion that it is long until the full attainment of enlightenment, he is bound to suffer,

And for a long time he will be suffering while moving unto Dharma.

Therefore he is inferior in the perfection of vigour, and essentially indolent.

Beginning with the production of the first thought of the foremost enlightenment,

Until in the end he reaches the unsurpassed Bliss,

If night and day he would persevere single-mindedly,

The wise and learned should be known as one who has put forth vigour.

If someone would say, ‘On condition that you have shattered Mount Sumeru, You will be one who will attain to the foremost enlightenment.’

And if he [then] effects a thought of fatigue or limitation [to his efforts],

Then that Bodhisattva is affected by indolence.

But when there arises to him the mindful thought, ‘That is nothing difficult.

In a mere moment Sumeru [will] break up into dust,’

Then the wise Bodhisattva becomes one who puts forth vigour.

Before long he will attain the foremost enlightenment of the Leaders.

If he would exert himself with body, thought and speech, [thinking]

‘Having matured [it] I will work the weal of the world,’

Then, established in the notion of a self, he is affected by indolence.

He is as far distant from the meditational development of not-self as the sky is from the ground.

When one has no notion of either body, or thought, or a being,
 Standing rid of perception, coursing in the non-dual Dharma, That
 has been called by Him who bestows benefits the perfection of vigour
 Of those who desire the blissful, imperishable, foremost enlightenment.

The Perfection of Patience

When he hears someone else speaking to him harshly and offensively
 The wise Bodhisattva remains quite at ease and contented.
 [He thinks:] ‘Who speaks? Who hears? How, to whom, by whom?’
 The discerning is [then] devoted to the foremost perfection of patience.

If a Bodhisattva, devoted to the precious Dharma, remains patient, And
 if someone else would give the trichiliocosm filled with precious things
 To the Buddhas, Knowers of the world, and to the Arhats and
 Pratyekabuddhas, Infinitesimal
 only will be [by comparison] the merit from that heap of gifts.

The personality of one who is established in patience is completely purified,
 Exalted by the thirty-two marks, [it becomes] boundless.
 He preaches the best empty Dharma to beings.
 Dear to the entire world do the patient and discerning become.

If someone had taken a basket containing sandalwood powder,
 And, with respect and affection, strewed it over the Bodhisattva;
 And if a second one were to throw live coals over his head, He
 should produce a mind equal to both of them.

Having thus been patient, the wise and learned Bodhisattva
 Dedicates that production of thought to the foremost enlightenment.
 The hero who remains patient in all the worlds, surpasses
 Whatever Arhats and Pratyekabuddhas there may be in the world of beings.

Again, one who is patient should produce a thought [thus]:
 ‘In the hells, in the world of animals and in the Yama world there are many
 ills.
 With the sense-pleasures as cause one must experience much that causes
 displeasure.
 Better, for the sake of enlightenment, to be patient today!’

‘Whip, stick, sword, murder, imprisonment, and blows,
Decapitation, and amputation of ears, hands and feet, and of nose,
As many ills as there are in the world, [all] that I [will] endure,’
[When he thinks thus, then] the Bodhisattva stands in the perfection of
patience.

Chapter XXXI

The Perfection of Morality

By morality those who hanker after calm are lifted up,
Established in the sphere of those with the ten powers, unbroken in their
morality.

How ever many actions of restrain they comply with,
They dedicate them to enlightenment for the benefit of all beings.

If he generates a longing for the enlightenment of Arhats and
Pratyekabuddhas,
He becomes immoral, unwise, and likewise faulty in his coursing.
But when one turns over [all one's merit] into the utmost Bliss of
enlightenment,
Then one is established in the perfection of morality, [although] joined to
the sense-qualities.

The Dharma from which come the qualities of the enlightenment of the Gentle,
That is the object of the morality of those who are endowed with qualities
of Dharma.

The Dharma [involves] in the loss of the qualities of the enlightenment of
those who act for the weal of the world,
As immorality has that been proclaimed by the Leader.

When a Bodhisattva tastes of the five sense-qualities,
But has gone for refuge to the Buddha, the Dharma, and the holy Samgha
And has turned his attention toward all-knowledge, [thinking] 'I will become
a Buddha,'
As established in the perfection of morality should that discerning one be
known.

If, when coursing for kotis of aeons in the ten paths of wholesome action,
He engenders a longing for Arhatship or Pratyekabuddhahood,
Then he becomes one whose morality is broken, and faulty in his morality.
Weightier than an offense deserving expulsion is such a production of thought.

When he guards morality, he turns [the resulting merit] over to the foremost
enlightenment,
But he does not feel conceited about that, nor does he exalt himself.

When he has got rid of the notion of I and the notion of other beings,
Established in the perfection of morality is that Bodhisattva called.

If a Bodhisattva, coursing in the path of the Jinas,
Makes [a difference between] these beings as observers of morality and those
as of bad morality,
Intent on the perception of multiplicity he is perfectly immoral.
He is faulty in his morality, not perfectly pure in it.

He who has no notion of I and no notion of a being,
He has performed the withdrawal from perception, [and] he has no [need for]
restraint.
One who minds neither about restraint nor about non-restraint,
He has been proclaimed by the Leader as restrained by morality.

The Perfection of Giving

But one who, endowed with morality, a pure being,
Becomes unconcerned about anything that may be dear or undear, If,
when he renounces head, hands and feet his thought remains undejected,
He becomes one who gives up all he has, always uncowed.

And having known the essential original nature of dharmas as void and
without self,
He would renounce his own flesh, undejected in thought,
To say nothing of his renouncing in property and gold.
It is impossible that he should act from meanness.

Through the notion of I comes about a sense of ownership about property, as
well as greed;
How can the deluded have the resolve to renunciation?
The mean are reborn in the world of the Pretas,
Or if as humans, then they are poor.

Then the Bodhisattva, having understood why these beings are poverty
stricken,
Becomes resolved on giving, always a generous giver.
When he has given away the four Continents, well adorned, as if they were
just spittle,
He becomes elated, for he has not kept the Continents.

Having given gifts, the wise and learned Bodhisattva,
 Having brought to mind all the beings that they are in the triple world,
 Becomes to all of them a donor, and he turns over
 That gift into the most excellent enlightenment, for the weal of the world.

When he has given a gift, he does not make it into a basis or support.
 And he does never expect any reward from it.
 Having thus renounced, he becomes a wise renouncer of all.
 The little he has renounced becomes much and immeasurable.

If all the beings in the entire triple world, as many as there are
 Would, let us assume, give gifts for endless aeons,
 To the Buddhas, Knowers of the world, to Arhats and Pratyekabuddhas,
 But would wish for the virtues of the Disciples;

And if a Bodhisattva, wise and skilled in means,
 Would rejoice at the foundation of their meritorious deed,
 And would, for the weal of beings, turn it over into the best and most
 excellent enlightenment,
 By having turned over he surpasses the [merit of the] entire world.

If there were a large heap of spurious glass jewels,
 One single gem of lapis lazuli surpasses it all:
 Just so the Bodhisattva, who rejoices, surpasses
 The [merit from the] whole vast heap of gifts of the entire world.

If the Bodhisattva, when giving gifts to the world
 Remains unaffected by a sense of ownership or by affection for his property,
 From that his wholesome root grows into something of great might:
 As the moon, in the absence of cloud, is a circle of radiant light in the
 bright half of the lunar month.

Chapter XXXII

Rewards of the Six Perfections

Through Giving a Bodhisattva cuts off rebirth as a Preta.
 He also cuts off poverty, and likewise all the defilements.
 When he courses in it [i.e. giving] he gains infinite and abundant wealth.
 Through [his] giving he matures beings in trouble.

Through Morality he avoids rebirth as one of the many animals,
 And also the eight untoward moments; he constantly gains rebirth at an
 auspicious moment.

Through Patience he gains a perfect and exalted body,
 With golden skin, dear to the world to look at.

Through Vigour he does not incur the loss of the bright qualities.
 He gains the storehouse of the infinite cognition of the Jinas.

Through Trance he casts off the sense-qualities in disgust,
 He acquires the “lore,” the superknowledges and concentrations.

Having, through Wisdom, comprehended the essential original nature of
 dharmas,
 He completely transcends the triple world and the states of woe.

Having turned the precious wheel of the Mightiest of Men,
 He demonstrates Dharma to the world for the complete extinction of ill.

When the Bodhisattva has fulfilled these dharmas,
 He then still receives the purity of the field and the purity of [the]
 beings [in it].
 He also receives the lineage of the Buddha, the lineage of the Dharma,
 And likewise the lineage of the Samgha. He receives all dharmas.”

Conclusion

The supreme physician who accords medical treatment to the sickness of the
 world,
 Has taught this exposition of wisdom which is the path to enlightenment.

It is called “The Path to enlightenment which is the ‘Accumulation of Precious Qualities,’”

And it has been taught so that all beings might reach that Path.