



**CENTER FOR AMERICAN BUDDHIST PRACTICE
BLUE LOTUS DHARMA CENTER**

Liturgy

Saint Louis, Missouri

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Meditation & Sutra Practice

(Leader in Bold)

Preliminaries (*Join palms*)

Let us pay homage to our great teacher, Shakyamuni Buddha

To His wondrous Teaching, the Buddhadharma

And to the Sangha, the community He established:

NAMO SHAKYAMUNI BUDDHA (3x)

We have been given the profound and beautiful Dharma.

We in this very moment have the opportunity to hear it, study it, and apply it.

We vow to realize its deepest meaning.

Refuge and Generating Bodhicitta

Until I reach Enlightenment, I go for refuge to the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha.

Through the virtues I collect by giving and the other five perfections, may I become a Buddha for the benefit of all. (3x)

Four Immeasurables

May all beings everywhere have happiness and its causes.

May they be free from suffering and its causes.

May they continuously dwell in deep joy that transcends all sorrow and pain.

May they be free from the pangs of attachment and aversion. (3x)

Seven Limbed Prayer

With reverence, I prostrate with body, speech, and mind and present clouds of every type of offering, both actual and those mentally transformed. I declare all my negative actions accumulated from beginningless time until now and I rejoice in the merits and virtues of all holy and ordinary beings. I request the Enlightened Ones that teach the Dharma to please remain until samsara ends and turn the wheel of the Dharma for all sentient beings. I dedicate all the merit generated by myself and others to the Enlightenment of all beings.

Offerings (*Recite prayer while making lotus mudra*)

With a heart full of gratitude, just for the opportunity to hear, study, and practice the Dharma in this lifetime, I offer flowers, incense, and lights to all the Enlightened

Ones. I offer these things, both physically and mentally, with thanksgiving, to all the great teachers that have compassionately passed down the Great Teaching from generation to generation so that I too may receive them. Through this merit, may I become friends with the numerous Buddhas and Bodhisattvas that continuously work for the benefit of all sentient beings. With a heart-felt wish, may I attain enlightenment so that I too may quickly lead all beings to that same state.

Incense Offering

(Composed by Venerable Thich Naht Hanh)

I offer this incense to all Buddhas and Bodhisattvas throughout the three periods of time and in the ten directions.

May it be as fragrant as the Earth Herself, reflecting our careful efforts, wholehearted awareness, and the fruit of understanding slowly ripening.

May we all become friends with the numerous Buddhas and Bodhisattvas and may we awaken from our forgetfulness and realize our true abode.

(Composed by Lama Chokyi Lodu)

In the great expanse of the Deep Blue Sky –
In the vastness of the Deep Blue Ocean –
Billowing clouds of white arise, from this falls the golden honey-like nectar that blesses and purifies all outer and inner, vessel & contents, the whole of what is seen & unseen.

This incense we offer as clouds of Samantabhadra's offerings!

We offer this to the Great Masters – the Root Guru and Paramgurus, the Preachers of the Dharma, and the Spiritual Friends that guide us along the Path to Liberation. May this beautiful incense offering dispel all our obstacles and obscurations that keep us from realization.

In devotion to the Three Jewels, we make this sacred offering. May its fragrance pervade the whole of space, purifying all faults of distraction, washing away the seeds of negative karma, and dissolving all forms of guilt and the poverty mind.

Wherever there are sentient beings throughout the Six Realms, without exception, may this sweet offering become the cause for the transformation of those realms into Pure Buddha

Realms! May all beings reside effortlessly in the Cosmic Consciousness of Dharmata, never becoming separate from Great Bliss!

Extensive Offerings

OM In the entire realm of space throughout the ten directions, water for drinking and for washing, flowers, incense, lamps, perfumes, food, and music are offered.

**OM VAJRA ARGHAM PADYAM PUKPE DHUPE ALOKE GANDHE NAIWIDYE SHABDA
AH HUNG**

OM In the entire realm of space throughout the ten directions, form, sounds, odors, tastes, and tactile sensations are offered with devotion: I entreat you to accept these.

OM VAJRA RUPA SHABDA GANDHE RASA SAPARSHE PRATITZ TSA YE SOHA

OM In the entire realm of space throughout the ten directions, wheels, wish-fulfilling gems, queens, ministers, elephants, excellent horses, and generals – the seven precious aspects of universal monarchy – are offered with devotion: I entreat you to accept these.

OM SAPTA RATNA VAJRA PUDZATI AH HUNG

OM In the entire realm of space throughout the ten directions, umbrellas, golden fishes, vases, lotuses, white conch shells, endless knots, banners of victory, and wheels – the auspicious emblems – are offered with devotion: I entreat you to accept these.

OM AKT’HA MANGALAM VAJRA PUDZATI AH HUNG

OM In the entire realm of space throughout the ten directions, the eight auspicious substances – mirrors, anthelmintic medicine, yogurt, durva grass, wood apples, conch shells that spiral clockwise, vermilion dye, white mustard seeds – as well as the wheel and the precious wish-fulfilling gem are offered with devotion: I entreat you to accept these.

OM SARWA PUDZA MEGHA AH HUNG

These offering stanzas were compiled in 1981 by the one named Chagdud Padma and were revised in October 1989. May merit and virtue increase!

Mandala Offering (Recite prayer while making mandala mudra)

This ground, anointed with perfume, strewn with flowers, adorned with Mount Meru, the four continents, the sun and moon: I visualize this as a Buddha-field and offer it. May all living beings enjoy this pure land. The objects of my attachments, aversion, and ignorance – friends, enemies, strangers – and my body, wealth, and enjoyments; without any sense of loss, I offer

this collection. Please accept it with pleasure and bless me with freedom from the three poisons. *(3x if mandala is on the shrine).*

IDAM GURU RATNA MANDALAKAM NIYATAYAMI

Sutra Reading – *(The Leader recites the underlined words; the congregation recites all other words in unison)*

Mantra – *(Mantras are recited at least 108x)*

Meditation – *(The end of meditation is marked by the sound of the small bell)*

Dedication Prayers

Following the examples of Manjushri, Ksitigarbha, and the other Great Bodhisattvas, I too dedicate all this merit in order to study, train, and follow their examples. And as all the Enlightened Ones of the three periods of time exalted the dedication of merit, I now too dedicate this merit so that all beings attain the six perfections.

May the Dharma continue to blossom all around,
May the Spiritual Community abide in wellness and joy,
May all beings have happiness that transcends suffering,
And may the source of that happiness come from the Profound Wisdom of the Buddha!

Let us share this consciousness with all sentient beings:

May all kinds of hindrances be pacified,
May we be separated from unfavorable conditions,
And may we achieve favorable conditions and everything excellent.
Through this fortune may there now be happiness and health.

Guru Invocation & Mantras

1. Guru Invocation:

Om Namah Shivaaya Gurave, Satchitananda Murtaaye,
Nischprapanchaaya shaantaaya, Niraalambaaya Tejase

(translation: I bow to the Guru, the Self of All. The embodiment of Being, Awareness and Bliss. Living within everything as its true nature; Supreme peace; needing no support, but sustaining and supporting all; illuminating the entire universe with the light of consciousness.)

2. Mantra of Totality:

HARI OM SAT TAT

3. Mantra for blessings from guru and progression along one's path:

OM D[T]RAM OM GURU DATTAYA NAMAHA

4. Mantra of Shakyamuni Buddha:

OM MUNI MUNI MAHAMUNIYE SVAHA

5. Six-syllable mantra of compassion:

OM MA NI PAD ME HUM

6. Mantra of Manjushri Bodhisattva:

OM A RA PA DZA NA DHIH

Transforming the Mind

OM MA NI PAD ME HUM

With the heartfelt desire and determination to attain enlightenment for the welfare of all living beings, which are more precious than a wish-fulfilling jewel for accomplishing the supreme goal, may I always cherish them and hold them dear.

OM MA NI PAD ME HUM

Whenever I am with others may I think of myself as the lowest of all and from the very depths of my heart may I respectfully hold others as supreme.

OM MA NI PAD ME HUM

In all actions, may I closely examine my state of mind, and the moment a disturbing emotion or negative attitude arises, since this may cause harm to others and myself, I will confront them strongly and avert them.

OM MA NI PAD ME HUM

Whenever I meet people of unpleasant character or those overwhelmed by negativity, pain or suffering, may I cherish and care for them as if I had found a rare and precious treasure difficult to find.

OM MA NI PAD ME HUM

Whenever others, because of their jealousy, attack me or belittle me with insult, slander, or in other unjust ways, may I accept this defeat myself and offer the victory to others.

OM MA NI PAD ME HUM

When someone whom I have helped or in whom I have placed great hope, harms me with great injustice or treats me in hurtful ways without reason, may I see that person as my precious teacher.

OM MA NI PAD ME HUM

In brief, may I offer both directly and indirectly all help, happiness and benefit to all beings and may I secretly take upon myself all of their harmful actions, pain and suffering.

OM MA NI PAD ME HUM

May I keep all of these practices undefiled by stains of the eight worldly concerns (gain/loss, pleasure/pain, praise/blame, fame/dishonor), and by recognizing the emptiness and illusory nature of all existing things, may I be liberated from the bondage of attachment and mistaken views of reality.

Mahakaruna Dharani

* Namah ratnatrayaya / Namō aryavalokitesvaraya

Bodhisattvaya / Mahasattvaya / Mahakarunikaya

* Om sarva rabhaye / Shudhanadasya / Namō skritvaimom /

Aryavalokitesvaraya ramdhava / Namō narakindi

Heri mahavadhasame / Sarva athadusubhum / Ajeyam sarva satta

Namō vasata / Namō vāga mavadudhu

Tadyatha Om avalokī lokate / Kalate ehre /

Mahabodhisattva / Sarva sarva mala mala/ Mahe mahredayam

Kulu kulu karmam / Dhuru dhuru vajayate / Mahavajayate

Dhara dhara / Dhirini svaraya / Cala Cala / Mama vamara mutele

Ehe ehe / Cinda cinda / Arsam pracali / Vasa vasam prasaya

Huru huru mara / Huru huru hri

Sara sara / siri siri / suru suru / Bodhiya bodhiya

Bodhaya bodhaya / Maitriya * narakindi dharsinina

Payamana svaha / Siddhaya svaha

Mahasiddhaya svaha / Siddhayoge svaraya svaha /

* Narakindi svaha / Maranara svaha

Sirasamamukhaya svaha / Sarva maha siddhaya svaha

Cakra siddhaya svaha / Padma kastaya svaha

Narakindi vagaraya svaha / Mavari sankraya svaha

Namah ratnatrayaya / + Namō aryavalokitesvaraya svaha

Om + siddhyantu mantra padaya svaha ~

MAHAPRAJNAPARAMITA – HRIDAYA-SUTRA

(The Heart Sutra)

Thus I have heard at one time. The Buddha dwelt at Vulture Peak together with a sangha of one hundred thousand monks and nuns, and seventy thousand bodhisattvas. At that time the bodhisattva Avalokitesvara arose from his seat among the assembly and went up to the Buddha. Facing him he joined his palms together and bowed respectfully. With reverence he said, “I wish to explain for this assembly the bodhisattva’s Heart of Perfect Wisdom which is the Universal Womb of Wisdom.”

Then the Buddha said, “Excellent, excellent, Great Compassionate One!”

Then Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva entered into his meditation and coursing in prajnaparamita observed that all five skandhas are empty of own-nature. Arising from his contemplation he said:

“The nature of form is empty, emptiness is form. Form is not different from emptiness, emptiness is not different from form. That which is form is empty, that which is emptiness is form. Feelings, perception, activities, and individual consciousness are also like this. The nature of consciousness is empty, emptiness is consciousness. Consciousness is not different from emptiness, emptiness is not different from consciousness. That which is consciousness is empty, that which is emptiness is consciousness.

“These dharmas are marked with emptiness, neither arising nor ceasing, neither tainted nor pure, neither increasing nor decreasing. Therefore in emptiness there is no form, no sensation, no perceptions, no mental impulses, no consciousness, no eye, no ear, no nose, no taste, no touch; no realm of sight and so on up to no realm of mind-consciousness; no ignorance and no extinction of ignorance, and so on up to no old age and death and no end to old age and death; no suffering, no origin of suffering, no end to suffering, no path, no wisdom and no attainment.

“With nothing to attain the bodhisattvas depend on prajnaparamita and their minds are without any hindrance. Without any hindrance, no fears exist. Far removed from perverted thought they are awake. All Buddhas of the three periods of time depend on prajnaparamita in attaining annutara-samyak-sambodhi.

“Therefore, know the prajnaparamita is the great mantra, the bright mantra, the unsurpassed mantra, the unequalled mantra that ends all suffering, and is true not false.

“Therefore proclaim the prajnaparamita mantra. Proclaim the mantra that says:

GATE GATE PARAGATE PARASAMGATE BODHI SVAHA

The Platform Sutra

Sutra of Hui Neng – Sixth Patriarch of Ch'an

Chapter II. On Prajña

The next day Prefect Wei asked the Patriarch to give another address. Thereupon, having taken his seat and asked the assembly to purify their mind collectively, and to recite the 'Maha Prajñaparamita' Sutra, he gave the following address: --

Learned Audience, the Wisdom of Enlightenment is inherent in every one of us. It is because of the delusion under which our mind works that we fail to realize it ourselves, and that we have to seek the advice and the guidance of enlightened ones before we can know our own Essence of Mind. You should know that so far as Buddha-nature is concerned, there is no difference between an enlightened man and an ignorant one. What makes the difference is that one realizes it, while the other is ignorant of it. Now, let me talk to you about Maha Prajñaparamita, so that each of you can attain wisdom.

Learned Audience, those who recite the word 'Prajña' the whole day long do not seem to know that Prajña is inherent in their own nature. But mere talking on food will not appease hunger, and this is exactly the case with these people. We might talk on Emptiness for myriads of kalpas, but talking alone will not enable us to realize the Essence of Mind, and it serves no purpose in the end.

The word 'Maha Prajñaparamita' is Sanskrit, and means 'great wisdom to reach the other shore.' What we have to do is to put it into practice with our mind; whether we recite it or not does not matter. Mere reciting it without mental practice may be likened to a phantasm, a magical delusion, a flash of lightning or a dewdrop. On the other hand, if we do both, then our mind will be in accord with what we repeat orally. Our very nature is Buddha, and apart from this nature there is no other Buddha.

What is Maha? It means 'Great'. The capacity of the mind is as great as that of space. It is infinite, neither round nor square, neither great nor small, neither green nor yellow, neither red nor white, neither above nor below, neither long nor short, neither angry nor happy, neither right nor wrong, neither good nor evil, neither first nor last. All Buddha Lands are as empty as space. Intrinsically our transcendental nature is empty and not a single Dharma can be attained. It is the same with the Essence of Mind, which is a state of 'Absolute Emptiness' – the Emptiness of non-emptiness.

Learned Audience, when you hear me talk about the Emptiness, do not at once fall into the idea of vacuity, because this involves the heresy of the doctrine of annihilation. It is of the utmost importance that we should not fall into this idea, because when a man sits quietly and keeps his mind blank he will abide in a state of 'Emptiness of Indifference'.

Learned Audience, the illimitable Emptiness of the universe is capable of holding myriads of things of various shape and form, such as the sun, the moon, stars, mountains, rivers, men, Dharmas pertaining to goodness or badness, deva planes, hells, great oceans, and all the mountains of the Mahameru. Space takes in all of these, and so does the emptiness of our nature. We say that the Essence of Mind is great because it embraces all things, since all things are within our nature. When we see the goodness or the badness of other people we are not attracted by it, nor repelled by it, nor attached to it; so that our attitude of mind is as empty as space. In this way, we say our mind is great. Therefore we call it 'Maha'.

Learned Audience, what the ignorant merely talk about, wise men put into actual practice with their mind. There is also a class of foolish people who sit quietly and try to keep their mind blank. They refrain from thinking of anything and call themselves 'great'. On account of their heretical view we can hardly talk to them.

Learned Audience, you should know that the mind is very great in capacity, since it pervades the whole Universe. When we use it, we can know something of everything, and when we use it to its full capacity we shall know all. All in one and one in all. When our mind works without hindrance, and is at liberty to 'come' or to 'go', then it is in a state of 'Prajña'.

Learned Audience, all Prajña comes from the Essence of Mind and not from an exterior source. Have no mistaken notion about that. This is called 'Self-use of the True Nature'. Once Suchness is known, one will be free from delusion forever.

Since the scope of the mind is for great objects, we should not practice such trivial acts as sitting quietly with a blank mind. Do not talk about 'Emptiness' all day without practicing it in the mind. One who does this may be likened to a self-styled king who is really a commoner. Prajña can never be attained in this way, and those who behave like this are not my disciples.

Learned Audience, what is Prajña? It means 'Wisdom'. If at all times and at all places we steadily keep our thought free from foolish desire, and act wisely on all occasions, then we are practicing Prajña. One foolish notion is enough to shut off Prajña, while one wise thought will bring it forth again. People in ignorance or under delusion do not see it; they talk about it with their tongues, but in their mind they remain ignorant. They are always saying that they practice Prajña, and they talk incessantly on 'Vacuity'; but they do not know the 'Absolute Emptiness'. 'The Heart of Wisdom' is Prajña, which has neither form nor characteristic. If we interpret it in this way, then indeed it is the wisdom of Prajña.

What is Paramita? It is a Sanskrit word, meaning 'to the other shore'. Figuratively, it means 'above existence and non-existence'. By clinging to sense objects, existence or non-existence arises like the up and down of the billowy sea, and such a state is called metaphorically 'this shore'; while by non-attachment a state above existence and non-existence, like smoothly running water is attained, and this is called 'the other shore'. This is why it is called 'Paramita'.

Learned Audience, people under illusion recite the 'Maha Prajñāparamita' with their tongues, and while they are reciting it, erroneous and evil thoughts arise. But if they put it into practice unremittingly, they realize its 'true nature'. To know this Dharma is to know the Dharma of Prajñā, and to practice this is to practice Prajñā. He who does not practice it is an ordinary man. He who directs his mind to practice it even for one moment is the equal of Buddha.

For ordinary man *is* Buddha, and defilement is enlightenment. A foolish passing thought makes one an ordinary man, while an enlightened second thought makes one a Buddha. A passing thought that clings to sense-objects is defilement, while a second thought that frees one from attachment is enlightenment.

Learned Audience, the Maha Prajñāparamita is the most exalted, the supreme, and the foremost. It neither stays, nor goes, nor comes. By means of it Buddhas of the present, the past, and the future generations attain Buddhahood. We should use this great wisdom to break up the five Skandhas [1] for to follow such practice ensures the attainment of Buddhahood. The three poisonous elements - greed, hatred and delusion - will then be turned into good conduct, Samadhi and Prajñā.

Learned Audience, in this system of mine one Prajñā produces eight-four thousand ways of wisdom, since there are that number of 'defilements' for us to cope with; but when one is free from defilements, wisdom reveals itself, and will not be separated from the Essence of Mind. Those who understand this Dharma will be free from idle thoughts. To be free from being infatuated by one particular thought, from clinging to desire, and from falsehood; to put one's own essence of Tathata into operation; to use Prajñā for contemplation, and to take an attitude of neither indifference nor attachment towards all things - this is what is meant by realizing one's own Essence of Mind for the attainment of Buddhahood.

Learned Audience, if you wish to penetrate the deepest mystery of the Universe and the Samadhi of Prajñā, you should practice Prajñā by reciting and studying the Diamond Sutra, which will enable you to realize the Essence of Mind. You should know that the merit for studying this Sutra, as distinctly set forth in the text, is immeasurable and illimitable, and cannot be enumerated in details. This Sutra belongs to the highest School of Buddhism, and the Lord Buddha delivered it especially for the very wise and quick-witted. If the less wise and the slow-witted should hear about it they would doubt its credibility. Why? For example, if it rained in the Southern Continent, through the miracle of the celestial Naga, cities, towns, and villages would drift about in the flood as if they were only leaves of the date tree. But should it rain in the great ocean the level of the sea as a whole would not be affected by it. When Mahayanists hear about the Diamond Sutra their minds become enlightened; they know that Prajñā is immanent in their Essence of Mind and that they need not rely on scriptural authority, since they can make use of their own wisdom by constant practice of contemplation.

The Prajñā immanent in the Essence of Mind of every one may be likened to the rain, the moisture of which refreshes every living thing, trees and plants as well as sentient beings. When rivers and streams reach the sea, the water carried by them merges into one body; this is another analogy. Learned Audience, when rain comes in a deluge, plants which are not

deep-rooted are washed away, and eventually they succumb. This is the case with the slow-witted, when they hear about the teaching of the 'Sudden' School. The Prajña immanent in them is exactly the same as that in the very wise man, but they fail to enlighten themselves when the Dharma is made known to them. Why? Because they are thickly veiled by erroneous views and deep-rooted defilements, in the same way as the sun may be thickly veiled by a cloud and unable to show his light until the wind blows the cloud away.

Prajña does not vary with different persons; what makes the difference is whether one's mind is enlightened or deluded. He who does not know his own Essence of Mind, and is under the delusion that Buddhahood can be attained by outward religious rites is called the slow-witted. He who knows the teaching of the 'Sudden' School and attaches no importance to rituals, and whose mind functions always under right views, so that he is absolutely free from defilements or contaminations, is said to have known his Essence of Mind.

Learned Audience, the mind should be framed in such a way that it will be independent of external or internal objects, at liberty to come or go, free from attachment and thoroughly enlightened without the least beclouding. He who is able to do this is of the same standard required by the Sutras of the Prajña School.

Learned Audience, all Sutras and Scriptures of the Mahayana and Theravada Schools, as well as the twelve sections of the canonical writings, were provided to suit the different needs and temperaments of various people. It is upon the principle that Prajña is latent in every man that the doctrines expounded in these books are established. If there were no human beings, there would be no Dharmas; hence we know that all Dharmas are made for men, and that all Sutras owe their existence to the preachers. Since some men are wise, the so-called superior men, and some are ignorant, the so-called inferior men, the wise preach to the ignorant when the latter ask them to do so. Through this the ignorant may attain sudden enlightenment, and their mind thereby becomes illuminated. Then they are no longer different from the wise men.

Learned Audience, without enlightenment there would be no difference between a Buddha and other living beings; while a gleam of enlightenment is enough to make any living being the equal of a Buddha. Since all Dharmas are immanent in our mind there is no reason why we should not realize intuitively the real nature of Suchness. The Bodhisattva Sila Sutra says, "Our Essence of Mind is intrinsically pure, and if we knew our mind and realized what our nature is, all of us would attain Buddhahood." As the Vimalakirti Nirdeśa Sutra says, "At once they become enlightened and regain their own mind."

Learned Audience, when the Fifth Patriarch preached to me I became enlightened immediately after he had spoken, and spontaneously realized the real nature of Tathata. For this reason it is my particular object to propagate the teaching of this 'Sudden' School, so that learners may find Bodhi at once and realize their true nature by introspection of mind.

Should they fail to enlighten themselves, they should ask the pious and learned Buddhists who understand the teaching of the Highest School to show them the right way. It is an exalted position, the office of a pious and learned Buddhist who guides others to realize the Essence of

Mind. Through his assistance one may be initiated into all meritorious Dharmas. The wisdom of the past, the present and the future Buddhas as well as the teachings of the twelve sections of the Canon are immanent in our mind; but in case we fail to enlighten ourselves, we have to seek the guidance of the pious and learned ones. On the other hand, those who enlighten themselves need no extraneous help. It is wrong to insist upon the idea that without the advice of the pious and learned we cannot obtain liberation. Why? Because it is by our innate wisdom that we enlighten ourselves, and even the extraneous help and instructions of a pious and learned friend would be of no use if we were deluded by false doctrines and erroneous views. Should we introspect our mind with real Prajñā, all erroneous views would be vanquished in a moment, and as soon as we know the Essence of Mind we arrive immediately at the Buddha stage.

Learned Audience, when we use Prajñā for introspection we are illumined within and without, and in a position to know our own mind. To know our mind is to obtain liberation. To obtain liberation is to attain Samadhi of Prajñā, which is 'thoughtlessness'. What is 'thoughtlessness'? 'Thoughtlessness' is to see and to know all dharmas (things) with a mind free from attachment. When in use it pervades everywhere, and yet it sticks nowhere. What we have to do is to purify our mind so that the six aspects of consciousness, in passing through the six sense organs will neither be defiled by nor attached to the six sense-objects. When our mind works freely without any hindrance, and is at liberty to 'come' or to 'go', we attain Samadhi of Prajñā, or liberation. Such a state is called the function of 'thoughtlessness'. But to refrain from thinking of anything, so that all thoughts are suppressed, is to be dharma-ridden, and this is an erroneous view.

Learned Audience, those who understand the way of 'thoughtlessness' will know everything, will have the experience all Buddhas have had, and attain Buddhahood. In the future, if an initiate of my School should make a vow in company with his fellow-disciples to devote his whole life without retrogression to the practice of the teachings of this 'Sudden' School, in the same spirit as that for serving Buddha, he would reach without failure the Path of Holiness. To the right people he should transmit from heart to heart the instructions handed down from one Patriarch to another; and no attempt should be made to conceal the orthodox teaching. To those who belong to other schools, and whose views and objects are different from ours, the Dharma should not be transmitted, since it will be anything but good for them. This step is taken lest ignorant persons who cannot understand our system should make slanderous remarks about it and thereby annihilate their seed of Buddha-nature for hundreds of Kalpas and thousands of incarnations. Learned Audience, I have a 'formless' stanza for you all to recite. Both laity and monks should put its teaching into practice, without which it would be useless to remember my words alone.

A master of the Buddhist Canon as well as of the teaching of the Ch'an School
May be likened unto the blazing sun sitting high in his meridian tower.
Such a man would teach nothing but the Dharma for realizing the Essence of Mind, and his
object in coming to this world would be to vanquish the heretical sects.
We can hardly classify the Dharmas into 'Sudden' and 'Gradual',
But some men will attain enlightenment much quicker than others.

For example, this system for realizing the Essence of Mind
Is above the comprehension of the ignorant.

We may explain it in ten thousand ways, but all those explanations may be traced back to one principle.

To illumine our gloomy tabernacle, which is stained by defilement,
We should constantly set up the Light of Wisdom.

Erroneous views keep us in defilement while right views remove us from it,
but when we are in a position to discard both of them we are then absolutely pure.

Bodhi is immanent in our Essence of Mind, an attempt to look for it elsewhere is erroneous.

Within our impure mind the pure one is to be found, and once our mind is set right, we are free from the three kinds of beclouding - defilement, evil habits, and expiation in evil realms of existence.

If we are treading the Path of Enlightenment we need not be worried by stumbling-blocks. Provided we keep a constant eye on our own faults we cannot go astray from the right path. Since every species of life has its own way of salvation they will not interfere with or be antagonistic to one another.

But if we leave our own path and seek some other way of salvation we shall not find it, and though we plod on till death overtakes us we shall find only penitence in the end.

If you wish to find the true way, right action will lead you to it directly; but if you do not strive for Buddhahood you will grope in the dark and never find it.

He who treads the Path in earnest sees not the mistakes of the world; if we find fault with others we ourselves are also in the wrong.

When other people are in the wrong, we should ignore it, for it is wrong for us to find fault. By getting rid of the habit of fault-finding we cut off a source of defilement.

When neither hatred nor love disturbs our mind serenely we sleep.

Those who intend to be the teachers of others should themselves be skilled in the various expedients, which lead others to enlightenment.

When the disciple is free from all doubts it indicates that his Essence of Mind has been found. The Kingdom of Buddha is in this world, within which enlightenment is to be sought.

To seek enlightenment by separating from this world is as absurd as to search for a rabbit's horn.

Right views are called 'transcendental'; erroneous views are called 'worldly'.

When all views, right or erroneous, are discarded then the essence of Bodhi appears.

This stanza is for the 'Sudden' School.

It is also called the 'Big Ship of Dharma' for sailing across the ocean of existence.

Kalpa after kalpa a man may be under delusion, but once enlightened it takes him only a moment to attain Buddhahood.

Before conclusion, the Patriarch added, "Now, in this Ta Fan Temple, I have addressed you on the teaching of the 'Sudden' School. May all sentient beings of the Universe instantly understand the Law and attain Buddhahood." After hearing what the Patriarch said, the Prefect Wei, government officials, Taoists and laymen were all enlightened. They made obeisance in a body and exclaimed unanimously, "Well done! Well done! Who would have expected that a Buddha was born in Canton?"

The Platform Sutra

Sutra of Hui Neng – Sixth Patriarch of Ch’an

Chapter III. Questions and Answers

One day Prefect Wei entertained the Patriarch and asked him to preach to a big gathering. At the end of the feast, Prefect Wei asked him to mount the pulpit (to which the Patriarch consented). After bowing twice reverently, in company with other officials, scholars, and commoners, Prefect Wei said, "I have heard what Your Holiness preached. It is really so deep that it is beyond our mind and speech, and I have certain doubts which I hope you will clear up for me." "If you have any doubts," replied the Patriarch, "please ask, and I will explain."

"What you preach are the fundamental principles taught by Bodhidharma, are they not?" "Yes," replied the Patriarch. "I was told," said Prefect Wei, "that at Bodhidharma's first interview with Emperor Wu of Liang he was asked what merits the Emperor would get for the work of his life in building temples, allowing new monks to be ordained (royal consent was necessary at that time), giving alms and entertaining the Order; and his reply was that these would bring no merits at all. Now, I cannot understand why he gave such an answer. Will you please explain."

"These would bring no merits," replied the Patriarch. "Don't doubt the words of the Sage. Emperor Wu's mind was under an erroneous impression, and he did not know the orthodox teaching. Such deeds as building temples, allowing new monks to be ordained, giving alms and entertaining the Order will bring you only felicities, which should not be taken for merits. Merits are to be found within the Dharmakaya, and they have nothing to do with practices for attaining felicities."

The Patriarch went on, "Realization of the Essence of Mind is Gong (good deserts), and equality is De (good quality). When our mental activity works without any impediment, so that we are in a position to know constantly the true state and the mysterious functioning of our own mind, we are said to have acquired Gong De (merits). Within, to keep the mind in a humble mood is Gong; and without, to behave oneself according to propriety is De. That all things are the manifestation of the Essence of Mind is Gong, and that the quintessence of mind is free from idle thoughts is De. Not to go astray from the Essence of Mind is , and not to pollute the mind in using it is De. If you seek for merits within the Dharmakaya, and do what I have just said, what you acquire will be real merits. He who works for merits does not slight others; and on all occasions he treats everybody with respect. He who is in the habit of looking down upon others has not got rid of the erroneous idea of a self, which indicates his lack of Gong. Because of his egotism and his habitual contempt for all others, he knows not the real Essence of Mind; and this shows his lack of De. Learned Audience, when our mental activity works without interruption, then it is Gong; and when our mind functions in a straightforward manner, then it is De. To train our own mind is Gong, and to train our own body is De. Learned Audience, merits should be sought within the Essence of Mind and they cannot be acquired by almsgiving, entertaining the monks, etc. We should therefore distinguish between felicities and merits.

There is nothing wrong in what our Patriarch said. It is Emperor Wu himself who did not know the true way."

Prefect Wei then asked the next question, "I notice that it is a common practice for monks and laymen to recite the name of Amitabha with the hope of being born in the Pure Land of the West. To clear up my doubts, will you please tell me whether it is possible for them to be born there or not."

"Listen to me carefully, Sir," replied the Patriarch, "and I will explain. According to the Sutra spoken by the Bhagavat in Sravasti City for leading people to the Pure Land of the West, it is quite clear that the Pure Land is not far from here, for the distance in mileage is 108,000, which really represents the 'ten evils' and 'eight errors' within us. To those of inferior mentality certainly it is far away, but to superior men we may say that it is quite near. Although the Dharma is uniform, men vary in their mentality. Because they differ from one another in their degree of enlightenment or ignorance, therefore some understand the Law quicker than others. While ignorant men recite the name of Amitabha and pray to be born in the Pure Land, the enlightened purify their mind, for, as the Buddha said, 'When the mind is pure, the Buddha Land is simultaneously pure.'

"Although you are a native of the East, if your mind is pure you are sinless. On the other hand, even if you were a native of the West an impure mind could not free you from sin, When the people of the East commit a sin, they recite the name of Amitabha and pray to be born in the West; but in the case of sinners who are natives of the West, where should they pray to be born? Ordinary men and ignorant people understand neither the Essence of Mind nor the Pure Land within themselves, so they wish to be born in the East or the West. But to the enlightened everywhere is the same. As the Buddha said, 'No matter where they happen to be, they are always happy and comfortable.'

"Sir, if your mind is free from evil the West is not far from here; but difficult indeed it would be for one whose heart is impure to be born there by invoking Amitabha!

"Now, I advise you, Learned Audience, first to do away with the 'ten evils'; then we shall have travelled one hundred thousand miles. For the next step, do away with the 'eight errors', and this will mean another eight thousand miles traversed. If we can realize the Essence of Mind at all times and behave in a straightforward manner on all occasions, in the twinkling of an eye we may reach the Pure Land and there see Amitabha.

"If you only put into practice the ten good deeds, there would be no necessity for you to be born there. On the other hand, if you do not do away with the 'ten evils' in your mind, which Buddha will take you there? If you understand the Birth-less Doctrine (which puts an end to the cycle of birth and death) of the 'Sudden' School, it takes you only a moment to see the West. If you do not understand, how can you reach there by reciting the name of Amitabha, as the distance is so far?

"Now, how would you like it if I were to shift the Pure Land to your presence this very moment, so that all of you might see it?" The congregation made obeisance and replied, "If we might see the Pure Land here there would be no necessity for us to desire to be born there. Will Your Holiness kindly let us see it by having it removed here."

The Patriarch said, "Sirs, this physical body of ours is a city. Our eyes, ears, nose and tongue are the gates. There are five external gates, while the internal one is ideation. The mind is the ground. The Essence of Mind is the King who lives in the domain of the mind. While the Essence of Mind is in, the King is in, and our body and mind exist. When the Essence of Mind is out, there is no King and our body and mind decay. We should work for Buddhahood within the Essence of Mind, and we should not look for it apart from ourselves. He who is kept in ignorance of his Essence of Mind is an ordinary being. He who is enlightened in his Essence of Mind is a Buddha. To be merciful is Avalokitesvara (one of the two principal Bodhisattvas of the Pure Land). To take pleasure in almsgiving is Mahasthama (the other Bodhisattva). Competence for a pure life is Shakyamuni (one of the titles of Gautama Buddha). Equality and straightforwardness is Amitabha. The idea of a self or that of a being is Mount Meru. A depraved mind is the ocean. Klesa (defilement) is the billow. Wickedness is the evil dragon. Falsehood is the devil. The wearisome sense objects are the aquatic animals. Greed and hatred are the hells. Ignorance and infatuation are the brutes.

"Learned Audience, if you constantly perform the ten good deeds, paradise will appear to you at once. When you get rid of the idea of a self and that of a being, Mount Meru will topple. When the mind is no longer depraved, the ocean (of existence) will be dried up. When you are free from defilement, billows and waves of the ocean of existence will calm down. When wickedness is alien to you, fish and evil dragons will die out.

"Within the domain of our mind, there is a Tathagata of Enlightenment who sends forth a powerful light which illumines externally the six gates (of sensation) and purifies them. This light is strong enough to pierce through the six Heavens of Desire; and when it is turned inwardly it eliminates at once the three poisonous elements, purges away our sins which might lead us to the hells or other evil realms, and enlightens us thoroughly within and without, so that we are no different from those born in the Pure Land of the West. Now, if we do not train ourselves up to this standard, how can we reach the Pure Land?"

Having heard what the Patriarch said, the congregation knew their Essence of Mind very clearly. They made obeisance and exclaimed in one voice, "Well done!" They also chanted, "May all the sentient beings of this Universe who have heard this sermon at once understand it intuitively."

The Patriarch added, "Learned Audience, those who wish to train themselves spiritually may do so at home. It is quite unnecessary for them to stay in monasteries. Those who train themselves at home may be likened unto a native of the East who is kind-hearted, while those who stay in monasteries but neglect their work differ not from a native of the West who is evil in heart. So far as the mind is pure, it is the 'Western Pure Land of one's own Essence of Mind'."

Prefect Wei asked, "How should we train ourselves at home? Will you please teach us?"

The Patriarch replied, "I will give you a 'formless' stanza. If you put its teaching into practice you will be in the same position as those who live with me permanently. On the other hand, if you do not practice it, what progress can you make in the spiritual path, even though you cut your hair and leave home for good?"

The stanza reads:

For a fair mind, observation of precepts is unnecessary.
For straightforward behaviour, practice in contemplation may be dispensed with.
On the principle of gratefulness, we support our parents and serve them.
On the principle of righteousness, the superior and the inferior stand for each other in time of need.
On the principle of mutual desire to please, the senior and junior are on affectionate terms.
On the principle of forbearance, we do not quarrel even in the midst of a hostile crowd.
If we can persevere till fire can be obtained through rubbing a piece of wood,
Then the red lotus - the Buddha-nature- will shoot out from the black mire of the unenlightened state.
That which is of bitter taste is bound to be good medicine.
That which sounds unpleasant to the ear is certainly frank advice.
By amending our mistakes, we get wisdom.
By defending our faults, we betray an unsound mind.
In our daily life we should always practice altruism,
But Buddhahood is not to be attained by giving away money as charity. Bodhi is to be found within our own mind,
And there is no necessity to look for mysticism from without.
Hearers of this stanza who put its teaching into actual practice
Will find paradise in their very presence.

The Patriarch added, "Learned Audience, all of you should put into practice what is taught in this stanza, so that you can realize the Essence of Mind and attain Buddhahood directly. The Dharma waits for no one. I am going back to Cai Xi, so the assembly may now break up. If you have any questions, you may come there to put them."

At this juncture Prefect Wei, the government officials, pious men, and devout ladies who were present were all enlightened. Faithfully they accepted the teaching and put it into practice.

The Platform Sutra

Sutra of Hui Neng – Sixth Patriarch of Ch’an

Chapter IV. Samadhi and Prajña

The Patriarch on another occasion preached to the assembly as follows:

Learned Audience, in my system Samadhi and Prajña are fundamental. But do not be under the wrong impression that these two are independent of each other, for they are inseparably united and are not two entities. Samadhi is the quintessence of Prajña, while Prajña is the activity of Samadhi. At the very moment that we attain Prajña, Samadhi is therewith; and vice versa. If you understand this principle, you understand the equilibrium of Samadhi and Prajña. A disciple should not think that there is a distinction between 'Samadhi begets Prajña' and 'Prajña begets Samadhi'. To hold such an opinion would imply that there are two characteristics in the Dharma.

For one whose tongue is ready with good words but whose heart is impure, Samadhi and Prajña are useless, because they do not balance each other. On the other hand, when we are good in mind as well as in words, and when our outward appearance and our inner feelings harmonize with each other, then it is a case of equilibrium of Samadhi and Prajña.

Argument is unnecessary for an enlightened disciple. To argue whether Prajña or Samadhi comes first would put one in the same position as those who are under delusion. Argument implies a desire to win, strengthens egotism, and ties us to the belief in the idea of 'a self, a being, a living being, and a person'.

Learned Audience, to what are Samadhi and Prajña analogous? They are analogous to a lamp and its light. With the lamp, there is light. Without it, it would be darkness. The lamp is the quintessence of the light and the light is the expression of the lamp. In name they are two things, but in substance they are one and the same. It is the same case with Samadhi and Prajña.

On another occasion the Patriarch preached to the assembly as follows:

Learned Audience, to practice the 'Samadhi of Specific Mode' is to make it a rule to be straightforward on all occasions -- no matter whether we are walking, standing, sitting or reclining. The Vimalakirti Nirveda Sutra says, "Straightforwardness is the holy place, the Pure Land." Don't let your mind be crooked and practice straightforwardness with your lips only. We should practice straightforwardness and should not attach ourselves to anything. People under delusion believe obstinately in Dharmalakṣaṇa (things and form) and so they are stubborn in having their own way of interpreting the 'Samadhi of Specific Mode', which they define as 'sitting quietly and continuously without letting any idea arise in the mind'. Such an interpretation would rank us with inanimate objects, and is a stumbling block to the right Path which must be kept open. Should we free our mind from attachment to all 'things', the Path becomes clear; otherwise, we put ourselves under restraint. If that interpretation 'sitting quietly

and continuously, etc.' be correct, why on one occasion was Sariputra reprimanded by Vimalakirti for sitting quietly in the wood?

Learned Audience, some teachers of meditation instruct their disciples to keep a watch on their mind for tranquillity, so that it will cease from activity. Henceforth the disciples give up all exertion of mind. Ignorant persons become insane from having too much confidence in such instruction. Such cases are not rare, and it is a great mistake to teach others to do this.

On another occasion the Patriarch addressed the assembly as follows:

In orthodox Buddhism the distinction between the 'Sudden' School and the 'Gradual' School does not really exist; the only difference is that by nature some men are quick-witted, while others are dull in understanding. Those who are enlightened realize the truth in a sudden, while those who are under delusion have to train themselves gradually. But such a difference will disappear when we know our own mind and realize our own nature. Therefore these terms, gradual and sudden, are more apparent than real.

Learned Audience, it has been the tradition of our school to take 'Idealess-ness' as our object, 'Non-objectivity' as our basis, and 'Non-attachment' as our fundamental principle. 'Idealess-ness' means not to be carried away by any particular idea in the exercise of the mental faculty. 'Non-objectivity' means not to be absorbed by objects when in contact with objects. 'Non-attachment' is the characteristic of our Essence of Mind.

All things -- good or bad, beautiful or ugly -- should be treated as void. Even in time of disputes and quarrels we should treat our intimates and our enemies alike and never think of retaliation. In the exercise of our thinking faculty, let the past be dead. If we allow our thoughts, past, present, and future, to link up in a series, we put ourselves under restraint. On the other hand, if we never let our mind attach to anything, we shall gain emancipation. For this reason, we take 'Non-attachment' as our fundamental principle.

To free ourselves from absorption in external objects is called 'Non-objectivity'. When we are in a position to do so, the nature of Dharma will be pure. For this reason, we take 'Non-objectivity' as our basis.

To keep our mind free from defilement under all circumstances is called 'Idealess-ness'. Our mind should stand aloof from circumstances, and on no account should we allow them to influence the function of our mind. But it is a great mistake to suppress our mind from all thinking; for even if we succeed in getting rid of all thoughts, and die immediately thereafter, still we shall be reincarnated elsewhere. Mark this, practitioners of the Path. It is bad enough for a man to commit blunders from not knowing the meaning of the Law, but how much worse would it be to encourage others to follow suit? Being deluded, he sees not and in addition he blasphemes the Buddhist Canon. Therefore we take 'Idealess-ness' as our object.

Learned Audience, let me explain more fully why we take 'Idealess-ness' as our object. It is because there is a type of man under delusion who boasts of the realization of the Essence of

Mind; but being carried away by circumstances, ideas rise in his mind, followed by erroneous views which are the source of all sorts of false notions and defilements. In the Essence of Mind (which is the embodiment of void), there is intrinsically nothing to be attained. To say that there is attainment, and to talk thoughtlessly on merits or demerits are erroneous views and defilements. For this reason we take 'Idealess-ness' as the object of our School.

Learned Audience, in 'Idealess-ness' what should we get rid of and what should we fix our mind on? We should get rid of the 'pairs of opposites' and all defiling conceptions. We should fix our mind on the true nature of Suchness, for Suchness is the quintessence of idea, and idea is the result of the activity of Suchness.

It is the positive essence of Suchness - not the sense organs - which gives rise to 'idea'. Suchness bears its own attribute, and therefore it can give rise to 'idea'. Without Suchness the sense organs and the sense objects would perish immediately. Learned Audience, because it is the attribute of Suchness which gives rise to 'idea', our sense organs - in spite of their functioning in seeing, hearing, touching, knowing, etc. - need not be tainted or defiled in all circumstances, and our true nature may be 'Self-manifested' all the time. Therefore the Sutra says, "He who is an adept in the discrimination of various dharmalakshana (things and phenomena) will be immovably installed in the 'First Principle' - nirvana."

The Platform Sutra

Sutra of Hui Neng – Sixth Patriarch of Ch’an

Chapter V. Dhyana

One day the Patriarch preached to the assembly as follows:

In our system of meditation, we neither dwell upon the mind in contradistinction to the Essence of Mind nor upon purity. Nor do we approve of non-activity. As to dwelling upon the mind, the mind is primarily delusive; and when we realize that it is only a phantasm there is no need to dwell on it. As to dwelling upon purity, our nature is intrinsically pure; and so far as we get rid of all delusive 'idea' there will be nothing but purity in our nature, for it is the delusive idea that obscures Suchness. If we direct our mind to dwell upon purity we are only creating another delusion, the delusion of purity. Since delusion has no abiding place, it is delusive to dwell upon it. Purity has neither shape nor form; but some people go so far as to invent the 'Form of Purity', and treat it as a problem for solution. Holding such an opinion, these people are purity-ridden, and their Essence of Mind is thereby obscured.

Learned Audience, those who train themselves for 'equanimity' should, in their contact with all types of men, ignore the faults of others. They should be indifferent to others' merit or demerit, good or evil, for such an attitude accords with the 'coolness of the Essence of Mind'. Learned Audience, a man unenlightened may be unperturbed physically, but as soon as he opens his mouth he criticizes others and talks about their merits or demerits, ability or weakness, good or evil; thus he deviates from the right course. On the other hand, to dwell upon our own mind or upon purity is also a stumbling-block in the Path.

The Patriarch on another occasion preached to the assembly as follows:

Learned Audience, what is sitting for meditation? In our School, to sit means to gain absolute freedom and to be mentally unperturbed in all outward circumstances, be they good or otherwise. To meditate means to realize inwardly the stability of the Essence of Mind.

Learned Audience, what are Dhyana and Samadhi? Dhyana means to be free from attachment to all outer objects, and Samadhi means to attain inner peace. If we are attached to outer objects, our inner mind will be perturbed. When we are free from attachment to all outer objects, the mind will be in peace. Our Essence of Mind is intrinsically pure, and the reason why we are perturbed is because we allow ourselves to be carried away by the circumstances we are in. She who is able to keep her mind unperturbed, irrespective of circumstances, has attained Samadhi.

To be free from attachment to all outer objects is Dhyana, and to attain inner peace is Samadhi. When we are in a position to deal with Dhyana and to keep our inner mind in Samadhi, then we are said to have attained Dhyana and Samadhi. The Bodhisattva Sila Sutra says, "Our Essence of

Mind is intrinsically pure." Learned Audience, let us realize this for ourselves at all times. Let us train ourselves, practice it by ourselves, and attain Buddhahood by our own effort.

Verses on the Faith Mind

Seng-Tsan, the third Ch'an patriarch

The Great Way is not difficult for those that have no preferences.
When love and hate are both absent everything becomes clear and undisguised.
Make the smallest distinction however, and heaven and earth are set infinitely
apart.

If you wish to see the truth, then hold no opinions for or against anything.
To set up what you like against what you dislike is the disease of the mind.
When the deep meaning of things is not understood, the mind's peace is
disturbed to no avail.

The Way is perfect like vast space where nothing is lacking and nothing is in
excess.

Indeed, it is due to our choosing to accept or reject that we do not see the true nature of things.
Live neither in the entanglements of outer things, nor in the inner feelings of
emptiness.

Be serene in the oneness of things and such erroneous views will disappear by
themselves.

When you try to stop activity to achieve passivity, your very effort fills you with
activity.

As long as you remain in one extreme or the other, you will never know Oneness.
Those who do not live in the single Way fail in both activity and passivity,
assertion and denial.

To deny the reality of things is to miss their reality; to assert the emptiness of
things is to miss their reality.

The more you talk and think about it, the further astray you wonder from the truth.
Stop talking and thinking, and there is nothing you will not be able to know.
To return to the root is to find the meaning, but to pursue appearances is to miss
the source.

At the moment of inner enlightenment there is a going beyond appearances and
emptiness.

The changes that appear to occur in the empty world we call "real" only because
of our ignorance.

Do not search for the truth; only cease to cherish opinions.

Do not remain in the dualistic state, avoid such pursuits carefully.

If there is even a trace of "this" and "that", "right" or "wrong", the Mind-essence
will be lost in confusion.

Although all dualities come from the One, do not be attached to even this One.

When the mind exists undisturbed in the Way, nothing in the world can offend,
and when a thing can no longer offend, it ceases to exist in the old way.

When no discriminating thoughts arise, the old mind ceases to exist.

When thought objects vanish, the thinking-subject vanishes, as when the mind vanishes, objects vanish.

Things are objects because of the subject; the mind is such because of things.

Understand the relativity of these two and the basic reality: the unity of emptiness.

In this Emptiness the two are indistinguishable and each contains in itself the whole world.

If you do not discriminate between coarse and fine, you will not be tempted to prejudice and opinion.

To live in the Great Way is neither easy nor difficult, but those with limited views are fearful and irresolute: the faster they hurry, the slower they go, and clinging cannot be limited: even to be attached to the idea of enlightenment is to go astray.

Just let things be in their own way and there will be neither coming nor going.

Obey the nature of things, and you will walk freely and undisturbed.

When thought is in bondage the truth is hidden, for everything is murky and unclear and the burdensome practice of judging brings annoyance and weariness.

What benefit can be derived from distinctions and separations?

If you wish to move in the One Way do not dislike even the world of senses and ideas.

Indeed, to accept them fully is identical with true Enlightenment.

The wise one strives to no goals but the foolish one fetters himself.

There is one Dharma, not many; distinctions arise from the clinging needs of the ignorant.

To seek the Mind with the mind is the greatest of all mistakes.

Rest and unrest derive from passion; with enlightenment there is no liking and disliking.

All dualities come from ignorant inference.

They are like dreams or flowers in the air; the foolish try to grasp them.

Gains and loss, right and wrong: such thoughts must finally be abolished at once.

If the eye never sleeps, all dreams will naturally cease.

If the mind makes no discriminations, the ten thousand things are as they are – of single essence.

To understand the mystery of this One essence is to be released from all entanglements.

When all things are seen equally, the timeless Self-essence is reached.

No comparisons or analogies are possible in the causeless, relation less state.

Consider movement stationary and the stationary in motion, both movement and rest disappear.

When such dualities cease to exist, Oneness itself cannot exist.

To this ultimate finality, no law or description applies.

For the unified mind in accord with the Way, all self-centred striving ceases.

Doubts and irresolution vanish and life in true faith is possible.

With a single stroke we are free from bondage; nothing clings to us and we hold to nothing.

All is empty, clear, self-illuminating, with no exertion of the mind's power.

Here thought, feeling, knowledge, and imagination are of no value.

In this world of Suchness there is neither self nor other-than-self.

To come directly into harmony with this reality, just simply say when doubt arises "Not two."

In this "not two" nothing is separate, nothing is excluded.

No matter when or where, enlightenment means entering this truth.

And this truth is beyond all extension or diminution in time or space; in it, a single thought is ten thousand years.

Emptiness here, Emptiness there, but the infinite universe stands always before your eyes.

Infinitely large and infinitely small; no difference, for definitions have vanished and no boundaries are seen.

So too with Being and Non-Being.

Don't waste time in doubts and arguments that have nothing to do with this.

One thing, all things: move among and intermingle without distinction.

To live in this realization is to be without anxiety about non-perfection.

To live in this faith is the road to non-duality.

Because the non-dual is one with the trusting mind.

Words!

The Way is beyond language, for in it there is

No yesterday

No tomorrow

No today.

The Diamond Sutra – Part 1

(The Vajrachchedika Prajña Paramita Sutra)

(1) Thus have I heard at one time, the Buddha was in the state of Sravasti at the Jeta Grove with a gathering of monks numbering 1,250. At mealtime, the World-honoured One put on his robe, picked up his bowl, and went into the city of Sravasti to beg for food. After he had gone from house to house, he returned to the grove. When he had finished eating, he put away his robe and bowl, washed his feet, straightened his mat, and sat down.

(2) At that time the elder monk Subhuti was among the gathering of monks. He arose from his seat, bared his right shoulder, kneeled on his right knee, and with his palms pressed together before him, respectfully spoke to the Buddha saying, “Rare One, World-honoured One, the Tathagata protects and is concerned about all bodhisattvas, and he instructs all bodhisattvas. World-honoured One, when good men and good women commit themselves to anuttara-samyak-sambodhi, on what should they base themselves, and how should they subdue their minds?” The Buddha said, “Wonderful! Wonderful! Subhuti, you said that the Tathagata protects and is concerned about all bodhisattvas, and that he instructs all bodhisattvas. Now listen carefully while I tell you, when good men and good women commit themselves to anuttara-samyak-sambodhi, what should they base themselves, and how they should subdue their minds.”

“Excellent, World-honoured One, I eagerly await your answer.”

(3) The Buddha said to Subhuti, “All great bodhisattvas should subdue their minds in the following manner: they should realize as they vow to save all sentient beings that in truth there are no sentient beings to be saved. And they should realize as they vow to save all of the infinite, innumerable, illimitable sentient beings that in reality there are no sentient beings to be saved. When they vow to lead them all to nirvana without remainder – be they born of eggs, wombs, moisture, or transformation, or whether they have form, of no form, or whether they are able to perceive, or do not perceive, or cannot perceive, or will not perceive – they should realize that in truth there are no sentient beings to be led to nirvana. And why is this? Subhuti, if a bodhisattva has lakshana of self, lakshana of human beings, lakshana of sentient beings, or lakshana of a soul, then he is not a bodhisattva.

(4) “Moreover, Subhuti, within this phenomenal world, a bodhisattva ought to practice generosity without basing it on anything. This means that he should not base his generosity on form, and he should not base his generosity on sound, smell, taste, touch, or thought. Subhuti, the generosity of a bodhisattva should be like this and it should not be based on lakshana whatsoever. And why is this?

If the generosity is not based on any lakshana whatsoever, then his goodness will be immeasurable. Subhuti, what so you say, can vast space to the east of us be measured?”

“No, it cannot World-honoured One.”

“Subhuti, can the vastness of space in any direction be measured? Can the vastness of space to the south, west, north, up or down be measured?”

“No, it cannot, World-honoured One.”

“Subhuti, when the generosity of a bodhisattva is not based on lakshana, his goodness is just as immeasurable as that. Subhuti, a bodhisattva should base himself on this teaching and this teaching alone.

(5) Subhuti, what do you say, can you see the Tathagata in his bodily lakshana?”

“No, World-honoured One, no one can see the Tathagata in his bodily lakshana. And why is this? The bodily lakshana that the Tathagata is talking about is not bodily lakshana.”

The Buddha said to Subhuti, “All lakshana are delusive. If you can see that all lakshana are not lakshana, then you will see the Tathagata.”

(6) Subhuti said to the Buddha, “World-honoured One, can sentient beings, upon hearing these words, really be expected to believe them?”

The Buddha told Subhuti, “Don’t talk like that! Even after I have gone for five hundred years there will still be people who are moral and who cultivate goodness. If they can believe this teaching and accept it as truth, you can be sure that they will plant good roots not just with one Buddha, or two Buddhas, or three or four or five Buddhas, but that they will plant good roots with infinite tens of millions of Buddhas. And if someone has so much as a single pure moment of belief concerning this teaching, Subhuti, they will be intimately known and seen by the Tathagata. And what is the reason that these sentient beings will attain so much infinite goodness? These sentient beings will not return to the lakshana of self, the lakshana of human beings, the lakshana of sentient beings, the lakshana of souls, the lakshana of laws, or the lakshana of non-laws. And why is this? If a sentient being clings to lakshana in his mind, then he will cling to self, human beings, sentient beings, or souls. If he clings to the lakshana of a law, then he will also cling to self, human beings, sentient beings, or souls. And why is this? If he clings to even so little as the lakshana of a non-law, then he will also cling to self, human beings, sentient beings, or souls. Thus he must not cling to laws or non-laws, and this is why I have often said to you monks that even my teachings should be understood to be like a raft; if even the Dharma must be let go of, then how much more must everything else be let go of?”

(7) Subhuti, what do you say? Has the Tathagata really attained anuttara-samyak-sambodhi? Has the Tathagata really spoken a Dharma?”

Subhuti said, “As far as I understand what the Buddha has said, there is no definite Dharma that can be called anuttara-samyak-sambodhi, and there is no definite Dharma that could be spoken about by the Tathagata. And why is this?”

The Dharma of which the Tathagata speaks cannot be held onto, it cannot be spoken, it is not a law, and it is not a non-law. And that is why all bodhisattvas understand the unconditioned Dharmas differently.”

(8) Subhuti, what do you say? If a person, in an act of generosity, were to give away enough precious jewels to fill and entire great chiliocosm, would the goodness he achieved be great or not?”

Subhuti said, “It would be very great, World-honoured One! And why is this? This goodness is devoid of a ‘goodness nature’ and therefore the Tathagata would say that it is great.”

“If someone else were to receive and uphold as few as four verses of this sutra, and if he were to teach them to others, his goodness would be even greater than that. And why is this? Subhuti, all Buddhas and all anuttara-samyak-sambodhi are born of this sutra. Subhuti, that which is called the ‘Buddhadharma’ is not the Buddhadharma.

(9) Subhuti, what do you say? Would it be right for a srotapana to think like this: ‘I have attained the fruits of a srotapana?’”

Subhuti said, “No, World-honoured One. And why is this? Srotapana means ‘stream-enterer,’ and yet there is nothing to be entered. Indeed, to not enter into form, sound, smell, taste, touch, or thought is what is called srotapana.”

“Subhuti, what do you say? Would it be right for a sakradagami to think like this: ‘I have attained the fruit of a sakradagami?’”

Subhuti said, “No, World-honoured One. And why is this? Sakradagami means ‘once-returned,’ and yet there is no such thing as ‘returning’. This is what is called sakradagami.”

“Subhuti, what do you say? Would it be right for an anagami to think like this: ‘I have attained the fruit of an anagami?’”

Subhuti said, “No, World-honoured One. And why is this? Anagami means ‘never-returning’, and yet in truth there is no such thing as ‘never returning’. This is why it is called ‘anagami’”.

“Subhuti, what do you say? Would it be right for an Arhat to think like this: ‘I have attained the path of an Arhat?’”

Subhuti said, “No, World-honoured One. And why is this? There is no Dharma called ‘Arhat’. World-honoured One, if an Arhat were to think ‘I have attained the path of an Arhat’, then he would be clinging to self, human being, sentient being, and soul. World-honoured One, the Buddha has said that I have attained non-disputational samadhi, and that among all people, I am the best in this; and that among all Arhats, I am also the best at going beyond desire. And yet, I do not have the thought that I am an Arhat that has gone beyond desire. World-honoured One, if I were to have the thought that I had attained the path of an Arhat, the World-honoured One would not have said that Subhuti takes delight in the practice of aranya. Since Subhuti is wholly without any practice, Subhuti has been said to take delight in the practice of aranya.”

(10) The Buddha said to Subhuti, “What do you say? When the Tathagata was in the realm of Dip Ankara Buddha, did he gain anything by his practice of the Dharma?”

“No, World-honoured One, when the Tathagata was in the realm of Dip Ankara Buddha, he did not gain anything from his practice of the Dharma.”

“Subhuti, what do you say? Does a bodhisattva make a Buddha-realm magnificent?”

“No, World-honoured One. And why is this? That which makes a Buddha-realm magnificent is not ‘magnificent’, and this is what is called ‘magnificent’.”

“For this reason Subhuti, all great bodhisattvas should give rise to purity of mind in this way: they should give rise to a mind that is not based on form, and they should give rise to a mind that is not based on form, and they should give rise to a mind that is not based on sound, smell, taste, or thought. They should give rise to a mind that is not based on anything. Subhuti, what do you say? If a man’s body were as large as Mount Sumeru, would that body be large?”

Subhuti said “Very large, World-honoured One. And why is this? The Buddha has said that no body is what is called the large body.”

(11) Subhuti, if each grain of sand in the Ganges River were to become a Ganges River, and if the sand in all of those rivers were added up, what would you say? Would that be a lot of sand?

Subhuti said, "It would be very much, World-honoured One. The number of Ganges Rivers alone would be enormous; the amount of sand would be even greater than that."

"Subhuti, I am going to speak the truth to you now: if a good man or good woman were to give away as many great chiliocosms of precious jewels as all of those grains of sand, would his goodness be great?"

Subhuti said, "It would be very great World-honoured One."

The Buddha said to Subhuti, "If a good man or a good woman receives and upholds as few as four verses of this sutra, and if he teaches it to others, then his goodness will be greater than that."

(12) Furthermore, Subhuti, anyone who speaks about this sutra, even as little as only four verses of it, should be honoured by people in this world, by those in heaven, and by asuras as if he were a Buddhist shrine. And anyone who practices the teachings of this sutra with all of his strength, or who reads it or chants it, should be honoured that much more. Subhuti, you should know that such a person already has become accomplished in the highest and rarest of Dharmas. Wherever this sutra can be found, there is the Buddha; and it should be honoured as if it were one of his disciples.

(13) At that point, Subhuti asked the Buddha, "World-honoured One, what should this sutra be called, and how should we receive it and uphold it?"

The Buddha said to Subhuti, "This sutra is called the Vajrachhedika Prajñāparamita, and by this name you should receive it and uphold it. And why is this?"

Subhuti, the Buddha has said that Prajñāparamita is not 'Prajñāparamita' and that that is what is called Prajñāparamita. Subhuti, what do you say? Does the Tathagata really have some Dharma to speak about?"

Subhuti said to the Buddha, "World-honoured One, the Tathagata has nothing to speak about."

"Subhuti, what do you say? Is the fine dust of an entire great chiliocosm a lot of dust or not?"

Subhuti said, "It is a lot, World-honoured One."

"Subhuti, the Tathagata says that all of that fine dust is not fine dust, and that that is what is called 'fine dust'. The Tathagata says that the world is not the 'world', and that that is what is called the 'world'. Subhuti, what do you say? Can the Tathagata be seen by his thirty-two marks?"

"No, World-honoured One. And why is this? The Tathagata has said that the thirty-two marks are not the 'thirty-two marks' and that that is what is called the thirty-two marks."

"Subhuti, if a good man or a good woman were to practice generosity with as many lives as there are grains of sand in the Ganges River, their goodness would still not be as great as that of someone who upheld as few as four verses of this sutra and who spoke of them to others."

(14) Then after hearing this sutra and comprehending its deep meaning, Subhuti wept out loud and said to the Buddha, "Rare One, World-honoured One, of all of the wise things that I ever heard, I have never heard anything as profound as the sutra that the Buddha has just spoken. World-honoured One, if anyone should hear this sutra and believe it with a pure mind, then he

will give rise to the true lakshana, and he will attain supreme goodness of the rarest kind. World-honoured One, the true lakshana is not a 'lakshana', and that is why the Tathagata has called it a true lakshana. World-honoured One, today I have heard this sutra, believed it, understood it, received it, and upheld it, and this was not difficult. If five hundred years from now, someone should hear this sutra, believe it, understand it, receive it and uphold it, then that person will be a rare person indeed. And why is this? That person will be without lakshana of self, lakshana of people, lakshana of sentient beings, or lakshana of soul. And why is this? That which is separate from all lakshana is called 'all Buddhas'".

The Buddha said to Subhuti, "Just so, just so. Moreover, if a person hears this sutra and does not become alarmed, or frightened, or scared, then this person is indeed a rare person. And why is this? Subhuti, the Tathagata has said that the supreme paramita is not the 'supreme paramita' and that this is what is called the supreme paramita. Subhuti, the Tathagata has said that patience under insult is not the 'paramita of patience under insult'. And why is this? Subhuti, long ago when the flesh of the Tathagata was cut away by Kalingaraja, I had no lakshana of a self, no lakshana of a person, no lakshana of sentient beings, and no lakshana of a soul. And why is this? If at that distant time, as my flesh was being cut away piece by piece, if I had a lakshana of self, lakshana of people, lakshana of sentient beings, or lakshana of a soul, I would have become angry.

Subhuti, think about this some more; five hundred generations ago when I was patient under insult, I was without lakshana of self, lakshana of people, lakshana of sentient beings, or lakshana of a soul. For this reason, Subhuti, a bodhisattva should disentangle himself from all lakshana and commit himself to anuttara-samyak-sambodhi; and he should not give rise to a mind based on form, and he should not give rise to a mind based on sound, smell, taste, touch, or thought. He should give rise to a mind that is not based on anything. Even if the mind is based on something, it is not really based on anything, and for this reason the Buddha says that the generosity of a bodhisattva should not be based on form. Subhuti, a bodhisattva should be generous in this way for the purpose of aiding all sentient beings. The Tathagata says that all lakshana are not 'lakshana' and therefore he also says that all sentient beings are not 'sentient beings'. Subhuti, the Dharma that the Tathagata has attained is not true and it is not false. Subhuti, when a bodhisattva bases his mind on some dharma and then acts generously, he is like a person who has entered into darkness, and he sees nothing at all. But when a bodhisattva does not base his mind on any dharma and then acts generously, he is like someone who has eyes in the full light of the sun and he sees all forms very clearly. Subhuti, if in the future generations there are good men and good women who can practice this sutra, and read it, and chant it, then the Tathagata in his Buddha-wisdom intimately will know and intimately will see those people, and they will attain complete limitless and boundless goodness.

(15) Subhuti, even if a good man or a good woman were generous in the morning with as many bodies as there are grains of sand in the Ganges River, and even if this generosity were repeated at night with as many bodies as there are grains of sand in the Ganges River, and even if all of this generosity were continued for an infinite and immense number of eons, still his of her goodness would not be as great as that of another person who heard this sutra, who believed it, and who did not go against it. And if this is so, imagine how much greater is the goodness of one who copies this sutra, practices it, reads it, chants it, and explains it to others. Subhuti, the most important thing that can be said about this sutra is that its goodness is inconceivable,

immeasurable, and borderless. The Tathagata speaks this sutra to those who have committed themselves to the supreme vehicle. Those who uphold this sutra, and read it, and chant it, and explain it to others, will be intimately known and intimately seen by the Tathagata. And all such people will attain to a goodness that is immeasurable, unlimited, borderless, and inconceivable. And all such people will share in the anuttara-samyak-sambodhi of the Tathagata. And why is this? Subhuti, those who delight in the lower dharmas cling to a view of self, a view of people, a view of sentient beings, and a view of a soul and thus they are not able to listen to this sutra, to receive it, to read it, to chant it, or to explain it to others. Subhuti, in whatever place this sutra can be found, it should be honoured by all who are in this world, and all in heaven, and all asuras, and they should treat this place as if it were a shrine, and should surround it and bow to it and pay their deepest respects to it. And they should scatter incense and flowers all around this place.

(16) Furthermore, Subhuti, if a good man or a good woman is slighted or ridiculed by others for upholding, reading, or chanting this sutra, it is due to bad karma incurred in a former life. That bad karma should be the cause of the person falling into a lower realm, but in this life he is just being slighted and ridiculed. Eventually his bad karma from previous lives will be eradicated and he will attain anuttara-samyak-sambodhi. Subhuti, I remember countless eons ago, before Dip Ankara Buddha, when I met, honoured, and made offerings to all of the countless Buddhas in the universe without excluding a single one of them. If someone in the Dharma-declining age can practice, read, and chant this sutra, the goodness he will attain will be 100 times, nay, a billion-billion times, nay, an incalculable number of times that cannot even be suggested by metaphors, greater than the goodness I attained for honouring all Buddhas. Subhuti, if I were to say completely how great is the goodness attained by a good man or a good woman who practices, reads, and chants this sutra in the Dharma-declining age, there would be those whose minds would become crazy upon hear this, and they would form deep doubts and not believe it. Subhuti, it is enough to know that this sutra is inconceivably great, and that the rewards it offers are also inconceivably great”.

The Diamond Sutra – Part 2

(The Vajrachchedika Prajña Paramita Sutra)

(17) Then Subhuti asked the Buddha, “World-honoured One, when good men and good women commit themselves to anuttara-samyak-sambodhi, on what should they base themselves? And how should they subdue their minds?”

The Buddha said to Subhuti, “When good men and good women commit themselves to anuttara-samyak-sambodhi, they should give rise to a mind like this: ‘I should save all sentient beings, and as I save them, I should know that there really are no sentient beings to be saved.’ And why is this? If a bodhisattva has lakshana of self, lakshana of human beings, lakshana of sentient beings, or lakshana of soul, then he is not a bodhisattva. And why is this? Subhuti, in truth there is no such Dharma as committing to anuttara-samyak-sambodhi. Subhuti, what do you say? When the Tathagata was in the realm of Dip Anka Buddha, was there an attainable Dharma anuttara-samyak-sambodhi or not?”

“There was not, World-honoured One. As far as I understand the meaning of what the Buddha has said, when the Buddha was in the realm of Dip Anka Buddha, there was no attainable dharma anuttara-samyak-sambodhi.”

The Buddha said, “Just so, just so. Subhuti, in truth there is no dharma anuttara-samyak-sambodhi for the Tathagata to attain. Subhuti, if the Tathagata had attained a dharma anuttara-samyak-sambodhi, then Dip Anka Buddha would have never told me, ‘In the future you will attain Buddha-hood and be called Shakyamuni.’ Since there is no attainable dharma anuttara-samyak-sambodhi, Dip Anka Buddha told me that I would become a Buddha, saying, ‘In the future you will attain Buddha-hood and be called Shakyamuni.’ And why is this? The Tathagata is the essence of all Dharmas. Someone might say, ‘The Tathagata has attained anuttara-samyak-sambodhi,’ but Subhuti, there really is no dharma anuttara-samyak-sambodhi for the Buddha to attain. Subhuti, the anuttara-samyak-sambodhi that the Tathagata has attained lies between these two and it is neither true nor false. For these reasons the Tathagata says that all dharmas are the Buddha-dharma. Subhuti, that which is said to be ‘all dharmas’ is not ‘all dharmas’ and that is why it is called ‘all dharmas’. Subhuti, it is the same as a person growing up.

Subhuti said, World-honoured One, the Tathagata has said that when a person grows up, he has not grown up. And that this is what is meant by growing up.”

“Subhuti, a bodhisattva is just like that, and if he should say, ‘I should save all sentient beings,’ then he is not a bodhisattva. And why is this? Subhuti, there is no Dharma called ‘bodhisattva’ and for this reason the Buddha has said that all dharmas have no self, no human being, no sentient being, and no soul. Subhuti, if a bodhisattva should say, ‘I make the Buddha-realm magnificent,’ then he is not a bodhisattva. And why is this? The Tathagata has said that that which makes the Buddha-realm magnificent is not magnificent, and that that is what is called magnificence. Subhuti, only after a bodhisattva has fully understood the Dharma of selflessness will the Tathagata say that he is a true bodhisattva.

(18) Subhuti, what do you say? Does the Tathagata have eyes of flesh or not?”

“Yes, World-honoured One, the Tathagata has eyes of flesh.”

“Subhuti, what do you say? Does the Tathagata have heavenly eyes or not?”

“Yes, World-honoured One, the Tathagata has heavenly eyes.”

“Subhuti, what do you say? Does the Tathagata have wisdom eyes or not?”

“Yes, World-honoured One, the Tathagata has wisdom eyes.”

“Subhuti, what do you say? Does the Tathagata have Dharma eyes or not?”

“Yes, World-honoured One, the Tathagata has Dharma eyes.”

“Subhuti, what do you say? Does the Tathagata have Buddha eyes or not?”

“Yes, World-honoured One, the Tathagata has Buddha eyes.”

“Subhuti, what do you say? Has the Tathagata said that the sand in the Ganges River is sand or not?”

“Yes, World-honoured One, the Tathagata has said that it is sand.”

“Subhuti, what do you say? If there were as many Ganges Rivers as there are grains of sand in the Ganges River, and if all of that sand of all of those river were added up, and if the number of Buddha-realms equalled the number of all of those grains of sand, would that be a lot?”

“It would be very much, World-honoured One.”

The Buddha said to Subhuti, “The Tathagata intimately knows each and every sentient being in all of those worlds. And how can this be? The Tathagata has said that all minds are not minds and that that is what is called mind. And why is this so? Subhuti, the mind of the past cannot be gotten hold of, the mind of the present cannot be gotten hold of, and the mind of the future cannot be gotten hold of.

(19) “Subhuti, what do you say?” If a person gives away enough precious jewels to fill an entire great chiliocosm, will this cause him to attain immense goodness?”

“Just so, World-honoured One. This will cause him to attain immense goodness,”

“Subhuti, if there really were such a thing as ‘goodness’, the Tathagata would never speak about attaining immense goodness. It is only because there is no such thing as ‘goodness’ that the Tathagata says that immense goodness can be attained.

(20) “Subhuti, what do you say?” Can the Buddha be seen in his complete form body or not?”

“No, world-honoured One, the Buddha ought not to be seen in his form body. And why is this? The Tathagata has said that his complete form body is not ‘the complete form body.’”

“Subhuti, what do you say? Can the Tathagata be seen by means of all complete lakshana or not?”

“No, World-honoured One, the Tathagata ought not to be seen by means of all complete lakshana. And why is this? The Tathagata has said that the completeness of all lakshana is not completeness and that this is what is called completeness of all lakshana.”

(21) “Subhuti, never say that the Tathagata has this thought: ‘I have some Dharma to speak about.’ Do not have that thought. And why is this? If someone says that the Tathagata has a Dharma to speak about, then that person is defaming the Buddha, and he does not understand what I have been saying. Subhuti, one who speaks the Dharma had no Dharma to speak about and that is what is called ‘speaking the Dharma.’”

Then the wise Subhuti said to the Buddha, “World-honoured One, will there ever be sentient beings in the future who upon hearing this Dharma will give rise to believing minds?”

The Buddha said, “Subhuti, those sentient beings are not sentient beings, and they are not ‘not’ sentient beings. And why is this? Subhuti, the Tathagata has said that all sentient beings are not sentient beings and this is what is called sentient beings.”

(22)Subhuti said to the Buddha “World-honoured One, is it not so that when the Buddha attained anuttara-samyak-sambodhi, nothing was really attained?”

“Just so, just so. Subhuti, there is not even the slightest dharma that can be attained in anuttara-samyak-sambodhi, and this is what is called anuttara-samyak-sambodhi.

(23)Furthermore, Subhuti, this Dharma is equal and without high or low; it is called anuttara-samyak-sambodhi. Anuttara-samyak-sambodhi is attained by cultivating all good dharmas while being without self, without person, without sentient being, and without soul. Subhuti, when I say ‘good dharmas’, the Tathagata is saying that not good dharmas is what is called good dharmas.

(24)Subhuti, if a person were to perform an act of generosity by giving away a quantity of precious jewels equal to all of the Sumeru Mountains within a great chiliocosm; and if another person were to uphold as few as four verses of this Prajñāparamita Sutra, and reads them, and chants them, and explains them to others, the goodness of this second person would be 100 times, nay, a billion-billion times, nay, an incalculable number of times that cannot even be suggested by metaphors, greater than the goodness of the first person.

(25)Subhuti, what do you say? Don’t ever say that the Tathagata has this thought: ‘I am saving sentient beings.’ Subhuti, don’t have this thought. And why is this? In truth there are no sentient beings for the Tathagata to save. If there were sentient beings for the Tathagata to save, then the tathagata would have (lakshana of) self, person, sentient being, and soul. Subhuti, when the Tathagata speaks of a self, it is the same as no self, and yet all ordinary people take it as a self. Subhuti, the Tathagata says that ordinary people are not ordinary people, and that is what is called ordinary people.

(26)Subhuti, what do you say? Can the Tathagata be seen by his thirty-two marks or not?” Subhuti said, “Just so, just so. The tathagata can be seen by his thirty-two marks.”

The Buddha said, “Subhuti, if the tathagata could be seen by his thirty-two marks, than a wheel-turning sage-king would be the same as the tathagata.”

Subhuti said to the Buddha, “World-honoured One, as far as I understand the meaning of what the Buddha has said, one ought not to be able to see the tathagata by his thirty-two marks.”

Then the Buddha spoke a verse:

“If anyone should think that I can be seen among forms,
Or that I can be sought among sounds,
Then that person is on the wrong path,
And he will not see the Tathagata.”

(27)Subhuti, consider this thought: ‘the Tathagata attains anuttara-samyak-sambodhi because his lakshana are incomplete.’ Subhuti, do not have this thought: ‘the Tathagata attains anuttara-samyak-sambodhi because his lakshana are incomplete.’ Subhuti, consider this

thought: 'the one who commits to anuttara-samyak-sambodhi says that all dharmas are ended and extinguished.' Do not have this thought. And why is this? The one who commits to anuttara-samyak-sambodhi does not say that lakshana are ended and extinguished among dharmas.

(28) "Subhuti, if one bodhisattva gives away enough precious jewels to fill as many worlds as there are grains of sand in the Ganges River, and if a second person knows that all dharmas are without self and thus attains patience, then the goodness attained by this (second) bodhisattva is superior to the first bodhisattva. Subhuti, this is because all bodhisattvas do not receive goodness."

Subhuti said to the Buddha, "World-honoured One, why do you say that bodhisattvas do not receive goodness?"

"Subhuti, bodhisattvas should not be greedy or attached to the goodness that they do; this is why I say that they do not receive goodness.

(29) "Subhuti, if someone says, 'It seems as if the Tathagata comes, and goes, and sits, and lays down.' then this person has not understood my meaning. And why is this? The one who is the Tathagata has not come from somewhere, and he is not going somewhere, and that is why he is called the 'Tathagata' (Thus-come One).

(30) "Subhuti, if a good man or a good woman were to pulverize a great chiliocosm into fine dust, what do you say, would that grouping of dust be a lot or not?"

"It would be a lot, World-honoured One. And why is this? If that grouping of dust really existed, the Buddha would not have called it a grouping of fine dust. And why is this? The Buddha has said that a grouping of fine dust is not a grouping of fine dust and so it is called a grouping of fine dust.

World-honoured One, the great chiliocosm that the Tathagata has spoken about is not a great chiliocosm and that is what is called a great chiliocosm. And why is this? If that great chiliocosm really existed, then it would be a compound lakshana. The Tathagata has said that a compound lakshana is not a compound lakshana, and so it is called a compound lakshana."

"Subhuti, that which is a compound lakshana cannot really be spoken about, and yet ordinary people are attached to it and greedy about it.

(31) "Subhuti, if a person were to say: ' the Tathagata teaches a view of self, a view of people, a view of sentient beings, and a view of souls,' Subhuti, what do you say, has this person understood the meaning of what I am saying?"

"No, World-honoured One. This person has not understood the meaning of what the Tathagata is saying. And why is this? The World-honoured One has said that a view of self, a view of people, a view of sentient beings, and a view of souls is not a view of self, a view of people, a view of sentient beings, and a view of souls."

"Subhuti, one who commits to anuttara-samyak-sambodhi should not give rise to lakshana of dharmas; and he should know all dharmas in this way, and he should view them like this, and believe them like this and understand them like this. Subhuti, the Tathagata says that that which is called a lakshana of a dharma is not a lakshana of a dharma, and so it is called a lakshana of a dharma.

(32) "Subhuti, if a person performs an act of generosity by giving away as many precious jewels as would fill illimitable eons of worlds, and if a good man or a good woman commits to the bodhisattva mind, and upholds as few as four verses of this sutra, and if he upholds it, reads it, chants it, and teaches it to people, his goodness will be greater than that of the first person. And how should it be taught to people? By not grasping lakshana; by remaining immobile in this consciousness. And why is this?

All conditioned dharmas
Are like dreams, like illusions,
Like bubbles, like shadows,
Like dew, like lightening,
And all of them should be contemplated in this way."

When the Buddha finished speaking this sutra, the elder Subhuti, along with all of the other monks, nuns, upasaka, upasika, asuras, all worldly and heavenly beings, heard what the Buddha had said, and all of them were greatly pleased and they all believed it, received it, and practiced it.

The Path of Mindfulness (Satipatthana Sutra)

“O monks,” said the Buddha, “there is a most wonderful way to help living beings realize liberation, overcome directly grief and sorrow, end pain and anxiety, travel the right path, and realize nirvana. This way is the Four Establishments of Mindfulness.

“What are the Four Establishments of Mindfulness?

“Monks, a practitioner remains established in the observation of the body in the body, diligent, with clear understanding, mindful, having abandoned every craving and every aversion for this life.

“One remains established in the observation of the feelings in the feelings, diligent, with clear understanding, mindful, having abandoned every craving and every aversion for this life.

“One remains established in the observation of the mind in the mind, diligent, with clear understanding, mindful, having abandoned every craving and every aversion for this life.

“One remains established in the observation of the objects of mind in the objects of mind, diligent, with clear understanding, mindful, having abandoned every craving and every aversion for this life.

“And how does a practitioner remain established in the observation of the body?”

“One goes to the forest, to the foot of a tree, or to an empty room, sits down in a meditative position, holds one’s body straight, and establishes mindfulness in front of oneself. Breathing in, one is aware of breathing in. Breathing out, one is aware of breathing out. Breathing in a long breath, one knows, ‘I am breathing in a long breath.’ Breathing out a long breath, one knows, ‘I am breathing out a long breath.’ Breathing in a short breath, one knows, ‘I am breathing in a short breath.’ Breathing out a short breath, one knows, ‘I am breathing out a short breath.’

“The practitioner uses the following practice: ‘Breathing in, I am aware of my whole body. Breathing out, I am aware of my whole body.’ And then, ‘Breathing in, I calm the activities of my body. Breathing out, I calm the activities of my body.’

“Moreover, when walking, the practitioner is aware, ‘I am walking’; when standing, is aware ‘I am standing’; when sitting, is aware, ‘I am sitting’; when lying down, is aware, ‘I am lying down.’ In whatever position one’s body happens to be, one is aware of the position of the body.

“When one is going forward or backward, one applies full awareness to one’s going forward or backward. When one looks in front or looks behind, bends down or stands up, one also applies full awareness to what one is doing. One applies full awareness to wearing the robe or carrying the alms bowl. When one eats or drinks, chews or savours the food, one applies full awareness to all this and when passing excrement or urinating, one applies full awareness to this. When one walks, stands, lies down, sits, sleeps or wakes up, speaks or is silent, one shines his awareness on all this.

“Monks, how does a practitioner remain established in the observation of the feelings in the feelings?”

“Whenever the practitioner has a pleasant feeling, one is aware, ‘I am experiencing a pleasant feeling.’ Whenever one has a painful feeling, one is aware, ‘I am experiencing a painful feeling.’ Whenever one experiences a feeling which is neither pleasant nor painful, one is aware, ‘I am experiencing a neutral feeling.’ When one experiences a feeling based in the body, one is aware, ‘I am experiencing a feeling based in the body.’ When one experiences a feeling based in the mind, one is aware, ‘I am experiencing a feeling in the mind.’

“Monks, how does a practitioner remain established in the observation of the mind in the mind?”

“When one’s mind desires something, the practitioner is aware, ‘My mind is desiring.’ When one’s mind does not desire something, one is aware, ‘My mind does not desire.’ When one’s mind hates something, one is aware, ‘My mind hates.’ When one’s mind does not hate something, one is aware, ‘My mind does not hate.’ When one’s mind is in the state of ignorance, one is aware, ‘My mind is in an ignorant state.’ When one’s mind is in an awakened state, one is aware, ‘My mind is in an awakened state.’ When one’s mind is tense, one is aware, ‘My mind is tense.’ When one’s mind is at ease, one is aware, ‘My mind is at ease.’ When one’s mind is distracted, one is aware, ‘My mind is distracted.’ When one’s mind is focused, one is aware, ‘My mind is focused.’ When one’s mind has a wide perspective, one is aware, ‘My mind has a wide perspective.’ When one’s mind has a narrow view, one is aware, ‘My mind has a narrow view.’ When one’s mind is composed, one is aware, ‘My mind is composed.’ When one’s mind is not composed, one is aware, ‘My mind is not composed.’ When one’s mind is free, one is aware, ‘My mind is free.’ When one’s mind is bound up, one is aware, ‘My mind is bound up.’

“How, monks, does the practitioner remain established in the observation of the Four Noble Truths?”

“A practitioner is aware ‘This is suffering,’ as it arises. One is aware ‘This is the cause of suffering,’ as it arises. One is aware ‘This is the end of suffering,’ as it arises. One is aware ‘This is the path which leads to the end of suffering,’ as it arises.

“Monks, one who practices in the Four Establishments of Mindfulness for seven years can expect one of two fruits – the highest understanding in this very life or, if there remains some residue of affliction, he can attain the fruit of no-return.

“Let alone seven years, monks, whoever practices in the Four Establishments of Mindfulness for six, five, four, three, two years, one year, or one month, can also expect to attain one of two fruits – either the highest understanding in this very life or the fruit of no-return.

“Let alone a month, monks, whoever practices in the Four Establishments of Mindfulness one week can also expect one of two fruits – either the highest understanding in this very life or the fruit of no-return.”

The monks were delighted to hear the teaching of the Buddha. They took it to heart and began to put it into practice.

Bhayabherava Sutta

Thus have I heard, on one occasion the Blessed One was living at Savatthi in Jeta's Grove, Anathapindika's Park.

Then the Brahmin Janussoni went to the Blessed One and exchanged greetings with him. When this courteous and amiable talk was finished, he sat down at one side and said: "Master Gautama, when clansmen have gone forth into homelessness out of faith in Master Gautama, do they have Master Gautama for their leader, their helper, and their guide? And do these people follow the example of Master Gautama?"

"That is so, brahmin, that is so. When clansmen have gone forth from the home life into homelessness out of faith in me, they have me for their leader, their helper, and their guide. And these people follow my example."

"But, Master Gautama, remote jungle-thicket resting places in the forest are hard to endure, seclusion is hard to practice, and it is hard to enjoy solitude. One would think the jungles must rob a bikkhu of his mind, if he has no concentration."

"That is so, brahmin, that is so. Remote jungle-thicket resting places are hard to endure, seclusion is hard to practice, and it is hard to enjoy solitude. One would think the jungles must rob a bikkhu of his mind, if he has no concentration."

"Before my enlightenment, while I was still an unenlightened bodhisattva, I too considered thus: 'Remote jungle-thicket resting places in the forest are hard to endure...the jungles must rob a bikkhu of his mind, if he has no concentration.'

"I considered thus: 'Whenever recluses or Brahmins unpurified in bodily conduct resort to remote jungle-thicket resting places in the forest, then owing to the defect of their unpurified

bodily conduct these good recluses and Brahmins evoke unwholesome fear and dread. But I do not resort to remote jungle-thicket resting places in the forest unpurified in bodily conduct. I am purified in bodily conduct. I resort to remote jungle-thicket resting places in the forest as one of the noble ones with bodily conduct purified.' Seeing in myself this purity of bodily conduct, I found great solace in dwelling in the forest.

"I considered thus: 'Whenever recluses or Brahmins unpurified in verbal conduct...unpurified in mental conduct...unpurified in livelihood resort to remote jungle-thicket resting places in the forest...they evoke unwholesome fear and dread. But...I am purified in livelihood. I resort to remote jungle-thicket resting places in the forest as one of the noble ones with livelihood purified.' Seeing in myself this purity of livelihood, I found great solace in dwelling in the forest.

I considered thus: 'Whenever recluses or brahmins who are covetous and full of lust...I am uncovetous...'

"...with a mind of ill will and intentions of hate...I have a mind of loving kindness...'

"...overcome by sloth and torpor...I am without sloth and torpor...'

"...overcome with restlessness and unpeaceful in mind...I have a peaceful mind...'

"...uncertain and doubting...I have gone beyond doubt...'

"...given to self praise and disparagement of others...I am not given to self praise and disparagement of others...'

"...subject to alarm and terror...I am free from trepidation...'

"...desirous of gain, honour, and renown...I have few wishes...'

"...lazy and wanting in energy...I am energetic...'

“...unmindful and not fully aware...I am established in mindfulness...”

“...unconcentrated and with straying minds...I am possessed of concentration...”

“I considered thus: ‘Whenever recluses of brahmins devoid of wisdom, drivellers, resort to remote jungle-thicket resting places in the forest, then owing to the defect of their being devoid of wisdom and drivellers these good recluses and brahmins evoke unwholesome fear and dread. But I do not resort to remote jungle-thicket resting places in the forest devoid of wisdom, a driveller. I am possessed of wisdom. I resort to remote jungle-thicket resting places in the forest as one of the noble ones possessed of wisdom.’ Seeing in myself this possession of wisdom, I found great solace in dwelling in the forest.

“I considered thus: ‘There are specially auspicious nights of the fourteenth, the fifteen, and the eighth of the fortnight. Now what if, on such nights as these, I was to dwell in such awe-inspiring, horrifying abodes such as orchard shrines, woodland shrines, and tree shrines? Perhaps I might encounter fear and dread.’ And later, on such specially auspicious nights as the fourteenth, fifteenth, and the eighth of the fortnight, I dwelt in such awe-inspiring, horrifying abodes as orchard shrines, woodland shrines, and tree shrines. And while I dwelt there, a wild animal would come up to me, or a peacock would knock off a branch, or the wind would rustle the leaves. I thought: ‘What now if this is the fear and dread coming?’ I thought: ‘Why do I dwell always expecting fear and dread? What if I subdue that fear and dread while keeping the same posture that I am in when it comes upon me?’

“While I walked, the fear and dread came upon me; I neither stood nor sat nor lay down till I had subdued that fear and dread. While I stood, the fear and dread came upon me; I neither walked nor sat nor lay down till I had subdued that fear and dread. While I sat, the fear and

dread came upon me; I neither walked nor stood nor sat down till I had subdued that fear and dread.

“There are, brahmin, some recluses and brahmins who perceive day when it is night and night when it is day. I say that on their part this is an abiding in delusion. But I perceive night when it is night and day when it is day. Rightly speaking, were it to be said of anyone: ‘A being not subject to delusion has appeared in the world for the welfare and happiness of many, out of compassion for the world, for the good, welfare, and happiness of gods and humans,’ it is of me indeed that rightly speaking this should be said.

“Tireless energy was aroused in me and unremitting mindfulness was established, my body was tranquil and untroubled, my mind concentrated and unified.

“Quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unwholesome states, I entered upon and abided in the first jhana, which is accompanied by applied and sustained thought, with rapture and pleasure born of seclusion.

“With the stilling of applied and sustained thought, I entered upon and abided in the second jhana, which has self-confidence and singleness of mind without applied and sustained thought, with rapture and pleasure born of concentration.

“With the fading away as well of rapture, I abided in equanimity, and mindful and fully aware, still feeling pleasure with the body, I entered upon and abided in the third jhana, on account of which noble ones announce: ‘He has a pleasant abiding who has equanimity and is mindful.’

“With the abandoning of pleasure and pain, and with the previous disappearance of joy and grief, I entered upon and abided in the fourth jhana, which has neither-pain-nor-pleasure and purity of mindfulness due to equanimity.

“When my concentrated mind was thus purified, bright, unblemished, rid of imperfection, malleable, wieldy, steady, and attained to imperturbability, I directed it to knowledge of the recollection of past lives. I recollected my manifold past lives, that is, one birth, two births, thirty births, a hundred thousand births, many many aeons of world-contraction and expansion: ‘There I was so named, of such a clan, with such an appearance, such was my nutriment, such my experience of pleasure and pain, such my life-term; and passing away from there, I reappeared elsewhere; and there too I was so named, of such a clan, with such an appearance, such was my nutriment, such my experience of pleasure and pain, such my life-term; and passing away from there, I reappeared here.’ Thus with their aspects and particulars I recollected my manifold past lives.

“This was the first true knowledge attained by me in the first watch of the night. Ignorance was banished and true knowledge arose, darkness was banished and light arose, as happens in one who abides diligent, ardent, and resolute.

“When my concentrated mind was thus purified, bright, unblemished, rid of imperfection, malleable, wieldy, steady, and attained to imperturbability, I directed it to knowledge of the passing away and reappearance of beings. With the divine eye, which is purified and surpasses the human, I saw beings passing away and reappearing, inferior and superior, fair and ugly, fortunate and unfortunate. I understood how beings pass on according to their actions thus: ‘These worthy beings who were ill conducted in body, speech, and mind, revilers of noble ones,

wrong in their views, giving effect to wrong view in their actions, on the dissolution of the body, after death, have reappeared in a state of deprivation, in a bad destination, in perdition, even in hell; but these worthy beings who were well conducted in body, speech, and mind, not revilers of noble ones, right in their views, giving effect to right view in their actions, on the dissolution of the body, after death, have reappeared in a good destination, even in the heavenly world.’ Thus with the divine eye, which is purified and surpasses the human, I saw beings passing away and reappearing, inferior and superior, fair and ugly, fortunate and unfortunate, and I understood how beings pass on according to their actions.

“This was the second true knowledge attained by me in the middle watch of the night. Ignorance was banished and true knowledge arose, darkness was banished and light arose, as happens in one who abides, diligent, ardent, and resolute.

“When my concentrated mind was thus purified, bright, unblemished, rid of imperfection, malleable, wieldy, steady, and attained to imperturbability, I directed it to knowledge of the destruction of the taints. I directly knew as it actually is: ‘This is suffering’; I directly knew as it actually is: ‘This is the origin of suffering’; I directly knew as it actually is: ‘This is the cessation of suffering’; I directly knew as it actually is: ‘This is the way leading to the cessation of suffering.’ I directly knew as it actually is: ‘These are the taints’; I directly knew as it actually is: ‘This is the origin of the taints’; I directly knew as it actually is: ‘This is the cessation of the taints’; I directly knew as it actually is: ‘This is the way leading to the cessation of the taints.’

“When I knew and saw thus, my mind was liberated from the taint of sensual desire, from the taint of being, and from the taint of ignorance. When it was liberated, there came the

knowledge: 'It is liberated.' I directly knew: 'Birth is destroyed, the hold life has been lived, what had to be done has been done, there is no more coming to any state of being.'

"This was the third true knowledge attained by me in the last watch of the night. Ignorance was banished and true knowledge arose, darkness was banished and light arose, as happens in one who abides, diligent, ardent, and resolute.

"Now, brahmin, it might be that you think: 'Perhaps the recluse Gautama is not free from lust, hate, and delusion even today, which is why he still resorts to remote jungle-thicket resting places in the forest.' But you should not think thus. It is because I see two benefits that I still resort to remote jungle-thicket resting places in the forest: I see a pleasant abiding for myself here and now, and I have compassion for future generations."

"Indeed, it is because Master Gautama is an Accomplished One, a Fully Enlightened One, that he has compassion for future generations. Magnificent, Master Gautama! Magnificent, Master Gautama! Master Gautama has made the Dharma clear in many ways, as though he were turning upright what had been overthrown, revealing what was hidden, showing the way to one who was lost, or holding up a lamp in the dark for those with eyesight to see forms. I go to Master Gautama for refuge and to the Dharma and to the Sangha of bikkhus. From today let Master Gautama remember me as a lay-follower who has gone to him for refuge for life.

Vimalakirti Sutra

Thereupon, a certain goddess who lived in that house, having heard this teaching of the Dharma of the great heroic bodhisattvas, and being delighted, pleased, and overjoyed, manifested herself in a material body and showered the great spiritual heroes, the bodhisattvas, and the great disciples with heavenly flowers. When the flowers fell on the bodies of the bodhisattvas, they fell off and onto the floor, but when they fell on the bodies of the great disciples, they stuck to them and did not fall off. The great disciples shook the flowers and even tried to use their magical powers to remove them, but still the flowers would not shake off.

Then the goddess said to Venerable Sariputra, “Reverend Sariputra, why do you shake these flowers?”

Sariputra replied, “Goddess, these flowers are not proper for religious persons and so we are trying to shake them off.”

The goddess replied, “Do not say that, Reverend Sariputra! Why? These flowers are proper indeed! Why? Such flowers have neither compounded thoughts nor discriminating thoughts. But the elder Sariputra has both compounded and discriminating thoughts.

“Reverend Sariputra, impropriety for one who has renounced the world for the discipline of the rightly taught Dharma consists of compounded thought and discrimination, yet the elders are full of such thoughts. One who is without such thoughts is always proper.

“Reverend Sariputra, see how these flowers do not stick to the bodies of the great heroes, the bodhisattvas! This is because they have eliminated both compounded thoughts and discrimination.

“For example, evil spirits have power over fearful men but cannot disturb the fearless. Likewise, those intimidated by fear of the world are in the power of forms, sounds, smells, tastes, and textures, which do not disturb those who are free from fear of the passions inherent in the compounded world. Thus, these flowers stick to the bodies of those who have not eliminated their instincts for the passions and do not stick to the bodies of those who have eliminated their instincts. Therefore, the flowers do not stick to the bodies of these bodhisattvas, who have abandoned all instincts.”

Sariputra asked: “Goddess, what prevents you from transforming yourself out of your female state?”

The goddess replied: “Although I have sought my ‘female state’ for these twelve years, I have not yet found it. Reverend Sariputra, if a magician were to incarnate a woman by magic, would you ask her, ‘What prevents you from transforming yourself out of your female state?’”

Sariputra answered: “No! Such a woman would not really exist, so what would there be to transform?”

The goddess said: “Just so, reverend Sariputra, all things do not really exist. Now, would you think, ‘What prevents one whose nature is that of magical incarnation form transforming herself out of her female state?’”

Thereupon the goddess employed her magical powers to cause the elder Sariputra to appear in her form and to cause herself to appear in his form. Then the goddess, transformed into Sariputra, said to Sariputra, transformed into a goddess, “Reverend Sariputra, what prevents you from transforming yourself out of your female state?”

And Sariputra, transformed into a goddess replied loudly: “I no longer appear in the form of a male! My body has changed into the body of a woman! I do not know what to transform!”

The goddess continued, “If the elder Sariputra could again change out of the female form, then all women could also change out of their female forms. All women appear in the form of women in just the same way as the elder appears in the form of a woman. While they are not women in reality, they appear in the form of women. With this in mind, the Buddha said, ‘In all things, there is neither male nor female.’”

Then, the goddess released her magical power and each returned to their ordinary form. She then said to him, “Reverend Sariputra, what have you done with your female form?”

Sariputra responded: “I have neither made it nor did I change it.”

The goddess said: “Just so, all things are neither made nor changed, and that they are not made and not changed, that is the teaching of the Buddha.”

THE DISCOURSE ON LOVING-KINDNESS

Karaniya Metta Sutra

This is what should be done by one who is skilled in goodness and who knows the path of peace:

Let them be able and upright,
Straightforward and gentle in speech,
Humble and not conceited,
Contented and easily satisfied,
Unburdened with duties and frugal in their ways.
Peaceful and calm and wise and skillful,
Not proud and demanding in nature.
Let them not do the slightest thing
That the wise would later reprove.

Wishing: in gladness and in safety may all beings be at ease.
Whatever living beings there may be,
Whether they are weak or strong,
The great or the mighty, medium, short or small,
The seen and the unseen,
Those living near and far away,
Those born and to be born, omitting none,
May all beings be at ease.

Let none deceive another or despise any being in any state.
Let none, through anger or ill-will wish harm upon another.

Like a mother protects her child, her only child with her life,
So with a boundless heart should one cherish all living beings.
Radiating kindness over the entire world:
Spreading upwards to the skies and downwards to the depths,
Outwards and unbounded, free from hatred and ill-will.

Whether standing or walking, seated or lying down
Free from drowsiness, one should sustain this recollection.
This is said to be the sublime abiding.

By not holding to fixed views,
The pure-hearted one, having clarity of vision,
Being freed from all sense desires,
Is not reborn into this world.

Sutta Nipata

The Buddha said: "This I do declare, after investigation there is nothing among the doctrines that such a one as I would embrace. Seeing misery in philosophical views, without adopting any of them, searching for the truth I saw 'inward peace.'

"Not by any philosophical opinion, not by tradition, not by knowledge, not by virtue and holy works can anyone say that purity exists; not by absence of philosophical opinion, by absence of tradition, by absence of knowledge, by absence of virtue and holy works either; having abandoned these without adopting anything else, let one, calm and independent, not desire any resting place.

"One who thinks oneself equal to others, or distinguished, or low, for that very reason disputes; but one who is unmoved under those three conditions, for that person the notions 'equal' and 'distinguished' do not exist.

"The Sage for whom the notions 'equal' and 'unequal' do not exist, would he say, 'This is true'? Or with whom should he dispute, saying, 'This is false'? With whom should he enter into dispute?

"An accomplished person does not by a philosophical view, or by thinking, become arrogant, for he is not of that sort; not by holy works, nor by tradition is he to be led, he is not led into any of the resting places of the mind.

"For the one who is free from views there are no ties, for one who is delivered by understanding there are no follies; but those who grasped after views and philosophical opinions, they wander about in the world annoying people."

At that time, being sowing season, five hundred ploughs owned by the brahmin Kaśibharadvaja were set to work. In the morning then, the Buddha, having robed himself and taking his bowl and double-layered robe, went to that place where Kaśibharadvaja's work was in progress. It was lunch time and the food was being distributed by the brahmin. When the Buddha arrived at the place where the food was being distributed he stood aside. The brahmin, seeing the Buddha standing for alms, said thus:

"O recluse, I plough and sow, and having ploughed and sown, I eat. You also, recluse, should plough and sow; and having ploughed and sown, you should eat."

The Buddha replied: "I too, brahmin, plough and sow; and having ploughed and sown, I eat."

"We do not see any yoke or plough, or ploughshare, or goad, or oxen of the Venerable Gautama, and yet you say: 'I too plough and sow; and having ploughed and sown, I eat.'"

Thereupon Kaśibharadvaja addressed the Buddha in this stanza:

“You claim to be a farmer, yet we do not see your ploughing. Being questioned by us about your ploughing, tell us in such a manner that we may know of it.”

The Buddha said thus:

“Confidence is the seed; self-control the rein; wisdom my yoke and plough; modesty is my pole; mind is the rope; mindfulness my ploughshare and goad.

“Bodily action is well-guarded, speech is well-guarded, moderate in food, and I make truth the destroyer of weeds and calm my release.

“Exertion is my yoked-oxen which carries me toward Nirvana. It goes onward without stopping; having gone there one has no regrets.

“In this way the ploughing is done; it bears the fruit of immortality. Having accomplished this ploughing, one becomes free from all suffering.”

Upon hearing this, the brahmin Kaśibharadvaja offered food to the Buddha.

Sutra On the Full Awareness of Breathing

When the full moon day arrived, the Buddha, seated under the open sky, looked over the assembly and said:

“O followers of the way, the method of being fully aware of breathing, if developed and practiced continuously, will have great rewards and bring great advantages. It will lead to success in the practice of the Seven Factors of Awakening, if developed and practiced continuously, will give rise to Understanding and Liberation of the Mind.

“What is the way to develop and practice continuously the method of Full Awareness of Breathing so that the practice will be rewarding and offer great benefit?”

“It is like this, the practitioner goes into the forest or to the foot of a tree, or to any deserted place, and sits in a stable position, holding one’s body quite straight. Breathing in, one knows that one is breathing in; and breathing out, one knows that one is breathing out.

“Breathing in a long breath, one knows, ‘I am breathing in a long breath.’ Breathing out a long breath, one knows, ‘I am breathing out a long breath.’

“Breathing in a short breath, one knows, ‘I am breathing in a short breath.’ Breathing out a short breath, one knows, ‘I am breathing out a short breath.’

“‘I am breathing in and am aware of my whole body. I am breathing out and am aware of my whole body.’ This is how one practices.

“‘I am breathing in and making my whole body calm and at peace. I am breathing out and making my whole body calm and at peace.’ This is how one practices.

“‘I am breathing in and feeling joyful. I am breathing out and feeling joyful.’ This is how one practices.

“‘I am breathing in and am aware of the activities of the mind in me. I am breathing out and am aware of the activities of the mind in me.’ One practices like this.

“‘I am breathing in and making the activities of the mind in me calm and at peace. I am breathing out and making the activities of the mind in me calm and at peace.’ One practices like this.

“‘I am breathing in and am aware of my mind. I am breathing out and am aware of my mind.’ One practices like this.

“‘I am breathing in and making my mind happy and at peace. I am breathing out and making my mind happy and at peace.’ One practices like this.

“I am breathing in and concentrating my mind. I am breathing out and concentrating my mind.’ One practices like this.

“I am breathing in and liberating my mind. I am breathing out and liberating my mind.’ One practices like this.

“I am breathing in and observing the impermanent nature of all thoughts (dharmas). I am breathing out and observing the impermanent nature of all dharmas (thoughts).’ One practices like this.

“I am breathing in and observing the fading away of all thoughts (dharmas). I am breathing out and observing the fading away of all dharmas (thoughts).’ One practices like this.

“I am breathing in and contemplating liberation. I am breathing out and contemplating liberation.’ One practices like this.

“I am breathing in and contemplating letting go. I am breathing out and contemplating letting go.’ One practices like this.

The Full Awareness of Breathing, if developed and practiced continuously according to these instructions, will be rewarding and of great benefit.”

Anguttara Nikaya Sutra

One time the Buddha was walking on tour with a large group of monks, when he came to a town of the Kamlamas' called Keśaputra.

The Kalamas' of Kesaputra thought: "It is very good indeed to see Awakened Ones such as these." And so they went up to where the Buddha was. Having seated themselves to one side, the Kalamas of Keśaputra said this to the Buddha:

"There are, sir, many different teachers that come to Keśaputra. They illuminate their own doctrines, but the doctrines of others they put down, revile, disparage and cripple. For us, sir, uncertainty arises, and doubts arise concerning them: Who indeed of these venerable teachers speaks truly, who speaks falsely?"

"It is indeed fitting, Kalamas, to be uncertain, it is fitting to doubt. For in situations of uncertainty, doubts surely arise. You should decide, Kalamas, not by what you have heard, not by following convention, not by assuming it is so, not by relying on the texts, not by reasoning, not because of logic, not by thinking about explanations, not by acquiescing to the views that you prefer, not because it appears likely, and certainly not out of respect for a teacher.

"When you would know, Kalamas, for *yourselves*, that 'These things are unhealthy, these things when entered upon and undertaken, incline toward harm and suffering' – then, Kalamas, you should reject them.

"What do you think, Kalamas? When greed, hatred or delusion arises within a person, does it arise for their welfare or their harm?"

"For their harm, sir."

"And when a person has become greedy, hateful or deluded, their mind consumed by this greed, hatred or delusion, Kalamas, do they kill living creatures, take what has not been given and go to another's spouse and speak what is false, and induce others to undertake what is, for a long time, to their harm and suffering?"

"This is true, sir."

"And what do you think, Kalamas? Are these things healthy or unhealthy?"

"Unhealthy, sir."

"And when entered upon and undertaken, do they incline toward harm and suffering or do they not?"

"We agree that they do, sir."

“But when you would know, Kalamas, for *yourselves*, that ‘These things are healthy, these things, when entered upon and undertaken, incline toward welfare and happiness’ – then, Kalamas, having come to them you should stay with them.

“What do you think Kalamas? When non-greed, non-hatred or non-delusion arise within a person, does it arise for their welfare or their harm?”

“For their welfare, sir.”

“And when a person has not become greedy, hateful or deluded, their mind is not consumed by this greed, hatred or delusion, Kalamas, do they refrain from killing living creatures, refrain from taking what has not been given and do not go to another’s spouse and do not speak what is false, and induce others to undertake what is, for a long time, to their welfare and happiness?”

“It is true, sir.”

“And what do you think, Kalamas? Are these things healthy or unhealthy?”

“They are healthy, sir.”

“And when entered upon and undertaken, do they incline toward welfare and happiness or do they not?”

“We agree that they do, sir.”

“That person, Kalamas, who is a follower of the noble path, is thus free of wanting, free of harming, and without confusion. Clearly conscious and mindful, she or he abides having suffused the first direction, then the second, then the third and the fourth – and so above, below and across, everywhere and in every way – with a mind dedicated to loving kindness, compassion, good will and equanimity that is abundant, expansive, immeasurable, kindly and free of harming.

“And so, Kalamas, the follower of the noble path whose mind is thus kindly and free of harming – their mind is not defiled, but is purified.”

Friends, I know nothing which is as stubborn as an untamed heart. The untamed heart is indeed obstinate.

Friends, I know nothing which is as manageable as a tamed heart. The tamed heart is indeed docile.

Friends, I know nothing which tends toward loss as does an untamed heart. Indeed, the untamed heart leans toward loss.

Friends, I know nothing which tends toward growth as does the tamed heart. Indeed, the tamed heart leans toward growth.

Friends, I know nothing which brings suffering as does an untamed heart, uncontrolled, unattended and unrestrained heart. Such a heart brings suffering.

Friends, I know nothing which brings joy as does a tamed, controlled, attended and restrained heart. Such a heart brings supreme joy.

Samdhinirmocana Mahayana Sutra
Ch. IV - The Characteristic Patterns of All Things

At that time the great Bodhisattva Gunakara addressed the Buddha and said:

“World-honored One, you have spoken about bodhisattvas skilled in the characteristic patterns of all things. Why do you so speak of them? Why do you describe them so?”

Then the World-honored One addressed the Bodhisattva Gunakara and said: “It is excellent, Gunakara, that you have been able to question the Tathagata about this profound theme. You bring forth this question because you desire to benefit and gladden unlimited sentient beings, because you have compassion for the world with all its gods, men, angels, and so forth, so that they might be led to attain meaning, benefit, and happiness. Attend and I will explain the marks of all things for you.

“In sum, the marks of all things are threefold. The first is the characteristic pattern of clinging to what is entirely imagined. The second is the characteristic pattern of other-dependency. The third is the character pattern of full perfection.

“The pattern of clinging to what is entirely imagined refers to the establishing of names and symbols for all things and the distinguishing of their essences, whereby they come to be expressed in language. The pattern of other-dependency refers to the pattern whereby all things arise co-dependently: for if this exists, then that exists, and if this arises, then that arises. This refers to the twelvefold conditions, starting with ‘conditioned by ignorance are karmic formations,’ and ending with ‘conditioned by origination is this grand mass of suffering,’ the last of the twelve conditions. The pattern of full perfection refers to the universally equal suchness of all things. Bodhisattvas penetrate to this suchness because of their resolute zeal, intelligent focusing, and true reflection. By gradually cultivating this penetration, they reach unsurpassed true awakening and actually realize perfection.

“Good son, the pattern of clinging to what is entirely imagined is like the defective vision of one who has cataracts in his eyes. The pattern of other-dependency is like those deceptive images in the confused vision of the one with the cataracts, for they appear to be distinct images, such as hairs, flies, small particles, or patches of different colors. The pattern of full perfection is like the unconfused objects seen by the pure vision of with sound eyes and no cataracts.

“Good son, it is just as when a pure crystal comes into contact with and is tinted with the color blue, it appears to be a blue sapphire or a blue gem. Because it takes on the appearance of a blue sapphire or a blue gem, it confuses sentient beings. When it comes into contact with the color red, it appears to be a ruby and so confuses sentient beings. When it comes into contact with the color green, it appears to be an emerald and so confuses sentient beings. When it comes into contact with yellow, it seems to be gold and so confuses sentient beings. Similarly, Gunakara, just as those tinted colors appear upon the pure crystal, so the propensity toward language of the characteristic pattern of clinging to what is imagined is superimposed upon other-dependent pattern. Just as upon that pure crystal one falsely clings to blue sapphires, rubies, emeralds, or gold, so upon the other-dependent pattern of consciousness one clings to the imagined, for that other-dependent pattern is like the crystal. Just as, when in a constant and continual fashion the pure crystal no longer has any images of sapphires, rubies, emeralds,

or gold, it is without their reality or essence, so when the pattern of other-dependency no longer has imagined images in it, it is also in fact without their reality or essence, and is then the pattern of full perfection.

“Furthermore, Gunakara, the imagined pattern can be understood as caused by the interplay between images and words. The other-dependent pattern can be understood as caused by the grasping of those imagined images upon that other-dependent pattern. The pattern of full perfection can be understood as caused by the absence of grasping the imagined pattern upon the other-dependent pattern.

“If bodhisattvas are truly able to understand the imagined pattern as it arises upon the other-dependent pattern in all things, they then will be truly able to understand all things as unmarked. If bodhisattvas are truly able to understand the other-dependent pattern of their consciousness, they then will be truly able to understand all things as defiled. If bodhisattvas are truly able to understand the fully perfected pattern, they then will be truly able to understand all things as purified. If bodhisattvas truly understand all things as unmarked in the other-dependent pattern, they then will be able to abandon defiled things. If they are able to abandon defiled things, they will be able to realize things as purified. In this fashion, Gunakara, since they truly understand all three patterns of consciousness, they truly know things as unmarked, defiled, and purified. Because they abandon defiled things, they will realize things as purified. And this is why those bodhisattvas are described by the Tathagata as skilled in the characteristic patterns of all things.”

Then the World-honored One recited these verses to emphasize his meaning:

If one does not understand things as unmarked, one will be unable to abandon defiled things.

Not being able to abandon defiled things, one will obstruct the realization of wondrously purified things. Not gaining insight into the sinfulness of all one’s actions, one will be wild, sinful, and injurious to sentient beings. Sadly enmeshed in transient things, are not such people lost and pitiable?

Wiping Out the Five Aggregates & Eight Consciousnesses
to Expose the Unreality of Ego

*Probing into the false mind to wipe out the first two
aggregates and first five consciousnesses*

The Buddha said to Ananda: “You and I are close relatives. Tell me what you saw in the assembly when you made up your mind to give up all worldly feelings of affection and love to follow me?”

Ananda replied: “I saw the thirty-two excellent characteristics and the shining crystal-like form of the Buddha’s body. I thought that all this could not be the result of desire and love, for desire creates foul and fetid impurities like pus and blood which mingle and cannot produce the wondrous brightness of His golden-hued body, in admiration of which I shaved my head to follow Him.”

The Buddha said: “Ananda and all of you should know that living beings, since the time without beginning, have been subject continuously to birth and death because they do not know the permanent True Mind whose substance is, by nature, pure and bright. They have relied on false thinking which is not Reality so that the wheel of samsàra turns. Now if you wish to study the unsurpassed Supreme Bodhi to realize this bright nature, you should answer my questions straightforwardly. All Buddhas in the ten directions trod the same path to escape from birth and death because of their straightforward minds, with the same straightforwardness of mind and speech from start to finish without a trace of crookedness. Ananda, when you developed that mind because of the Buddha’s thirty-two excellent characteristics, tell me what saw and loved them.”

Ananda replied: “World Honoured One, my love came from the use of my mind, my eyes seeing and my mind admiring them, so that it was set on relinquishing birth and death.”

The Buddha continued: “As you just said, your love was caused by your mind and eyes but if you do not know where your mind and eyes really are, you will never be able to destroy delusion. For instance, when the country is invaded by bandits, the king, before sending his soldiers to destroy them, should first know where they are. That which causes you to transmigrate without interruption, comes from defects in your mind and eyes. Now tell me where your mind and eyes are.”

Ananda replied: “World Honoured One, all living beings born in the world through the ten types of birth hold that this knowing mind is in the body. As I look at the lotus-blue eyes of the Buddha, I see that they are on His face. Hence my understanding that my eyes are on my face whereas my knowing mind is in my body.”

The Buddha asked: “Now as you sit in this hall, where do you see Jetavana park?”

Ananda replied: “World Honoured One, this great hall is in Jetavana Park which is, therefore, outside the hall.”

The Buddha asked: “What do you see first in this hall?”

Ananda replied: “World Honoured One, in this hall, I see first the Tathagata, then the assembly, and only when looking outside do I see the park.”

The Buddha asked: “When you see the park, what causes you to do so?”

Ananda replied: “It is because the doors and windows are open that I, though sitting in this hall, see the park outside.”

The Buddha then extended His golden-hued arm and touched Ananda’s head with His hand, saying: “There is a samadhi called the all-embracing Supreme Surangama, a gateway through which all Buddhas in the ten directions attained to the wondrous Majestic Path. Ananda, listen now attentively.”

Ananda prostrated himself at the Buddha’s feet and knelt to receive the holy instruction. The Buddha said: “If you are right that, while sitting in this hall, you see the park outside through open doors and windows it would be possible for someone sitting here to see only things outside without seeing the Buddha within.”

Ananda replied: “One cannot see the grove and stream outside without seeing the Buddha here.”

The Buddha said: “Ananda, it is the same with you; if your mind is not deluded, it will be clear about all this. However, if your knowing mind was really in your body, you should first be clear about everything inside it. You should, therefore, see everything in your body before seeing things outside it; even if you cannot see your heart, liver, spleen, and stomach, at least you should be clear about your growing nails and hair, about that which moves along your nerves and the pulsing of your veins. Why are you not clear about all this? If you do not see things within, how can you see those outside? Therefore, your contention that your knowing mind is inside your body is groundless.”

Ananda bowed and said: “After hearing the Buddha’s Dharma-voice, I now understand that my mind is really outside my body. For instance a lamp should light up everything in a room before the courtyard outside through the open door. If I do not see what is in my body but see things outside it, this is like a lamp placed outside a room which cannot light what is in it. This being so clear that there can be no doubt, am I still wrong about what the Buddha means?”

The Buddha said: “All the monastics followed me to Sravasti to beg for food and have now returned to Jetavana Park. I have taken my meal but as one monastic is still eating, is the whole community well-fed?”

Ananda replied: “No, World Honoured One, though they are arhats, they have not the same body or life span then how can one by eating cause all the others to satisfy their hunger?”

The Buddha said: “If your knowing mind is outside your body, the two are separate. Thus when your mind knows something, your body should not feel it and when your body feels something, your mind should not be aware of it. Now as I show you my hand, when your eyes see it, does your mind discern it?”

Ananda replied: “Yes, World Honoured One, my mind discerns it:”

The Buddha said: “If so, how can your mind be outside your body? Therefore, your contention that your knowing and discerning mind is outside your body is groundless.”

Ananda said: “World Honoured One, as you have said, if my mind does not see what is in my body, it is not within it, and if my body and mind know each other, they are not separate and my mind is, therefore, not outside my body. Now after thinking about this, I know where my mind is.”

The Buddha asked: “Where is it?”

Ananda replied: “Since my knowing mind does not see what is in my body but can see things outside, I think it is hidden in my sense organ. For instance, if one covers one’s eyes with a crystal bowl, the latter does not obstruct this sense organ which simply follows the faculty of seeing to distinguish all things seen. Thus if my knowing mind does not see what is in my body, it is because it is in the sense organ, and if it sees clearly what is outside without being obstructed, it is because it is hidden in that organ.”

The Buddha asked: “As you just said, the mind is hidden in the same way that the eyes are covered by the crystal bowl: now when one so covers them and sees the mountain and river, does one also see the bowl?”

Ananda replied: “Yes, World Honoured One, one also sees the bowl.”

The Buddha said: “If your mind is like the crystal bowl, when you see the mountain and river, why do you not see your own eyes? If you do they should be outside and should not follow your faculty of seeing. If they cannot be seen, how can you say that this knowing mind is hidden in the sense organ, like the eyes covered by the crystal bowl? Therefore, your contention that the knowing mind is hidden in the sense organ is groundless.”

Ananda asked: “World Honoured One, I now think of the bowels concealed in the body and of the apertures on its surface. Therefore, where there is concealment there is darkness and where there are openings there is light. As I am now before the Buddha, I open my eyes and see clearly and this is called outward seeing, and when I close them, I see only darkness and this is called inward seeing. What does the Buddha think of this?”

The Buddha said: “When you close your eyes and see darkness, is this darkness opposite to your eyes or not? If it is, it is in front of them, then how can this be inward seeing? Even if there is really such inward seeing, when you sit in a dark room without the light of the sun, moon or a lamp, this darkness should also be in your bowels. If it is not opposite to your eyes, how can there be any seeing? Now let us forget your so-called outward seeing and assume that there is inward seeing, then when you close your eyes and see only darkness, which you call seeing what is in your body, why when you open them and see clearly, do you not see your face? If you do not, there is no such inward seeing. Now assuming that you can see your face, your knowing mind and organ of sight should be in the air, and then how can there be inward seeing? If they were in the air, they should not belong to your body, and the Buddha who now sees your face, should be your body as well. Thus when your eyes see something, your body should have no feeling. If you insist that both body and mind have separate feelings, there should be two separate perceptions and then your body should one day become two Buddhas. Therefore, your contention that to see darkness is inward seeing is groundless.”

Ananda said: “I have always heard the Buddha when teaching monks, nuns and male and female devotees say: ‘When the mind stirs all sorts of things are created and then all kinds of mind appear.’ I now think that the substance of my thinking is the nature of mind which arises when it unites with externals and which is neither within nor without nor in between.”

The Buddha said: “You have just said that because phenomena are created, all kinds of mind appear when uniting with them. So this mind has no substance and cannot unite with anything. If that which has no substance can unite with externals, this is union of the nineteenth realm of sense with the seventh sense datum. This is sheer nonsense. If the mind has substance, when your hand grasps your body, does your mind feeling this touch come from within or without? If from within, you should see what is in your body and if from without, you should see your face.”

Ananda said: “It is the eyes that see and the mind that knows is not the eyes: to say that it sees is wrong.”

The Buddha said; “If the eyes can see, when you are in a room, do you see the door outside? Those who are dead and still have eyes, should see things if they still see, how can they be dead? Ananda, if your knowing mind has substance, is that substance single or manifold? As it is in your body, does it spread to every part of it or not? If it is one substance, when you grasp a limb, all four should feel that they are grasped; if so there would be no grasping of any particular limb. If there is, the contention of a single substance does not hold good. If it is a manifold substance there should be many persons; then which substance is yours if it spreads to every part of your body, this is the same as in the previous case of grasping. If it does not spread, then when you touch your head and foot at the same time, while your head feels that it is touched; your foot should not, but this is not so. Therefore, your contention that the mind arises where there is union with externals is groundless.”

Ananda said: “World Honoured One, I have heard the Buddha discuss Reality with other Bodhisattvas; He also said that the mind is neither within nor without. I now deduce that if the mind is in the body, it does not see anything within and if it is outside, they both cease to feel

each other. To say that it is within is wrong for it does not know anything in the body. To say that it is without is also faulty since body and mind can perceive each other. As they do so and since nothing is seen in the body, the mind should be between the two - the inside and outside.”

The Buddha said: “If your conception of a mind in between is correct, it implies a position for it. Now according to your inference, where is this intermediate position? Do you mean that it is in or on the body? If it is on the surface of the body, it cannot be in its center, and the conception of a mind in the center is no different from that of a mind in the body which was refuted earlier. Moreover is its position manifest or not? If it is not, it does not exist. If it is, it is not fixed. Why? For instance, if a stake is driven into the ground to mark a center, when seen from the east it is in the west and when seen from the south it is in the north. As this stake can only lead to confusion, so is your conception of a mind in between completely chaotic.”

Ananda said: “The intermediate position that I mentioned is not these two. As the World Honoured One has said, the eyes and form are causes from which sight-perception arises. While the eyes can distinguish, form does not follow anything and perception lies between them; hence the mind arises.”

The Buddha said: “If the mind lies between sense organs and sense data, does it include both or not? If it does, its substance and what is outside will be mixed up together, and since the mind perceives while its objects do not, two opposites will be set up; then how can there be an intermediate position? If it is not inclusive, that is if it is independent of the sense organs and sense data), being neither the knower (subject) nor the known (object), it has no substance; then what is this intermediate? Therefore, your contention that it is in between is groundless.”

Ananda said: “World Honoured One, previously when I saw the Buddha, with His four chief disciples, Maha-Maudgalyayana, Subhuti, Paramaitrayanaputra and Sariputra, turn the Wheel of the Law, He always said that the nature of the knowing and discriminating mind is neither within nor without nor between the two, exists nowhere and clings to nothing, hence it is called mind. Is that which does not cling to things called mind?”

The Buddha replied: “You just said that the nature of the knowing and discriminating mind exists nowhere. Now in this world, all things in the air, in water and on the ground, including those that fly and walk, make the existing whole. By that which does not cling to anything, do you mean that it exists or not? If it ‘is not’, it is just the hair of a tortoise or the horn of a hare, then how can there be this extra non-clinging? If it ‘is’ it cannot be said not to exist. That which ‘is not’ is simply non-existent and that which ‘is’ should have a position; then how can there be no clinging? Therefore, your contention that that which does not cling to anything is the knowing mind is groundless.”

Cunda Sutra: About Cunda **(Sariputra's Passing Away)**

translated from the Pali by

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Sanskrit transliteration conversion: Ven. Sha'ul Hirschmann

On one occasion the Blessed One was staying near Sravasti in Jeta's Grove. Now at that time Venerable Sariputra was staying among the Magadhans in Nalaka village — diseased, in pain, severely ill. Cunda the novice was his attendant. Then, because of that illness, Venerable Sariputra attained total Unbinding.

So Cunda the novice, taking Venerable Sariputra's bowl and robes, went to Venerable Ananda in Jeta's Grove, Anathapindika's monastery, near Sravasti, and on arrival, having bowed down to him, sat to one side. As he was sitting there he said to Ven. Ananda: "Venerable sir, Ven. Sariputra has attained total Unbinding. Here are his bowl and robes."

"Cunda, my friend, this news is reason for seeing the Blessed One. Come, let's go to the Blessed One and report this matter to him."

"Yes, venerable sir," Cunda the novice replied.

So Ven. Ananda and Cunda the novice went to the Blessed One and, on arrival, having bowed down to him, sat to one side. As they were sitting there, Ven. Ananda said to him, "Lord, just now Cunda the novice said to me, 'Venerable sir, Ven. Sariputra has attained total Unbinding. Here are his bowl and robes.' It was as if my body were drugged, I lost my bearings, things weren't clear to me, on hearing that Ven. Sariputra had attained total Unbinding."

"But, Ananda, when he attained total Unbinding, did Sariputra take the aggregate of virtue along with him? Did he take the aggregate of concentration... discernment... release... the aggregate of knowledge and vision of release along with him?"

"No, lord, when he attained total Unbinding, Ven. Sariputra didn't take the aggregate of virtue... concentration... discernment... release... the aggregate of knowledge and vision of release along with him. It's just that he was my instructor and counsellor, one who exhorted, urged, roused, and encouraged me. He was tireless in teaching the Dharma, a help to his companions in the holy life. We miss the nourishment of his Dharma, the wealth of his Dharma, his help in the Dharma."

"But, Ananda, haven't I already taught you the state of growing different with regard to all things dear and appealing, the state of becoming separate, the state of becoming otherwise? What else is there to expect? It's impossible that one could forbid anything born, existent, fabricated, and subject to disintegration from disintegrating.

"Just as if the largest limb were to fall off of a great tree composed of heartwood, standing firm; in the same way, Sariputra has attained total Unbinding from this great community of monks

composed of heartwood, standing firm. What else is there to expect? It's impossible that one could forbid anything born, existent, fabricated, and subject to disintegration from disintegrating.

"Therefore, Ananda, each of you should remain with your self as an island, your self as your refuge, without anything else as a refuge. Remain with the Dharma as an island, the Dharma as your refuge, without anything else as a refuge. And how does a monk remain with his self as an island, his self as his refuge, without anything else as a refuge? How does he remain with the Dharma as an island, the Dharma as his refuge, without anything else as a refuge? There is the case where a monk remains focused on the body in and of itself — ardent, alert, and mindful — putting aside greed and distress with reference to the world. He remains focused on feelings... mind... mental qualities in and of themselves — ardent, alert, and mindful — putting aside greed and distress with reference to the world. This is how a monk remains with his self as an island, his self as his refuge, without anything else as a refuge, with the Dharma as an island, the Dharma as his refuge, without anything else as a refuge. For those who — now or after I am gone — remain with their self as an island, their self as their refuge, without anything else as a refuge, with the Dharma as an island, the Dharma as their refuge, without anything else as a refuge, they will be the highest of the monks who desire training."

THE WAY OF PRACTICE

A collection of Teachings from

**Anguttara Nikaya; Majjhima Nikaya; Parinibbana-sutta; Avatamsaka-sutra;
Mahaparinirvana-sutra; and Samyuktaratnapitaka-sutra**

For those who seek Enlightenment there are three ways of practice that must be understood and followed: First, disciplines for practical behavior; second, right concentration of mind; and third, wisdom.

What are the disciplines? Everyone, whether a person is a common person or a way-seeker, should follow the precepts for good behavior. One should control both the mind and body, and guard the gates of one's five senses. One should be afraid of even a trifling evil and, from moment to moment, should endeavor to practice only good deeds.

What is meant by the concentration of mind? It means to get quickly away from greedy and evil desires as they arise and to hold the mind pure and tranquil.

What is wisdom? It is the ability to perfectly understand and to patiently accept the Four Noble Truths, to know the fact of suffering and its nature; to know the source of suffering, to know what constitutes the end of suffering, and to know the Noble Path that leads to the end of suffering.

Those who earnestly follow these three ways of practice may rightly be called the disciples of Buddha.

Suppose a donkey, that has no nice shape, no voice and no horns like those of the cow, was following a herd of cows and proclaiming, "Look, I am also a cow." Would any one believe him? It is just as foolish when a person does not follow the three ways of practice but boasts that he is a way-seeker or a disciple of Buddha.

Before a farmer gathers a harvest in the fall, he must first plow the ground, sow the seed, irrigate, and remove the weeds as they come up in the springtime. Likewise, the seeker of Enlightenment must follow the three ways of practice. A farmer cannot expect to see the buds today, to see the plants tomorrow, and to gather the harvest the day after. So a person who seeks Enlightenment cannot expect to remove worldly desires today, to remove attachments and evil desires tomorrow, and to get Enlightenment the day after.

Just as plants receive the patient care of the farmer after the seed has been sown and during the changes of climate and during the growth from plant to fruit, so the seeker of Enlightenment must patiently and preserveringly cultivate the soil of Enlightenment by following the three way of practice.

It is difficult to advance along the path that leads to Enlightenment so long as one is covetous of comforts and luxuries and his mind disturbed by the desires of the senses. There is a wide difference between the enjoyment of life and the enjoyment of the True Path.

As already explained, the mind is the source of all things. If the mind enjoys worldly affairs, illusions and suffering will inevitably follow, but if the mind enjoys the True Path, happiness, contentment and enlightenment will just as surely follow.

Therefore, those who are seeking Enlightenment should keep their minds pure, and patiently keep and practice the three ways. If they keep the precepts they will naturally obtain concentration of mind; and if they obtain concentration of the mind it will be just as natural for them to grasp wisdom, and wisdom will lead them to Enlightenment.

Indeed, these three ways – keeping the precepts, practicing concentration of mind and always acting wisely – is the true path to Enlightenment.

By not following them, people have for a long time accumulated mental delusions. They must not argue with worldly people, but must patiently meditate in their inner world of a pure mind in order to attain Enlightenment.

If the three ways of practice are analyzed, they will reveal the eightfold noble path, the four viewpoints to be considered, the four right procedures, the five faculties of power to be employed, and the perfection of six practices.

The Noble Eightfold Path refers to Right View, Right Thought, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, and Right Concentration.

Right View means to thoroughly understand the Four Noble Truths, to believe in the law of cause and effect and not to be deceived by appearances and desires.

Right Thought means the resolution not to cherish, hold desires, not to be greedy, not to be angry, and not to do any harmful deed.

Right Speech means the avoidance of lying words, idle words, abusive words, and double-tongues.

Right Action means not to destroy any life, not to steal, or not to commit adultery.

Right Livelihood means to avoid any lifestyle or employment that would bring shame.

Right Effort means to try to do one's best diligently toward the right direction.

Right Mindfulness means to maintain a pure and thoughtful mind.

Right Concentration means to keep the mind right and tranquil for its concentration, seeking to realize the mind's pure essence.

The Four View-points to be considered are: First, to consider the body impure, seeking to remove all attachment to it; second, to consider the senses as a source of suffering, whatever their feelings of pain or pleasure may be; third, to consider the mind to be in a constant state of flux; and fourth, to consider everything in the world as being a consequence of causes and conditions and that nothing remains unchanging forever.

The Four Right Procedures are: First, to prevent any evil from starting; second, to remove any evil as soon as it starts; third, to induce the doing of good deeds; and fourth, to encourage the growth and continuance of good deeds that have already started. One must endeavor to keep these four procedures.

The Five Faculties of Power are: First, the faith to believe; second, the will to make the endeavor; third, the faculty of alertness; fourth, the ability to concentrate one's mind; and fifth, the ability to maintain clear wisdom. These five faculties are necessary powers to attain Enlightenment.

The Six Perfections for reaching the other shore of Enlightenment are: the path of Offering, the path of Keeping Precepts, the path of Endurance, the path of Endeavor, the path of Concentration of Mind, and the path of Wisdom. By following these paths, one can surely pass from the shore of delusion over to the shore of Enlightenment.

The practice of Offering gets rid of selfishness; the practice of Keeping Precepts keeps one thoughtful of the rights and comforts of others; the practice of Endurance helps one to control a fearful or angry mind; the practice of Endeavor helps one to be diligent and faithful; the practice of Concentration helps one to control a wandering and futile mind; and the practice of Wisdom changes a dark and confused mind into a clear and penetrating insightful mind.

Offering and Keeping Precepts make the foundation necessary to build a great castle on. Endurance and Endeavor are the walls of the castle that protect it against enemies from outside. Concentration and Wisdom are the personal armor that protects one against the assaults of life and death.

If one gives away a gift only when convenient, or because it is easier to give than not to give, it is an offering, of course, but it is not a True Offering. A True Offering comes from a sympathetic heart before any request is made, and True Offering is the one that gives not occasionally but constantly.

Neither is it a True Offering if after the act there are feelings of regret or of self-praise; a True Offering is one that is given with pleasure, forgetting oneself as the giver, the one who receives it and the gift itself.

True Offering springs spontaneously from one's pure compassionate heart with no thought of any return, wishing to enter into a life of Enlightenment together.

There are seven kinds of offering that can be practiced by even those who are not wealthy. The first is the physical offering. This is to offer service by one's labor. The highest type

of this offering is to offer one's own life for the sake of another's. The second is the spiritual offering. This is to offer a compassionate heart to others. The third is the offering of eyes. This is to offer a warm glance to others, which will give them tranquility. The fourth is the offering of countenance. This is to offer a soft countenance with a smile to others. The fifth is the speech offering. This is to offer kind and warm words to others. The sixth is the seat offering. This is to offer one's seat to others. The seventh is the offering of shelter. This is to let others spend the night at one's home. These kinds of offerings can be practiced by anyone in everyday life.

Lay Followers of the Buddha

A collection of Teachings from:

Mahanama Sutta; Angutara Nikaya; Gilayanam Sutta; Avatamsaka Sutra; Mahaparinirvana Sutra; Mahamaya Sutra

It has already been explained that to become a disciple of Buddha one must believe in the Three Jewels: the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha.

To become a lay follower one must have an unshakable faith in Buddha, must believe in His teachings (the Dharma), study and put precepts into practice, and must cherish the Brotherhood – the Sangha.

Lay followers should follow the Five Precepts: not to kill, not to steal, not to commit adultery, not to lie or deceive, and to not use alcohol.

Lay followers should not only believe in the Three Jewels and the precepts themselves, but also they should, as far as they are able, help others observe them. Thus working to awaken in them an unshakable faith in the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha, so that they too may share in the Buddha's compassion.

Lay followers should always remember that the reason they believe in the Three Jewels and keep the precepts is to enable themselves ultimately to attain Enlightenment, and for that reason they should, though living in the world of desires, avoid becoming attached to such desires.

Lay followers should always keep in mind that sooner or later they will be obliged to part with their parents and families and pass away from this life of birth and death; therefore, they should not become attached to things of this life but should set their minds on the world of Enlightenment, wherein nothing passes away.

If lay followers want to awaken an earnest and undisturbed faith in the Buddha's teachings, they should realize within their minds a quiet and undisturbed happiness that will shine out on all their surroundings and will be reflected back to them.

This mind of faith is pure and gentle, always patient and enduring, never arguing, never causing suffering to others but always pondering the Three Jewels. Thus happiness spontaneously rises in their minds, and the light for Enlightenment can be found everywhere.

Since they are resting in the bosom of Buddha by faith, they are kept far from having a selfish mind, from attachment to their possessions, and, therefore, they have no fear in their daily life or dread of being criticized.

Since their minds are filled with compassion for all people, they will make no distinctions among them but will treat all alike, and since their minds are free from likes and dislikes it will be pure and equitable and happy for them to do any good deed.

Whether they live in adversity or in prosperity, it will make no difference to the increase of their faith. If they cherish humility, if they respect the Buddha's teachings, if they are consistent in speech and action, if they are guided by wisdom, if their mind is as immovable as a mountain, then they will make steady progress on the path to Enlightenment.

Therefore, one should first have the wish of hearing the Buddha's teachings.

If the Enlightened should tell him that it would be necessary for him to go through fire to gain Enlightenment, then he should be willing to pass through such a fire.

There is satisfaction in hearing the Buddha's name - that is worth passing through a world filled with fires.

If one wishes to follow the Buddha's teaching, one must not be egoistic or self-willed, but should cherish feelings of good-will toward all alike; one should respect those who are worthy of respect; one should serve those who are worthy of service and treat everyone with uniform kindness.

Thus, lay followers are to train their minds first and not be disturbed by the actions of others. In this manner, they are to receive the Buddha's teaching and put it into practice, not envying others, not being influenced by others, and not considering other ways.

Those who do not believe in the Buddha's teaching have a narrow vision and consequently, a disturbed mind. But those who believe in the Buddha's teaching, believe that there is a great wisdom and a great compassion embracing everything and, in that faith, they are undisturbed by trifles.

Those who hear and receive the Buddha's teaching know that their lives are transient and that their bodies are merely the aggregation of sufferings and the source of all evils, and so they do not become attached to them.

At the same time, they do not neglect to take good care of their bodies, not because they wish to enjoy the physical pleasures of the body, but because the body is temporarily necessary for the attainment of wisdom and for their mission of explaining the path to others.

If they do not take good care of their bodies they cannot live long. If they cannot live long, they cannot practice the teaching personally or transmit it to others.

If a woman wishes to cross a river, she is very careful of her raft. If she has a long journey to make, she takes good care of her horse. So if a woman seeks to attain Enlightenment, she must take good care of her body.

The disciples of Buddha must wear clothing to protect the body from extremes of heat and cold and to cover its private parts, and should not wear it for decoration.

They must eat food to nourish the body so that they may hear and receive and explain the teaching, but they should not eat for mere enjoyment.

They must live in the house of Enlightenment to be protected from the thieves of worldly passions and from the storms of evil teachings, and they should use the house for its real purpose and not for display or the concealment of selfish practices.

Thus one should value things and use them solely in their relation to Enlightenment and the Dharma. One should not possess them or become attached to them for selfish reasons, but only as they serve a useful purpose in carrying the teaching to others.

Therefore, one's mind should always dwell on the Dharma even when one is living with their family. One should care for them with a wise and sympathetic mind, seeking various means to awaken faith in their minds.

Lay members of the Buddha's Spiritual Community should study the following lessons every day: How to serve their parents; how to live with their spouse and children; how to control themselves; and how to serve the Buddha.

To best serve their parents they must learn to practice kindness toward all animate life. To live happily with their spouse and children they must keep away from lust and thoughts of selfish comfort.

When lay followers are giving offerings, they should remove all greed from their hearts; when they are in the midst of crowds, their minds should be in the company of the wise; when they face misfortune, they should keep their minds tranquil and free from hindrances.

When they take refuge in the Buddha, they should seek His wisdom.

When they take refuge in the Dharma, they should seek its truth, which is like a great ocean of wisdom.

When they take refuge in the Sangha, they should seek peaceful fellowship unobstructed by selfish interests. They should never neglect attending the gatherings of the Sangha or its needs.

When they wear clothes, they must not forget to also put on the garment of goodness and humility.

When they want to relieve themselves, they must wish to discharge all greed, anger, and ignorance from their minds.

When they are toiling on an up-hill road, they should think of it as the road to Enlightenment that will carry them beyond the world of delusion. When they are following an easy road, they should take advantage of its easier conditions to make greater progress toward Buddhahood.

When they see a bridge, they must wish to construct the bridge of the Dharma to let the people cross.

When they meet a sorrowful person, they should lament the bitterness of this ever-changing world. When they see a greedy person, they should have a great longing to keep free from the illusions of this life and to attain the true riches of Enlightenment.

When they see savory food, they must be on guard; when they see distasteful food, they should wish that greed might never return.

During the intense heat of summer, they must wish to be away from the heat of worldly desires and gain the fresh coolness of Enlightenment. During the unbearable cold of winter, they must think of the warmth of Buddha's great compassion.

When they recite the sacred scriptures, they should be determined not to forget them and resolve to put those teachings into personal practice.

When they think of the Buddha, they should cherish a deep wish to have eyes like a Buddha.

As they fall asleep at night, they should wish that their body, speech, and mind might be purified and refreshed; when they awaken in the morning, their first wish should be that during that day their minds might be clear to understand all things.

Those who follow the teachings of Buddha, because they understand that everything is characterized by "non-substantiality," do not treat lightly the things that enter into one's life, but they receive them for what they are and then try to make them fit tools for Enlightenment.

They must not think that this world is meaningless and filled with confusion, while the world of Enlightenment is full of meaning and peace. Rather, they should taste the way of Enlightenment in all the affairs of this world.

If one looks upon the world with defiled eyes dimmed by ignorance, he will see it filled with error; but if he looks upon it with clear wisdom, he will see it as the world of Enlightenment.

There is only one world - not two. People only think there are two due to their discriminating minds.

Those who believe in the Buddha and His teachings taste this universal purity of oneness in everything and in that mind they feel compassion for all and have a humble attitude to serve everyone.

Therefore, they should cleanse their minds of all pride and cherish humility, courtesy, and service. Their minds should be like the fruitful earth that nourishes everything without partiality, that serves without complaint, that endures patiently, that is always zealous, that finds its highest joy in serving all poor people by planting in their minds the seeds of the Dharma.

Thus, the mind that has compassion for poor people, becomes a mother to all people, honors all people, looks upon all as personal friends, and respects them as parents.

Practical Guide to the True Way of Living
Digha Nikaya; Angutara Nikaya; Vinaya (Mahavagga);
Srimaladevasimhanada Sutra

It is wrong to think that misfortunes come from the east or from the west; they originate within one's own mind. Therefore, it is foolish to guard against misfortunes from the external world and leave the inner mind uncontrolled.

There is a custom that has come down from ancient times that people still follow. When they get up in the morning, they first wash their face and rinse their mouth, and then they bow in the six directions – east, west, south, north, above, and below – wishing that no misfortune may come to them from any direction and that they may have a peaceful day.

But it is different in the Buddha's teaching. Buddha teaches that we are to pay respect to the six directions of Truth and then behave wisely and virtuously and thus prevent all misfortunes.

To guard the gates in these six directions, people are to remove the defilement of the "four deeds", restrain the "four evil minds", and plug the "six holes" which cause the loss of house and property.

By the "four deeds" it is meant killing, stealing, committing adultery and falsehood. The "four evil minds" are greed, anger, foolishness, and fear. The "six holes" which cause the loss of wealth are desire for intoxicating drinks and behaving foolishly, staying up late at night and losing the mind in frivolity, indulging in musical and theatre entertainments, gambling, associating with evil companions, and neglecting one's duties. After removing these four defilements, avoiding these four evil states of mind, and plugging these six holes of waste, the disciples of Buddha do reverence to the six directions of Truth.

Now, what are these six directions of Truth? They are east for the way of parents and child; south for the way of teacher and student; west for the way of husband and wife; north for the way of friends; below for the way of master and servant; and above for the way of serving those who expound the teachings.

First, as for the way of the parents and child in the eastern direction, the child should carry out five deeds. One should take care of the parents, work for the sake of the parents, protect the family lineage, inherit the family property, and hold memorial services for the ancestors.

In return the parents should carry out five deeds for the child. They should avoid wrong deeds, promote good deeds, have the child acquire knowledge and skills, see to it that one gets married, and hand over the family property at an appropriate time. If these five things are followed, the way of the parent and child in the eastern direction will be peaceful and without sorrow.

Next, as for the teacher and student in the southern direction, the student should stand when the teacher approaches, attend to the teacher's needs closely, should listen earnestly to the teacher, not neglect offerings for the teacher, and receive their teachings with respect.

In return the teacher should guide the student by conducting oneself properly, correctly pass on everything that the teacher has learned, have the student not forget what they have learned, and prepare the way for the student to receive honors as well as benefits and respect anywhere. Thus, the way of the teacher and student in the southern direction will be peaceful and without sorrow.

Next, as for the way of married couples in the western direction, the husband should treat the wife with respect, courtesy and faithfulness, entrust the wife with decision-making, and present gifts to the wife. The wife should carry out all her duties well, attend to the needs of the family members, be faithful to the husband, protect the family property, and make the family affairs go well. Thus, the way of married couples in the western direction will be peaceful and without sorrow.

Next, as for the way of friends in the northern direction, one should provide them with what one's friends' lack, speak to them with kindness, work for their benefit, always be thoughtful, and treat them with honesty.

One should make effort to prevent one's friends from falling into wrong ways, protect their property in the event they lose their way, listen to their concerns when they have problems, lend them a helping hand in times of trouble, and support their family when necessary. Thus, the way of friends in the northern direction will be one of peace without sorrow.

Next, as for the way of the master and servant in the lower direction, one should observe the following five points in dealing with one's servants. Make the servants work in accordance with their ability, provide good meals and ample compensation, care for them with kindness when they are sick, share with them any delicious food, and have them rest at appropriate times.

In turn, the servant should serve one's master with the following points in mind. One should get up in the morning before the master, go to sleep after the master, be honest at all times, be proficient in one's work, and not bring disgrace to the master's good name. Thus, the way of the master and servant in the lower direction will be one of peace and without sorrow.

Next, as for the way of serving those who preach the teachings in the upper direction, one should treat those who preach the teachings with utmost respect in body, speech, and mind. One should also welcome the preachers with courtesy, listen and observe their teachings, and make offerings for them.

In turn, one who preaches the teachings should reject evil, foster goodness, be compassionate with a good heart, preach moral standards, make the listeners understand the teachings fully, and have the people attain the state of peace. Thus, the way of serving those who preach the teachings in the upper direction will be one of peace and without sorrow.

A person who bows in the six directions does not do so in order to escape from external misfortunes. A person does it in order to be on one's guard to prevent evils from arising within one's own mind.

A person should recognize among one's acquaintances those with whom one should associate and those with whom one should not. The ones with whom a person should not associate are those who are greedy, clever talkers, flatterers or wasters.

The ones with whom a person should associate are those who are helpful, who are willing to share happiness as well as suffering, who give good advice and who have a sympathetic heart.

A true friend, the one with whom a person may safely associate will always stick closely to the right way, will worry secretly about one's friend's welfare, will console the friend in misfortune, will offer a helping hand when needed, will keep secrets, and will always give good advice.

It is very difficult to find a friend like this, and, therefore, one should try very hard to be a friend like this. As the sun warms the fruit of the earth, so a friend shines in society because of one's good deeds.

A family is a place where minds come in contact with one another. If these minds love one another, the home will be as beautiful as a flower garden. But if these minds get out of harmony with one another, it is like a storm that plays havoc with the garden. If discord arises within one's family, one should not blame others but should examine one's own mind and follow a right path.

Righteousness is never lost forever unless one casts it away from oneself. Righteousness occasionally may seem to disappear but, in fact, it never disappears. When it seems to be disappearing, it is because one is losing the righteousness of one's own mind.

Discordant minds often bring disaster. A trifling misunderstanding may be followed by great misfortune. This is especially to be guarded against in family life.

In family life, the question as to how the daily expenses are to be met always requires the utmost care. Every member must work hard like the diligent ants and the busy bees. No one must rely upon the industry of others, or expect their charity.

On the other hand, one must not consider what has been earned as totally their own. Some of it must be shared with others, some of it must be saved for an emergency, some of it must be set aside for the needs of the community, and some of it must be devoted to the needs of the religious teachers.

One should always remember that nothing in the world can strictly be called "mine". What comes to a person comes to them because of a combination of causes and conditions; it can be kept only temporarily and, therefore, one must not use it selfishly or for unworthy purposes.

The relationship between a husband and wife was not designed merely for their convenience. It has a deeper significance than the mere association of two physical bodies in one house. Husband and wife should take advantage of the intimacies of their association to help each other in training their minds in the Holy Teachings.

There are no distinctions of sex on the path to Enlightenment. If a woman makes up her mind to seek Enlightenment, she will become a heroine of the True Path.

Mallika, the daughter of King Prasenajit and the Queen of King Ayodhya, was such a heroine. She had great faith in the Buddhadharma and made in His presence the ten following vows:

“My Lord, until I gain Enlightenment I will not violate the sacred precepts; I will not be arrogant before people who are older than myself; I will not become angry with anyone.

“I will not be jealous of others or envy their possessions; I will not be selfish either in mind or property; I will try to make the poor happy with things I receive and will not hoard them for myself.

“I will receive all people courteously, give them what they need, and speak kindly to them; consider their circumstances and not my convenience; and try to benefit them without partiality.

“If I see others in solitude, in prison, or suffering from disease or other troubles, I will try to relieve them and make them happy, by explaining the reasons and laws to them.

“If I see others catching living animals and being cruel to them or violating any such precept, I will punish them if they are to be punished, or teach them if they are to be taught, and then I will try to undo what they have done and correct their mistakes, to the best of my ability.

“I will not forget to hear the right teaching, for I know that when one neglects the right teaching, one quickly falls away from the truth that abides everywhere, and will fail to reach the shore of Enlightenment.”

Then She made the following three wishes to save poor people: “First, I will try to make everyone peaceful. This wish, I believe, in whatever life I may hereafter receive, will be the root of goodness that will grow into the wisdom of good teaching.

“Second, after I have received the wisdom of good teaching, I will untiringly teach all people.

“Third, I will protect the true teaching, even at the sacrifice of my own body, life, or property.”

The true significance of family life is the opportunity it gives for mutual encouragement and aid on the path to Enlightenment. If a woman has the same mind to seek Enlightenment, and makes the same vows and wishes, she will become a great disciple of Buddha just as Queen Mallika had been.

Harmony of the Sangha
Anguttara Nikaya; Samyutta Nikaya; Dhammapada Atthakatha; Mahaparinirvana Sutra;
Antarabhava Sutra; Vimalakirti Nirdeśa Sutra

Let us imagine a desert country lying in absolute darkness with many living things swarming blindly about in it.

Naturally they will be frightened and as they run about without recognizing one another during the night, there will be frequent squirming and loneliness. This is indeed a pitiful sight.

Then let us imagine that suddenly a superior person with a torch appears and everything around becomes bright and clear.

The living beings in the dark solitude suddenly find a great relief as they look about to recognize one another and happily share their companionship.

By “a desert country” is meant a world of human life when it lies in darkness of ignorance. Those who have no light of wisdom in their minds wander about in loneliness and fear. They were born alone and die alone; they do not know how to associate with their fellow humans in peaceful harmony, and they are naturally despondent and fearful.

By “a superior person with a torch” is meant the Buddha assuming a human form, and by His wisdom and compassion He illuminates the world.

In this light people find themselves as well as others and are glad to establish human fellowship and harmonious relations.

Thousands of people may live in a community but it is not one of real fellowship until they know each other and have sympathy for one another.

A true community has faith and wisdom that illuminate it. It is a place where the people know and trust one another and where there is social harmony. In fact harmony is the life and real meaning of a true community or organization.

Of organizations, there are three kinds. First, there are those that are organized on the basis of the power, wealth, or authority of great leaders.

Second, there are those that are organized because of its convenience to the members, which will continue to exist as long as the members satisfy their conveniences and do not quarrel.

Third, there are those that are organized with some good teaching as its center and harmony as its very life.

Of course the last of these is the only true organization, for in it the members live in one spirit, from which the unity of spirit and various kinds of virtue will arise. In such an organization there will prevail harmony, satisfaction, and happiness.

Enlightenment is like rain that falls on a mountain and gathers into rivulets that run into brooks, and then into rivers, which finally flow, into the ocean.

The rain of the sacred teaching falls on all people alike without regard to their conditions or circumstances. Those who accept it gather into small groups, then into organizations, then into communities, and finally, find themselves in the great Ocean of Enlightenment.

Thus, the true teaching is the fundamental requirements of a perfect organization and, as mentioned above, it is the light that enables people to recognize one another, to become adjusted to one another and to smooth out the rough place in their thinking.

Thus, the organization that is formed on the perfect teachings of Buddha can be called a Sangha.

The Buddha's Sangha will have two types of members: those who are teaching the lay members, and those who are supporting the teachers by offering them whatever materials necessary to meet their needs. They together will disseminate and perpetuate the teachings.

Then, to make the Sangha complete, there must be perfect harmony among the members. The teachers teach the members and the members honor the teachers so that there can be harmony between them.

Members of the Buddha's Sangha should associate together with affectionate sympathy, being happy to live together with fellow-followers, and seeking to become one in spirit.

There are six things that will help to lead a Sangha to harmony. They are: first, sincerity of speech; second, sincerity and kindness of action; third, sincerity and sympathy of spirit; fourth, equal sharing of common property; fifth, following the same pure precepts; and sixth, all having right views. Among these things, "all having right views" forms the frame with the other five serving as wrappings for it.

There are two sets of seven rules to be followed if the Sangha is to be a success. The first is as a group:

1) they should gather together frequently to listen to the Buddhadharma and to discuss them;

2) they should mingle freely and respect one another;

3) they should revere the Buddhadharma and respect the rules and precepts and not change them;

4) elder and younger members are to treat each other with courtesy;

5) they should let sincerity and reverence mark their bearing;

6) they should purify their minds in a quiet place which they should, nevertheless, offer to others before taking it themselves;

7) they should love all people, treat visitors cordially, and console the sick with kindness. A Sangha that follows these rules will never decline.

The second is, individually each should:

1) maintain a pure spirit and not ask for too many things; 2) maintain integrity and remove all greed; 3) be patient and not argue; 4) keep silent and not talk idly; 5) submit to the regulations and not be overbearing; 6) maintain an even mind and not follow different teachings; 7) be thrifty and frugal in daily living. If its members follow these rules, the Sangha will endure and never decline.

As mentioned above, a Sangha should maintain harmony in its very essence; therefore, one without harmony cannot be called a “community”. Each member should be on guard not to be the cause of discord. If discord appears, it should be removed as quickly as possible, for discord will soon ruin any organization.

Bloodstains cannot be removed by more blood; resentment cannot be removed by more resentment; resentment can be removed only by forgetting it.

Resentment cannot be satisfied by resentment; it can only be removed by forgetting it.

It is indeed hard to be born in this world. It is hard to hear the Dharma; it is harder to awaken faith; therefore, everyone should try one’s best to hear the Buddha’s teachings.

THE SUTRA OF ARYA TARA
WHO SAVES FROM THE EIGHT FEARS
(Arya Tara Ashta Ghora Tarani Sutra)

Homage to the Three Jewels!
Homage to Venerable Tara!
Homage to the Lord Shakyamuni!

Thus have I heard at one time. The Lord was residing in the realm of the gods on Mount Meru. Among the assembly there, the Goddess Tara spoke, as follows:

1. "Having reached this gem-like paradise,
Understand actions and their results:
Keep to good and leave evil aside!
For whoever practices wrong actions
Will, in the life that is to come, fall down.
2. Beasts are dumb and stupid; one eats another;
Up weary paths, down cliffs, they climb and fall,
In panic, terror-stricken, trembling with fear,
Full of caution – one cannot conceive their sufferings.
3. Pretas hunger and thirst, and their bodies won't do.
Should food or drink appear, another guards it,
Or if they should eat some, it turns to fire or swords.
Their suffering of hunger and thirst can't be conceived.
4. Sentient beings who are born in hells
Are led against their will by vicious Yamas,
Burned and cooked and cut up with sharp weapons;
Their suffering, hot or cold, cannot be borne.
5. Therefore, doing wrong deeds in this life
Manifests to oneself, magnified –
For many eons, fierce sorrow torments one
With no escape, nor chance to bear it.
6. Understand karmic effect by clear recollection.
Unbearable suffering and lamentation torment one;
Foul speech, fierce body and voice also frighten;
These and other sufferings can't be conceived.
7. Those who, knowing thoroughly the faults,
Abandon causes of the three realms of woe
And in any gross subtle sin

- Never engage with body, speech or mind,
8. But though happy themselves aid all migrators,
Greed, hate, delusion gone, root of compassion
Firm, and striving with three doors pure do virtue,
Strive in this essence of the most profound.
 9. The fruit of a flower that frost has carried off,
Though cultivated, will produce no sprout;
So too people who doubt and break their vows,
Though they may practice most profound mantras,
 10. Might think a blessing comes, but it cannot –
Their pains become but meaningless fatigue,
Their mantras like the talk of common folk,
Their concentrations but like childish thoughts,
 11. If people practice those mantras without fault,
Quickly they will accomplish what they wish.
For example, the seed of the banyan tree
 Is tiny,
But if well moistened with water and manure,
 12. In seven years it grows a league across;
If even external matter has such growth,
What of practicing consciousness with
 Consciousness?
Inner clear light's growth is measureless.
 13. If, relying on traders who know the way,
With a suitable boat one puts to sea,
Then when one has found jewels as one wished,
In due course one reaches one's own home.
 14. With Bodhicitta, relying on Love, Compassion,
Joy and Equanimity, practice virtue,
And set out on the Path of true perfection:
You will reach the stage of certain knowledge.
 15. If an arrow, shot by a man, has flown,
Indeed it's been shot, though one may think not.
A person who's realized all Reality's meaning
Goes beyond, although one may think not.
 16. Aspect and nature of actions and parts
 Perfected,

Without doubt he'll gain the fruit of
Buddhahood.
If one understands that pure Reality,
There is no self, nor life, nor cutting of life,

17. No karma, and no karmic ripening.
That person abandons extremes and is liberated.
If to realize that benefit, you recite
Devotedly this essence I'm explaining,
18. Sins of three countless eons will be consumed,
All sufferings of the three realms of woe and
Samsàra
Will be washed away, and obscurations cleared.
This beneficial essence is as follows.

OM! Bodhisattva-mahasattva,
Goddess! Please will you protect me!

OM NAMA ARYA-AVALOKITESVARAYA
BODHISATTVAYA MAHSATTVAYA MAHA -
KARUNIKAYA! TAD-YATHA: OM TARE TUTTARE TURE
SARVA-DUSTAN PRADUSTAN MAMA KRTE
JAMBHAYA STAMBHAYA MOHAYA BANDHAYA HUM
HUM HUM P'HE P'HE P'HE SVAHA!
NAMA ARYAVALOKABHAYA NARA BODHISATTVA
MAHASATTVANI, ADHISTHANA ADHISTHITE,
MAMA SARVA-KARMA-AVARANA-SVABHAVA-
SUDDHE VISHUDDHE SODHAYA VISODHAYA HUM
P'HE SVAHA!" *

19. Thereupon, by the Buddha's power,
Full praise was given to the Goddess:
20. "With very great Compassion
You work the weal of beings,
Complete in Marks and Signs,
Bedecked with jewel adornments,
Your neck most beautiful,
And smiling, laughing face!
21. Your eye-sense-sphere is like flax-lotuses,
Your ear-sense-sphere like open lily flowers,
Your nose-sense-sphere like fragments of lotuses,

Your mouth-sense-sphere like full-grown hollyhocks.

22. Your Body, a lovely maiden's, has various
Forms;
Your Speech of kalavinka proclaims the Dharma;
Your Mind of Compassion is all beings' loving
Protector.
23. Left, a lotus – unstained with samsara's faults;
Right, giving Refuge, to benefit sentient beings;
You sit on sun and moon seats – Method and
Wisdom.
Venerable Tara, I go to You for Refuge.
24. Protect me from samsara's great abyss,
Never to circle in the six migrations!
Hold me with Your cord of Great Compassion,
Never to run to the three ill-destiny realms!
25. Set me on a Path where I cannot stray,
Never to be born with perverse views!
Let me meet a Guru with Bodhicitta,
Never meeting with evil companions!
26. Protector from the eight dangers –
Lions, elephants and fire,
Serpents, robbers, water, plagues
And vampires – homage to You!
In this life and in others,
From the eight fears please protect me!
27. Until I win the transcendent Result,
Let me keep inseparable company with
The ten Paramitas of Generosity, Discipline,
Patience, Effort, Meditation, Wisdom, Means,
Vow and Power and likewise Wisdom-knowledge!

Any son or daughter of good family should write this teaching,
read it, recite it, preserve it, practice right attention upon it, and
extensively teach it to others."

Thus spoke the Buddha, and the whole assembly, enraptured,
exalted His words.

**Translation of the mantra-*

(OM Homage to Arya Avalokitesvara, the
Bodhisattva Mahasattva, greatly compassionate!
As follows: OM TARE TUTTARE TURE Crush, check,
Confound, restrain all the sins and wicked things
I have done HUM HUM HUM P'HE P'HE P'HE
SVAHA!

Homage, You in whom Arya Avalokita, the
Fearless men, Bodhisattvas and Mahasattvas have
Inspired magical inspiring power, purify,
Completely purify all my karmic obscurations,
Pure, completely pure by nature HUM P'HE SVAHA!

Sutra of the Medicine Buddha Lapis Lazuli Radiance Tathagata:
His Past Vows, Merits & Virtues

PART 1

Thus I have heard: Once Buddha Shakyamuni, the World-Honored One, was traveling throughout the various lands to teach the Dharma. When he arrived in Vaisali, he rested under the Joyous Tree of Musical Breezes, accompanied by 8,000 monks and 36,000 bodhisattvas. Also in attendance were maharajas, ministers, Brahmins, lay men and women, the Eight Types of Divinities and other human and non-human beings.

At that time, the Bodhisattva Manjushri, Prince of the Dharma, receiving the awesome spiritual power of the Buddha, rose from his seat, adjusted his robe to bare his right shoulder and knelt on his right knee. He bowed deeply, and with palms joined, respectfully addressed the Buddha: “World-Honored One, may I please request you to explain the various names and titles, the great past vows and the sublime virtues of the Buddhas, so that those who are listening to you will be freed of karmic obstructions, while in the future, sentient beings in the Dharma Semblance Age will also derive great benefit and joy.”

The Buddha praised the Bodhisattva Manjushri, saying:

“Excellent! Excellent, Manjushri! Out of great compassion, you have urged me to explain the names and titles, merits and virtues and past vows of the Buddhas, in order to liberate those who are bound by karmic obstructions and bring benefits, peace and joy to all sentient beings in the Dharma Semblance Age. Now listen to what I am about to say.”

The Bodhisattva Manjushri replied: “So be it, World-honored One. We will joyfully listen to whatever you wish to teach.”

The Buddha then said to the Bodhisattva Manjushri:

“East of this world, past countless Buddha-lands – more numerous than the grains of sand in ten Ganges Rivers – there exists a world called Pure Lapis Lazuli. The Buddha of that world is called the Medicine Buddha Lapis Lazuli Radiance tathagata, Arhat, the Perfectly Enlightened, Perfect in Mind & Deed, Well Gone, Knower of the World, Unsurpassed Being, Tamer of Passions, Teacher of Gods & Men, Buddha-World-Honored One.

“Manjushri, when the World-Honored Medicine Buddha was treading the Bodhisattva path, he solemnly made Twelve Great Vows to grant sentient beings whatever they desired.”

First Great Vow

“I vow that in a future life, when I have attained Supreme, Perfect Enlightenment, brilliant rays will shine forth from my body, illuminating infinite, countless boundless realms. This body will be adorned with the Thirsty-Two Marks of Greatness and Eighty Auspicious Characteristics. Furthermore, I will enable all sentient beings to become just like me.

Second Great Vow

“I vow that in a future life, when I have attained Supreme, Perfect Enlightenment, my body, inside and out, will radiate far and wide with the clarity and flawless purity of lapis lazuli. This

body will be adorned with superlative virtues and dwell peacefully in the midst of a web of light more magnificent than the sun or moon. The light will awaken the minds of all beings dwelling in darkness, enabling them to engage in their pursuits according to their wishes.

Third Great Vow

“I vow that in a future life, when I have attained Supreme, Perfect Enlightenment, I will, with infinite wisdom and skillful means, provide all sentient beings with an inexhaustible quantity of goods to meet their material needs. They will never want for anything.

Fourth Great Vow

“I vow that in a future life, when I have attained Supreme, Perfect Enlightenment, I will set all who follow heretical ways upon the path to Enlightenment. Likewise, I will set those who follow the Sravaka and Pratyeka-Buddha ways onto the Mahayana path.

Fifth Great Vow

“I vow that in a future life, when I have attained Supreme, Perfect Enlightenment, I will help all the countless sentient beings who cultivate the path of morality in accordance with my Dharma to observe the rules of conduct – the Precepts – to perfection, in conformity with the Three Root Precepts. Even those guilty of disparaging or violating the Precepts will regain their purity upon hearing my name, and avoid descending upon the Evil Paths.

Sixth Great Vow

“I vow that in a future life, when I have attained Supreme, Perfect Enlightenment, sentient beings with imperfect bodies – whose senses are deficient, who lack beauty and appeal, or who are simple-minded, foolish or stubborn. Those who are blind, deaf, mute, crippled, hunchbacked, leprous, insane or suffering from any other form of calamity – will, upon hearing my name, acquire well-formed bodies, endowed with intelligence, with all senses intact. They will be free from illness and suffering.

Seventh Great Vow

“I vow that in a future life, when I have attained Supreme, Perfect Enlightenment, sentient beings afflicted with various illnesses, with no one to help them, nowhere to turn, no physicians, no medicine, no family, no home – who are destitute and miserable – will as soon as my name passes through their ears, be relieved of all illnesses. With mind and body peaceful and contented, they will enjoy home, family and property in abundance and eventually realize Unsurpassed Supreme Enlightenment.

Eighth Great Vow

“I vow that in a future life, when I have attained Supreme, Perfect Enlightenment, those women who feel coerced or oppressed by the many disadvantages of the female form and have given rise to the desire to let go of that form, they shall, after hearing my name, be transformed in the male form. Accompanying this form are all the characteristics of the true man, even unto the attainment of Buddhahood.

Ninth Great Vow

“I vow that in a future life, when I have attained Supreme, Perfect Enlightenment, I will help all sentient beings escape from the demons’ net and free themselves from the bonds of heretical paths.

“Should they be caught in the thicket of wrong views, I will lead them to correct views, gradually leading them to cultivate the practices of Bodhisattvas and swiftly realize Supreme, Perfect Enlightenment.

Tenth Great Vow

“I vow that in a future life, when I have attained Supreme, Perfect Enlightenment, those sentient beings who are shackled, beaten, imprisoned, condemned to death, tortured or any other manner of brutal punishment due to local laws or by royal decree – and those who are suffering in body and mind from this oppression – need only hear my name to be freed from these afflictions, due to the awesome power of my spiritual élan.

Eleventh Great Vow

“I vow that in a future life, when I have attained Supreme, Perfect Enlightenment, if sentient beings who are tormented by hunger and thirst – to the point of creating evil karma in their attempts to survive – should succeed in hearing my name, recite it single-mindedly and hold fast to it, I will first satisfy them with the most exquisite food and drink. Ultimately, it is through the flavor of the Dharma that I will establish them in the realm of peace and happiness.

Twelfth Great Vow

“I vow that in a future life, when I have attained Supreme, Perfect Enlightenment, if sentient beings who are utterly destitute, lacking clothing to protect them from mosquitos and flies, heat and cold – and are suffering day and night – should hear my name, recite it single-mindedly and hold fast to it, their wishes will be fulfilled. They will immediately receive all manner of exquisite clothing, precious adornments, flower garlands and incense powder, and will enjoy music and entertainment to their heart’s content.”

“Manjushri, these are the Twelve Sublime Vows made by the World-Honored Medicine Buddha Lapis Lazuli Radiance tathagata, Arhat, the Perfectly Enlightened, when he was cultivating the Bodhisattva path. Manjushri, as to these Great Vows made by the Medicine Buddha while he was following the Bodhisattva Path – as well as the merits, virtues and adornments of his Buddha-land – I cannot possibly describe them all, not even if I were to speak for an aeon or more. However, this Buddha-land is utterly pure. You will find no temptations, no Evil Paths nor even cries of suffering there.

“In this land, the ground is made of lapis lazuli, the boundaries are demarcated with golden cords, the towns, towers, palaces, pavilions, as well as the balconies, and windows and draperies are all made of the Seven Treasures. The merits, virtues and adornments of this realm are identical to those of Amitabha Buddha’s Pure Land in the West.

“In this land dwell two great Bodhisattvas, Universal Solar Radiance and Universal Lunar Radiance. Among the countless Bodhisattvas, they are the leaders. Each in turn will serve as successor to the Medicine Buddha and as the able guardian of His True Dharma treasury.

“For these reasons, Manjushri, all devout men and women should vow to be born in this land.”

Shakyamuni Buddha then said to Manjushri Bodhisattva:

“There are sentient beings who cannot tell right from wrong. They are greedy and mean, do not practice charity and do not understand the rewards of generosity. They are ignorant and unintelligent. Lacking the foundations of faith, they amass riches, which they assiduously hoard. Whenever they come across anyone seeking charity, they become annoyed; if forced to give, they feel as much pain and regret as if they were parting with their own flesh.

“Moreover, there are also countless sentient beings who are miserly and avaricious. They spend time amassing wealth, while not daring to spend it even on themselves, let alone on parents, spouse, children, servants or beggars. Upon death, these stingy persons will descend onto the path of hungry ghosts or in the animal realm.

“However, even though they may suffer such a fate, if in a previous existence in the human realm they happened to hear the name of the Medicine Buddha, and now recall and recite his name, even briefly, they will immediately vanish from the Evil Paths to be born once more in the human realm. However, they will remember their stay on the Evil Path and, dreading that past suffering, they will cease to wallow in worldly pleasures. They will gladly practice charity themselves, praise others who do so and will no longer be stingy.

“Eventually, they will even be able to donate their head, eyes, limbs, blood, flesh or other parts of their bodies to those who need them, not to mention mere material possessions.”

Then the Buddha continued:

“Moreover, Manjushri, there are sentient beings who have accepted the teachings of the Tathagata but have violated the Precepts. Or, they have not violated the Precepts, but have broken the rules and regulations pertaining to daily life. Then there are those that have not violated the Precepts nor the rules and regulations pertaining to daily life, but they do not Right View. Furthermore, there are those that have Right View, but waste or avoid extensive study of the Dharma and thus cannot explain the profound meaning of the sutras preached by the Buddha. Or else, though they may be learned, they have grown arrogant. Because conceit clouds the mind, they believe that they are in the right and others are in the wrong. Therefore, they deprecate the correct Dharma – and ally themselves with demons.

“Such deluded persons not only follow wrong views themselves, they also lead countless other sentient beings into the same great pitfall. These sentient beings are bound to wander endlessly on the paths of hell, animal realms and hungry ghost realms.

“Yet, if they should succeed in hearing the name of the Medicine Buddha, they will abandon their evil conduct forthwith to cultivate wholesome ways, and thus avoid descending upon the Evil Paths.

“Even those who cannot abandon evil practices or cultivate wholesome teachings, and thus descend onto the Evil Paths, can still benefit from the awesome power of the Medicine Buddha’s past vows. If through this power, they should hear his name even briefly, their lives on the Evil Paths will end and they will be born again in the human realm. They will hold correct views, diligently pursue their practice and tame their minds. They will then be able to abandon the home life to become monks or nuns. They will uphold and study the Dharma of the Tathagatas rather than disparaging and violating it. With correct views and extensive study, they will fathom the extremely profound meaning of the teachings, abandon all conceit and cease to

disparage the correct Dharma. They will no longer have demons as companions, but will gradually cultivate the practices of Bodhisattvas and swiftly perfect them.

“Moreover, Manjushri, there are sentient beings who are avaricious, stingy, jealous, boastful of themselves, and slanderous of others. They are bound to sink onto the three Evil Paths, suffering intense misery for countless thousands of years. When this intense suffering comes to an end, they will be born in the human world as oxen, horses, donkeys or camels. Often beaten and mistreated, they will suffer hunger and thirst and constantly travel along the road carrying heavy loads. If they succeed in returning as human beings, they will be among the poor and lowly, always serving others, constantly receiving orders, never being free.

“However, if any of them, in a former incarnation as a human being, have heard the name of the World-Honored Medicine Buddha and, as a result of this good cause, now remember and single-mindedly take refuge in him, they will, thanks to this Buddha’s spiritual powers, escape all suffering. Their senses will be sharp and they will be wise and learned, constantly seeking the supreme teachings, and meeting with good spiritual friends. They will break forever through Mara’s net, smash the shell of delusion, dry up the river of afflictions and thus escape all the worry and suffering of birth, old age, sickness and death.

“Moreover, Manjushri, there are sentient beings who love to quarrel, create schisms and engage in legal disputes. They constantly aggravate and disturb both self and others by means of body, speech, and mind, creating and increasing all kinds of malevolent deeds. They plot against one another without mercy, while invoking the spirits of mountains, forests, trees and tombs.

“They kill sentient beings and use their flesh and blood to propitiate the Yaksa and Raksasa demons.

“They may also write down the names and make images of those against whom they harbor grudges, curse them with evil mantras or try to harm or kill them with potions, witchcraft or demons-raised-from-the-dead.

“However, if the victims succeed in hearing the name of the Medicine Buddha, none of these evil practices can harm them. Moreover, everyone concerned will develop compassionate minds, endeavoring to benefit and bring peace and joy to others.

“They will abandon their harmful thoughts and their angry, spiteful minds and all parties will be happy and satisfied with what they have.

“They will cease to encroach upon others but will instead seek to benefit one another.

“Moreover, Manjushri, within the Fourfold Sangha of Bhiksus, Bhiksunis, Upasakas and Upasikas, as well as among other men and women of pure faith, there are those who are able to adhere to the Eight Precepts for a full year or for three months per year, dedicating these good roots toward rebirth in the Western Pure Land of Amitabha Buddha, the Buddha of Infinite Life, so as to listen to the correct Dharma. If their rebirth in the Pure Land is still uncertain, but they hear the name of the world-Honored Medicine Buddha, then, at the time of death, eight great Bodhisattvas – namely:

Manjushri, Avalokitesvara, Mahasthamaprapta, Aksayamati,
Ratnacandana, Bhaisajyaraja, Bhaisajyasamudgata, Maitreya,

will traverse space and descend to show them the way. They will thereupon be reborn spontaneously in jeweled flowers of many hues.

“Moreover, there are those who are born in the celestial realms, thanks to [hearing the name of the Medicine Buddha]. Despite their birth in the celestial realms, their good roots are still not exhausted, and thus they will not be born again on the Evil Paths. When their life span in the celestial realms comes to an end, they may return to the human world as Wheel-turning Kings, ruling over the Four Continents. With awesome virtues and ease, they will set countless hundreds of thousands of sentient beings onto the path of the Ten Virtues.

“Or else, such persons may be born in the military ruling class, Brahmins or laymen of great families, with abundant wealth and overflowing material possessions. They will be endowed with noble features, numerous family members and retainers, as well as intelligence, wisdom, bravery, vigor and the imposing demeanor of a great hero. Likewise, if there is any woman who hears and single-mindedly holds fast to the name of the Medicine Buddha, she will never again be born in a female form [where undue gender challenges exist].

“Manjushri, after the Medicine Buddha attained Supreme Enlightenment, he realized, by virtue of his past vows, that sentient beings endured various ailments, such as emaciation, crippling disabilities, fever, dysentery, jaundice, etc. Some were the targets of black magic or various poisons, while others suffered short lives or untimely death. At that time, seeking to put an end to these miseries and fulfill the desires of sentient beings, he entered a samadhi called ‘eliminating All the Suffering and Afflictions of Sentient Beings’.

“Once he entered that samadhi, a brilliant light shone forth from the crown of his head. Immersed in this light, he uttered a great Dharani:

NAMO BHAGAVATE BHAISHAJYAGURU-VAIDURYA PRABHA-RAJAYA TATHAGATA ARHATE
SAMYAK-SAMBUDDHAYA TADYATHA
OM BHAISHAJYA BHAISHAJYA BHAISHAJYA-SAMUDGATE SVAHA

“As soon as the Medicine Buddha, in his radiance, had uttered this Dharani, the entire cosmos rumbled and shook. Brilliant lights shone forth, allowing all sentient beings to escape disease and suffering and enjoy peace and happiness.

“Manjushri, if you come across anyone suffering illness, you should constantly cleanse him, bathe him and rinse his mouth. You should single-mindedly recite this dharani 108 times on his behalf, over his food, medicine or clean water. Once he has consumed the food or drink, his illness and suffering will disappear.

“If the patient has a particular wish and single-mindedly recites this dharani, his wish will be fulfilled. He will be free of disease, enjoy a longer life and, at death, be born in a realm of the Medicine Buddha. He will then be beyond retrogression and eventually realize Supreme Enlightenment.

“Therefore, Manjushri, any man or woman who single-mindedly reveres and respectfully makes offerings to the Medicine Buddha should constantly recite this dharani never letting out of his mind. Moreover, Manjushri, upon hearing the various names of the Medicine Buddha Lapis Lazuli radiance tathagata, Arhat, the Perfectly Enlightened, men and women of pure faith should recite and hold fast to his name.

“Each morning, at dawn, having bathed themselves and cleaned their teeth, they should make offerings of fragrant flowers, incense, perfume and various kinds of music before an image of this Buddha. Furthermore, they should copy this sutra or have others do so, as well as single-mindedly recite it and listen to explanations of its meaning.

“They should offer all the necessities of life to the Dharma masters who teach this sutra, making sure they lack nothing.

“In this way, devout men and women will be under the protection of the Buddhas. All their wishes will be fulfilled and they will eventually realize Supreme Enlightenment.”

(End Part 1)

Sutra of the Medicine Buddha Lapis Lazuli Radiance Tathagata:
His Past Vows, Merits & Virtues

PART 2

The Bodhisattva Manjushri then respectfully addressed the Buddha: “O, World-Honored One, I vow that in the Dharma Semblance Age, I will use every skillful means to help men and women of pure faith hear the name of the World-Honored Medicine Buddha. Even in their sleep, I will awaken their consciousness with the name of this Buddha.

“O, World-Honored One, if any devout persons should read, recite and uphold this sutra, or lecture upon it, explaining its meaning to others, or copy it or have others copy it, or if they should pay it the utmost reverence, adorning it with fragrant flowers, perfumes, incense powder and sticks, garlands, necklaces, banners, canopies, music and dance and protecting it with precious, multicolored cloth – and if they should prepare a clean site, erect a high altar and place the sutra upon it – the Four Great Celestial Kings, their retinues as well as countless hundreds of thousands of other divinities, will thereupon proceed to this place to make offerings and guard this sutra.

“World-Honored One, wherever this treasure of a sutra has spread and there are people capable of upholding it, you should know that, thanks to the Medicine Buddha’s past vows, his virtues and the power of his name, the place will be free of untimely death. In that place, there will no longer be evil demons or spirits to sap the vital energy of the people.

Even if there were, these devout men and women would recover, enjoying good health and peace of mind.”

The Buddha then spoke to Manjushri:

“So be it, so be it, Manjushri. It is as you say. If men and women of pure faith wish to make offerings to the World-Honored Medicine Buddha, they should first make an image of this Buddha, and then place it upon a pure clean altar.

“They should scatter all kinds of flowers, burn all varieties of incense and adorn the place with banners and pennants. For seven days and nights they should adhere to the Eight Precepts, consume only pure food, bathe and perfume themselves, put on clean, fresh clothing and keep their minds undefiled, free of anger or malice. They should develop feelings of kindness, compassion, joy and equanimity toward all sentient beings, while bringing them benefits, peace and happiness. They should play music and sing praises of the Medicine Buddha, while circumambulating his image in a clockwise direction. Moreover, they should bear in mind his merits, virtues and past vows, while reading and reciting this sutra, reflecting on its meaning and explaining it to others.

“Whatever they wish will then be fulfilled – whether it be longevity, wealth, or anything else, such as official position or the birth of sons and daughters.

“Moreover, if any sentient beings suddenly suffer nightmares and witness all kinds of evil omens – such as flocks of strange birds, or hundreds of ominous signs throughout their homes –

they need only to venerate the World-Honored Medicine Buddha with all kinds of wonderful offerings, and the nightmares, evil omens and inauspicious signs will all disappear, no longer able to cause them harm.

“If any sentient beings are in fear of water, fire, knives, poison, falling off a precipice, or of vicious beast – such as wild elephants, lions, tigers, wolves, bears, venomous snakes, scorpions, centipedes, millipedes, [infectious] mosquitos or gnats – they need only single-mindedly recall and recite the name of the Medicine Buddha, while respectfully making offerings to him, and they will escape all these terrors. If a country should be subject to foreign invasion, banditry or rebellion, the inhabitants need only recall and recite the name of Medicine Buddha, while paying homage to him, and all these calamities will likewise disappear.

“Moreover, Manjushri, there are men and women of pure faith who throughout their lives have not worshipped any deities, but have single-mindedly taken refuge in the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha and upheld the Precepts – the five pratimoksha or 10 sramanera Precepts, the 400 Bodhisattva Precepts or the 250 Bhikshu or 500 Bhiksuni Precepts. However, if any of them have violated the Precepts they have taken and fear falling onto an evil path, they should concentrate on reciting the name of the Medicine Buddha and respectfully make offerings to him. They will then certainly avoid rebirth on the Three Evil Paths.

“If women who experience extreme pain during childbirth can, with utmost sincerity, recite the name of the Medicine Buddha, praise, venerate and make offerings to him, they will be relieved of their suffering.

“Children born to them will be without defects, attractive in appearance, causing those who see them to rejoice. They will be endowed with keen senses and intelligence, along with a quiet disposition. They will seldom become ill, nor will evil spirits sap their vital energy.”

The World-Honored One then asked Ananda:

“I have just extolled the merits and virtues of the World-Honored Medicine Buddha. These merits and virtues are the extremely profound practices of al Buddhas, but are difficult to explain. Do you have faith in them or not?”

Ananda respectfully replied: “O, Great Virtuous World-Honored One, I do not have any doubts about the sutras preached by the Tathagatas. And why is this? It is because the Tathagatas’ karma of body, speech and mind are all pure. O, World-Honored One, the sun and the moon may fall, Mount Sumeru, the majestic king of mountains, may tremble, but the words of the Buddhas can never change. O, World-Honored One, some sentient beings whose roots of faith are deficient, may hear of the sublime practices of the Buddhas and think, ‘how can we obtain these merits, virtues and great advantages just by reciting the name of the Medicine Buddha alone?’ Because of this lack of faith, they even develop disparaging thoughts, this forfeiting great benefits and remaining in the long, dark night [of ignorance]. They descend onto the Evil Paths, revolving along them without end.”

The Buddha send said to Ananda:

“If these sentient beings should hear the name of the World-Honored Medicine Buddha, single-mindedly recite and hold fast to it without harboring doubts, then it will be impossible for them to sink onto the Evil Paths.

“O, Ananda! These extremely profound practices of the Buddhas are difficult to believe in, difficult to understand. Yet you are now able to accept them. You should realize that this is all due to the awesome power of the Tathagatas.

“O, Ananda! Even the Sravakas, Pratyeka Buddhas and Bodhisattvas who have not reached the Tenth Bhumi (Stages) cannot understand and believe in this truth. Only the Bodhisattvas who are one lifetime away from Buddhahood are able to do so.

“O, Ananda! A human rebirth is difficult to achieve; however, to believe in, respect and honor the Triple Jewel is even more difficult. To hear the name of the World-Honored Medicine Buddha is more difficult still.

“O, Ananda, the Medicine Buddha has cultivated countless Bodhisattva practices, employed countless skillful means and made countless far reaching vows. If I were to take an aeon or more to recount them, the aeon would come to an end before I could exhaustively describe all these wonderful practices, vows and skillful means.”

At that time, a Great Bodhisattva in the Assembly, named Salvation, arose from his seat, adjusted his robe to bare his right shoulder, knelt on his right knee, bowed and, with palms joined, respectfully addressed the Buddha:

“O, Great Virtuous World-Honored One, in the Dharma Semblance Age, there will be sentient beings who suffer numerous calamities, and are always sick and emaciated, unable to eat or drink, their throats dry and lips parched, their eyes seeing darkness everywhere. As the signs of death appear, they are surrounded by parents, family, friends and acquaintances weeping and lamenting.

“As such a patient lies in bed, he sees the messengers of Yama arrive to lead his consciousness before this King of Justice. Now, these beings clearly recollect all their own personal deeds, both positive and negative actions, record them and deliver their lists of deeds to the Judgment King of Hell.

“At that time, the King questions the dying person and tabulates his good and bad deeds, thus he will deliver an appropriate decision concerning their lives. If at that point, the relatives and acquaintances of the patient are able to take refuge in the World-Honored Medicine Buddha on his behalf, invite monks and nuns to recite this sutra, light seven layers of lamps, display the five-colored longevity banners, or undertake any similar practices, their consciousness could return after 7, 21, 35 or 49 days. When their consciousness returns, it is like waking up from a dream and they will recall all their good and bad deeds and the karmic retribution thereof.

“Having personally witnessed the consequences of karma, they will never again create negative karma, even if their life is in danger. Therefore, men and women of pure faith should uphold the name of the Medicine Buddha, venerate and make offerings to him according to their means.”

Ananda then asked the Bodhisattva Salvation:

“Good Man, how should we venerate and make offerings to the World-Honored Medicine Buddha and how should we make the longevity pennants and lamps?”

The Bodhisattva Salvation replied: “Virtuous One, in order to help the patient recover, you should adhere to the Eight Precepts for seven days and nights, make offerings of food, drink and other necessities to monastics in accordance with your means, pay homage and respectfully

make offerings to the World-Honored Medicine Buddha six times a day and recite this sutra forty-nine times.

“You should light forty-nine lamps, make seven images of the Medicine Buddha and place seven lamps before each image. The light from each lamp should radiate as large as the wheel of a cart and the radiant brightness should never be extinguished during the forty-nine days.

“You should also make multi-colored banners, forty-nine hand lengths long.

“Also you should release forty-nine species of animals [thus sparing their lives].

“The patient may then escape danger and will not be under the sway of evil demons, nor subject to danger or distress.

“Moreover, Ananda, when the anointed kings find themselves beset by calamities, such as epidemics, foreign invasion, internal insurrection, an adverse alignment of the stars, an eclipse of the sun or the moon, unseasonable storms or a failure of the monsoons, they should develop compassionate feelings toward all sentient beings.

“They should also pardon prisoners and make offerings to the World-Honored Medicine Buddha in accordance with the rites described earlier.

“Thanks to these good roots and the power of the Medicine Buddha’s past vows, peace and stability will immediately return to the affected countries; the rains and winds will be favorable; crops will mature on time and everyone will be healthy and happy. The country will be free of evil Yakshas out to harm the populace. All the evil omens will immediately disappear, and these anointed kings will enjoy greater longevity and vitality, finer appearance as well as greater health and freedom than ever before.

“O, Ananda, the queens, consorts, princesses, royal heirs, great ministers, court ladies, officials or commoners who suffer disease and other misfortunes should also make offerings to the Medicine Buddha. They should make multi-colored longevity banners, light lamps, ensuring that they burn continuously, liberate all kinds of animals, scatter flowers of various colors and burn various kinds of incense renowned for their fragrance. They will then recover from disease and escape misfortune.”

Ananda then asked the Bodhisattva Salvation:

“Good Man, how can an expiring life-span be lengthened?”

The Bodhisattva Salvation replied: “Virtuous One, did you not hear the Tathagata explain the nine forms of untimely death? I would urge everyone to make longevity banners and lamps and cultivate merits and virtues. Thanks to such cultivation, they will escape suffering and misfortune throughout their lives.”

Ananda further asked: “What are the nine forms of untimely death?”

The Bodhisattva Salvation replied:

“Some sentient beings contract a minor illness which goes untreated for lack of a physician or medicine; or else, even though there is a physician, he prescribes the wrong medicine, causing premature death. Or, the patients, believing the false pronouncements of earthly demons, heretics or practitioners of black magic, may panic – unable to clam their minds. They may then engage in divination or perform animal sacrifices in order to propitiate the spirits praying for blessings and longevity – all in vain. Through ignorance, confusion and reliance on wrong, inverted views, they meet with untimely death and sink into the hells, with no end in sight. This is the first form of untimely death.

“The second form is execution, by royal decree.

“The third form is losing one’s vitality to the demons through hunting for pleasure, gambling, debauchery, drunkenness or engaging in lewd and licentious behavior.

“The fourth form is death by fire; the fifth is death by drowning. The sixth is being devoured by wild animals. The seventh is falling off a mountain or a cliff. The eighth is death by poison, incantations, evil mantras or demons-raised-from the dead. The ninth is from hunger or thirst, for lack of food and water.

“These are the nine forms of untimely death mentioned by the Tathagatas. There are also countless other forms, which are too numerous to describe.

“Moreover, Ananda, King Yama is responsible for keeping the karmic register of everyone in the world. If there are sentient beings who do not respect their parents, commit one of the Five Heinous Crimes, damage or slander the Three Jewels, break the laws of the land or violate the Five Precepts, the King Yama will mete out punishment according to the infraction. Therefore, I urge sentient beings to light lamps, make banners, liberate animals and cultivate merits in order to avoid suffering and misfortune.”

At that time, there were 12 powerful Yaksha generals in the Great Assembly named:

Kumbhira	Vajra
Mihira	Andira
Majira	Shandira
Indra	Pajra
Makura	Sindura
Catura	Vikarala

Each one was accompanied by a retinue of 7,000 Yakshas. They all raised their voices in unison and said respectfully to the Buddha:

“O, World-Honored One, today, thanks to the Buddha’s awesome power, we have succeeded in hearing the name of the Medicine Buddha and no longer need to experience the fears of the three lower realms.

“Together, with one mind, we take refuge in the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha for the rest of our lives and pledge to support all sentient beings – bringing them genuine benefits and joy.

“Wherever this sutra circulates or wherever there are sentient beings who hold fast to the name of the Medicine Buddha and respectfully make offerings to him, whether in villages, towns, kingdoms or in the wilderness, we will all protect them. We will release them from all suffering and calamities and see to it that all their wishes are fulfilled.

“Sentient beings afflicted by disease or calamity and wishing to escape should also read or recite this sutra. Using the five-colored banner, they should tie a knot for each of our names – untying them when their wishes are fulfilled.”

Thereupon, Shakyamuni Buddha praised the great Yaksha generals with these words:

“Excellent! Good indeed! Your wish to protect and bring happiness to all sentient beings is an appropriate way to express your gratitude to the Medicine Buddha.

Ananda then asked the Buddha: “World-Honored One, what should we call this teaching, and how should we adhere to it and put it into practice?”

Shakyamuni Buddha replied to Ananda: “This teaching is call the ‘Past Vows, Merits and Virtues of the Medicine Buddha’ or the ‘Dharani of the Vows of the Twelve Yaksha Generals to Benefit Sentient Beings’ or ‘Eradicating of All Karmic Obstacles’. You should uphold it as such.”

When Shakyamuni Buddha finished speaking, the great Bodhisattvas, as well as the great Sravakas, kings, ministers, Brahmins, lay-persons, devas, nagas, yakshas, gandharvas, asuras, garudas, kinnaras, mahoragas and other human and non-human beings all rejoiced at the Buddha’s words. They faithfully accepted them and put them into practice.

NAMO BHAGAVAT BHAIJAYA-GURU-VAIDURYA-PRABHA—RAJAYA TATHAGATA ARHATE
SAMYAK-SAMBUDDHAYA TADYATHA
OM BHAIJAYE BHAIJAYE-BHAIJAYA-SANUDGATE SVAHA

(3x)

Amitabha Sutra

Translated from Sanskrit to Chinese by the Tripitaka Master Kumarajiva at Yao Ch'in; English translation by Upasaka I Guorong; additional editing by Lama Ngakpa Chökyi Lodü

Homage to the Lotus Pool Assembly of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas as Vast as the Sea.
(3x)

Thus I have heard, at one time Buddha dwelt at Sravasti in the Jeta Grove in the garden of the Benefactor of Orphans and the Solitary together with a gathering of great Bhiksus, 1250 in all, all great Arhats whom the assembly knew and recognized: Elders Shariputra, Mahamaudgalyayana, Mahakasyapa, Mahakatyayana, Mahakausthila, Revata, Suddhipanthaka, Nanda, Ananda, Rahula, Gavampati, Pindola-bharadvaja, Kalodayin, Mahakaphina, Vakkula, Aniruddha, and others such as these, all great disciples; together with all the Bodhisattvas, Mahasattvas: Dharma Prince Manjusri, Ajita Bodhisattva, Gandhastin Bodhisattva, Nityodyukta Bodhisattva, and others such as these, all great Bodhisattvas; and together with Sakra, chief among gods, and the numberless great multitudes from all the heavens.

At that time the Buddha told the Elder Shariputra, "Passing from here through hundreds of thousands of millions of Buddha-lands to the West, there is a world called Ultimate Bliss.

In this land a Buddha called Amitabha right now teaches the Dharma. Shariputra, for what reason is this land called Ultimate Bliss? All living beings of this Pure Land endure none of the sufferings, but enjoy every bliss. Therefore, it is called 'Ultimate Bliss'.

Moreover, Shariputra, this Land of Ultimate Bliss is everywhere surrounded by seven tiers of railings, seven layers of netting, and seven rows of trees, all formed from the four treasures and for this reason named 'Ultimate Bliss'.

Moreover, Shariputra, the Land of Ultimate Bliss has pools of the seven jewels, filled with the eight waters of merit and virtue. The bottom of each pool is pure, spread over with golden sand. On the four sides are stairs of gold, silver, lapis lazuli, and crystal; above are raised pavilions adorned with gold, silver, lapis lazuli, crystal, mother-of-pearl, red pearls, and carnelian. In the pools are lotuses as large as carriage wheels: green colored of green light; yellow colored of yellow light; red colored of red light; white colored of white light; subtly, wonderfully, fragrant and pure.

Shariputra, the realization of the Land of Ultimate Bliss is thus meritoriously adorned. Moreover Shariputra, in that Buddha-land there is always heavenly music, and the ground is yellow gold. In the six periods of the day and night a heavenly rain of mandarava flowers falls, and throughout the clear morning each living being of this Land, with sacks full of the myriads of wonderful flowers, makes offerings to the hundreds of thousands of millions of Buddhas of the other directions. At mealtime they

return to their own Pure Land, and having eaten, they stroll around, Shariputra, the realization of the Land of Ultimate Bliss is thus meritoriously adorned.

Moreover Shariputra, in this Pure Land there are always rare and wonderful varicolored birds: white cranes; peacocks, parrots and egrets ; kalavinkas and two-headed birds . In the six periods of the day and night the flocks of birds sing forth harmonious and elegant sounds. Their clear and joyful sounds proclaim the five roots, the five powers the seven Bodhi shares, the eight sagely way shares, and dharmas such as these. When living beings of this land hear these sounds, they are altogether mindful of the Buddha, mindful of the Dharma, and mindful of the Sangha.

Shariputra, do not say that these birds are born as retribution for their karmic offenses. For what reason? In this Buddha-land there are no three evil ways of rebirth. Shariputra, in this Buddha-land not even the names of the three evil ways exist, how much the less their actuality! Desiring that the Dharma sound be widely proclaimed, Amitabha Buddha by transformation made this multitude of birds.

Shariputra, in that Buddha-land, when the soft wind blows, the rows of jeweled trees and jeweled nets give forth subtle and wonderful sounds, like one hundred thousand kinds of music played at the same time. All those who hear this sound naturally bring forth in their hearts mindfulness of the Buddha, mindfulness of the Dharma, and mindfulness of the Sangha. Shariputra, the realization of the Land of Ultimate Bliss is thus meritoriously adorned. Shariputra, what do you think? Why is this Buddha called Amitabha? Shariputra, the brilliance of that Buddha's light is measureless, illumining the lands of the ten directions everywhere without obstruction; for this reason he is called Amitabha.

Moreover Shariputra, the life of that Buddha and that of his people extends for measureless, limitless kalpas; for this reason he is called Amitayus. And Shariputra, since Amitabha realized Buddhahood, ten kalpas have passed. Moreover Shariputra, that Buddha has measureless limitless "sound-hearer" disciples, all Arhats, their number incalculable; thus also is the assembly of Bodhisattvas. Shariputra, the realization of the Land of Ultimate Bliss is thus meritoriously adorned. Moreover Shariputra, those living beings born in the Land of Ultimate Bliss are limitless. Among them are many who in this very life will dwell in Buddhahood. Their number is extremely many, it is incalculable and only in measureless, limitless kalpas could it be spoken.

Shariputra, those living beings who hear should vow, 'I wish to be born in that Pure Land.'

And why is this? Those who thus attain are all superior and good people, all coming together in one place. Shariputra, one cannot have few good roots, blessings, virtues, and causal connections to attain birth in that Land.

Shariputra, if there is a good man or good woman who hears spoken 'Amitabha

Buddha' and holds the name, whether for one day, two days, three, four, five days, six days, as long as seven days, with one heart unconfused, when this person approaches the end of life, before him will appear Amitabha Buddha and all the assembly of Holy Ones. When the end comes, his heart is without inversion; in Amitabha Buddha's Land of Ultimate Bliss he will attain rebirth. Shariputra, because I see this benefit, I speak these words: If living beings hear this spoken they should make the vow, 'I will be born in that land.'

Shariputra, as I now praise the inconceivable benefit from the merit and virtue of Amitabha Buddha, thus in the East are also Akshobhya Buddha, Sumeru Appearance Buddha, Great Sumeru Buddha, Sumeru Light Buddha, Wonderful Sound Buddha, all Buddhas such as these, numberless as the sand of the Ganges River. In his own Pure Land each brings forth the appearance of a vast and long tongue, every-where covering the three thousand great thousand worlds, and speaks the sincere and actual words, 'All you living beings should believe, praise, and hold in reverence the inconceivable merit and virtue of this Sutra of the Mindful One of Whom All Buddhas Are Protective.'

Shariputra, in the Southern world are Sun Moon Lamp Buddha, Well-Known Light Buddha, Great Blazing Shoulders Buddha, Sumeru Lamp Buddha, Measureless Vigor Buddha, all Buddhas such as these, numberless as the sand of the Ganges River. In his own Pure Land each brings forth the appearance of a vast and long tongue, everywhere covering the three thousand great thousand worlds, and speaks the sincere and actual words,

'All you living beings should believe, praise, and hold in reverence the inconceivable merit and virtue of this Sutra of the Mindful One of Whom All Buddhas Are Protective.'

Shariputra, in the Western world are Measureless Life Buddha, Measureless Appearance Buddha, Measureless Curtain Buddha, Great Light Buddha, Great Brightness Buddha, Jeweled Appearance Buddha, Pure Light Buddha, all Buddhas such as these, numberless as the sand of the Ganges River. In his own Pure Land each brings forth the appearance of a vast and long tongue, everywhere covering the three thousand great thousand worlds, and speaks the sincere and actual words, 'All you living beings should believe, praise, and hold in reverence the inconceivable merit and virtue of this Sutra of the Mindful One of Whom All Buddhas Are Protective.'

Shariputra, in the Northern world are Blazing Shoulders Buddha, Most Victorious Sound Buddha, Hard to Injure Buddha, Sun Birth Buddha, Net Brightness Buddha, all Buddhas such as these, numberless as the sand of the Ganges River. In his own Pure Land each brings forth the appearance of a vast and long tongue, everywhere covering the three thousand great thousand worlds, and speaks the sincere and actual words,

'All you living beings should believe, praise, and hold in reverence the inconceivable merit and virtue of this Sutra of the Mindful One of Whom All Buddhas Are Protective.'

Shariputra, in the world below are Lion Buddha, Well-Known Buddha, Famous Light Buddha, Dharma Buddha, Dharma Curtain Buddha, Dharma Maintaining Buddha, all Buddhas such as these, numberless as the sand of the Ganges River. In his own Pure Land each brings forth the appearance of a vast and long tongue, everywhere covering the three thousand great thousand worlds, and speaks the sincere and actual words, 'All you living beings should believe, praise, and hold in reverence the inconceivable merit and virtue of this Sutra of the Mindful One of Whom All Buddhas Are Protective.'

Shariputra, in the world above are Pure Sound Buddha, King of Past Lives Buddha, Superior Fragrance Buddha, Fragrant Light Buddha, Great Blazing Shoulders Buddha, Varicolored Jewels and Flower Adornment Body Buddha, Sala Tree King Buddha, Jeweled Flower Virtue Buddha, Vision of all Meaning Buddha, Such as Mt. Sumeru Buddha, all Buddhas such as these, numberless as the sand of the Ganges River. In his own Pure Land each brings forth the appearance of a vast and long tongue, everywhere covering the three thousand great thousand worlds, and speaks the sincere and actual words, 'All you living beings should believe, praise, and hold in reverence the inconceivable merit and virtue of this Sutra of the Mindful One of Whom All Buddhas Are Protective.'

Shariputra, what do you think? Why is it called Sutra of the Mindful One of Whom All Buddhas Are Protective? Shariputra, if a good man or good woman hears this Sutra and holds to it, and hears the names of all these Buddhas, this good man or woman will be the Mindful One of whom all Buddhas are protective, and will irreversibly attain to anuttara-samyak-sambodhi. Therefore, Shariputra, all of you should believe and accept my words, and those, which all Buddhas speak. Shariputra, if there are people who have already made the vow, who now make the vow, or who are about to make the vow, 'I desire to be born in Amitabha's Pure Land', these people whether born in the past, now being born, or to be born in the future, all will irreversibly attain to anuttara-samyak-sambodhi. Therefore, Shariputra, all good men and good women, if they are among those who have faith, should make the vow, 'I will be born in that Pure Land.'

Shariputra, just as I am now one who praises the merit and virtue of all Buddhas, all those Buddhas equally praise my inconceivable merit and virtue saying these words, 'Shakyamuni Buddha can complete extremely rare and difficult deeds. In the Saha Land, in the evil time of the five turbidities, in the midst of the kalpa turbidity, the view turbidity, the affliction turbidity, the living beings turbidity, and the life turbidity, he can attain anuttara-samyak-sambodhi and for the sake of living beings, speak this Dharma which in the whole world is hard to believe.'

Shariputra, you should know that I, in the evil time of the five turbidities, practice these difficult deeds, attain anuttara-samak-sambodhi and for all the world speak this dharma, difficult to believe, extremely difficult!"

After the Buddha spoke this Sutra, Shariputra and all the Bhiksus, all the gods,

men, and asuras, and others from all the worlds, hearing what the Buddha had said, joyously welcomed, faithfully accepted, bowed and withdrew.