

CHAPTER NINE

The Sublime Goodness Ground²⁴⁸

I. THE NINTH GROUND: THE SUBLIME GOODNESS GROUND

1. THE NINTH GROUND'S INTRODUCTORY VERSES AND DHARMA REQUEST

Once that son of the Buddha had finished holding forth on this eighth ground's sublime meaning, through the spiritual powers of the Buddha, the countless lands were then caused to tremble. {1}

The body of the Omniscient One emanated countless subtle and marvelous rays of light entirely illuminating worlds through the ten directions, whereupon the beings therein were filled with happiness. {2}

A thousand myriads of bodhisattvas standing up amidst the sky above then presented a multitude of marvelous offerings of a sort that not even the devas possessed. {3}

The Maheśvara Heaven King together with the kings of the Paranirmita Vaśavartin Heavens— all were filled with joyous delight and presented wondrous offerings in reverence to the Buddha, the great ocean of meritorious qualities. {4}

Celestial nymphs numbering in the thousands of myriads paid reverence as all of them, filled with joyous delight, united with sublimely wondrous voices in singing praises of the Buddha's meritorious qualities. {5}

Due to the spiritual powers of the Buddha, they brought forth marvelous dharmas such as these: {6}

“Those who skillfully practice quiescence are entirely free of any sorts of evil thoughts. Each of them, abiding on his respective ground, skillfully cultivates the bodhisattva practices.

In order to benefit those in the world, they roams everywhere throughout the ten directions, instructing the multitudes in the path to buddhahood, even as their minds, like empty space, remain entirely unimpeded. {7}

“Through their spiritual powers, the bodhisattvas offered up marvelous offering gifts superior to those that the merit of any of humans or devas throughout the ten directions could ever bring forth. Those sons of the Buddha that delight in wisdom, by such phenomena as these, reveal the powers of the Buddha. (8)

“Even as they reside in a single land, unmoving, they still manifest their presence in all places, benefiting those in the world, doing so in a way that is like the light and purity of the full moon.

“Even though their voices, speech, and conceptual thought have all become quiescent,²⁴⁹ they still avail themselves of all manner of voices that resound like echoes as they discourse on the Dharma. (9)

“Adapting to those beings of lesser capacity whose minds have sunken into renunciation, he reveals the path of *śrāvaka*-disciples, thereby allowing them to succeed in escaping the many sufferings.

Where there are those beings whose faculties are possessed of a minor degree of acuity and who delight in the dharmas of causes and conditions, he explains for them the way of the *pratyekabuddha*. (10)

“Adapting to those who are possessed of sharp faculties, who are devoted to benefiting beings, and who are possessed of the great kindness and great compassion, he explains for them the Dharma of the bodhisattva.

For those who possess the unsurpassably great resolve resolutely fixed in its fondness for the great endeavor, he reveals to them the body of the Buddha and explains for them the Buddha’s measureless Dharma. (11)

“In this he is like a master conjurer who manifests appearances of all different sorts of physical forms even as all such physical appearances are devoid of any genuine phenomena.

In this same way, all of these sons of the Buddha well know wisdom’s stratagems whereby they are able to display all manner of actions even as their minds have transcended existence and nonexistence.” (12)

Those celestial nymphs employed there a thousand myriads of sublime and wondrous sounds in singing forth praises. Having finished the singing of praises such as these, they then became silent and gazed up at the Buddha.

Once again Liberation Moon said:

“O Son of the Buddha, those in this Great Assembly are pure. They single-mindedly wish to delight in hearing of right practice as it occurs beyond the eighth ground.” {13}

2. VAJRAGARBHA COMMENCES THE NINTH GROUND’S EXPLANATION

{A} Vajragarbha Bodhisattva then said:

3. TEN EARNESTLY PURSUED ENDEAVORS ENABLING NINTH GROUND ACCESS

O Son of the Buddha, here we have the bodhisattva *mahāsattvas* who, resorting to such immeasurably vast knowledge as this, have focused skillful meditative contemplation on the path to buddhahood, and:

Have additionally sought to seek ever more superior depth of realization in quiescent liberation;

Have sought to achieve ever more supremely deep reflection upon the wisdom of the Tathāgata;

Have sought to achieve entry into the Tathāgata’s profound and esoteric Dharma;

Have sought to selectively contemplate and acquire inconceivably great wisdom;

Have sought to selectively contemplate the *dhāraṇīs* and samādhis and cause them to become doubly purified;

Have sought to cause their spiritual superknowledges to become vast;

Have sought to adapt to the world’s different practices;

Have sought to cultivate the powers, fearlessnesses, and dharmanas exclusive to the Buddhas to the point where they are invulnerable to destructive interference by anyone at all;

Have sought to accord with the power of the Buddhas’ turning of the wheel of the Dharma;

And have sought to never relinquish the greatly compassionate great vows that they have taken on.

It is they who then succeed in entering the ninth ground.

4. THIS BODHISATTVĀ’S 10 TYPES OF REALITY-BASED KNOWLEDGE OF KARMA

{B} The bodhisattvas dwelling on this ground also know in accordance with reality:

- The effects of practicing²⁵⁰ good dharmas, bad dharmas, or karmically neutral dharmas;
- The effects of practicing dharmas either associated with or free of the contaminants;
- The effects of practicing worldly dharmas and world-transcending dharmas;
- The effects of practicing conceivable dharmas and inconceivable dharmas;
- The effects of practicing dharmas that are definite or dharmas that are indefinite;
- The effects of practicing the dharmas associated with *śrāvaka*-disciples and *pratyekabuddhas*;
- The effects of practicing the dharmas of the bodhisattva path;
- The effects of practicing the dharmas of the Tathāgata's ground;
- The effects of practicing conditioned dharmas;
- And the effects of practicing unconditioned dharmas.

5. TEN TYPES OF REALITY-BASED KNOWLEDGE OF ENTANGLING DIFFICULTIES

(c) Pursuant to such knowledge, they know in accordance with reality the entangling difficulties²⁵¹ associated with implementing the bodhi resolve, specifically knowing:²⁵²

- The entangling difficulties associated with the afflictions;
- The entangling difficulties associated with karmic actions;
- The entangling difficulties associated with the faculties;
- The entangling difficulties associated with resolute beliefs;²⁵³
- The entangling difficulties associated with sense realms;²⁵⁴
- The entangling difficulties associated with the mind's resolute intentions;²⁵⁵
- The entangling difficulties associated with latent tendencies;²⁵⁶
- The entangling difficulties associated with births;²⁵⁷
- The entangling difficulties associated with residual karmic propensities;²⁵⁸
- And the entangling difficulties associated with the differences in the three groups of beings.²⁵⁹

6. TEN TYPES OF REALITY-BASED KNOWLEDGE OF BEINGS' MENTAL ASPECTS

(d) So too do they know with regard to beings the different characteristics of their minds, specifically knowing:

- The mind's characteristic of manifesting in diverse ways;
- The mind's characteristic of ready transformation;

The mind's characteristic of being either destroyed or unde-
stroyed;

The mind's characteristic of having no physical form;²⁶⁰

The mind's characteristic of being boundless and independent;²⁶¹

The mind's characteristic of having different degrees of purity;

The mind's characteristic of being either defiled or free of
defilement;²⁶²

The mind's characteristic of being either held in bondage or lib-
erated;²⁶³

The mind's characteristic of being either deceptive or straight-
forward;²⁶⁴

And the mind's characteristic of following along in accordance
with the destinies of rebirth.

They know in accordance with reality all such characteristics as
these.

7. HIS REALITY-BASED KNOWLEDGE OF THE AFFLICTIONS' CHARACTERISTICS

(E) So too in the case of the afflictions, wherein this bodhisattva:

Knows their characteristics when they have gone deep;

Knows their characteristics when they are but shallow;

Knows their characteristic of accompanying the mind;

Knows their characteristic of not being abandoned;

Knows their different characteristics when latent and when one
is entangled with them;

Knows they are characterized of being either associated with
mind or disassociated from mind;

Knows they are characterized by conducing to the undergoing
of resulting retributions when one is reborn;

Knows they are characterized by differences in each of the three
realms;

Knows that craving, ignorance, and views are characterized by
being like arrows in the depth of their penetration;

Knows that pride and delusion are characterized by association
with grave karmic offenses;

And knows they are characterized by ceaselessly serving as
causes and conditions of the three types of karmic deeds.

To state it briefly, he knows and fathoms in accordance with real-
ity even up to eighty-four thousand different characteristics asso-
ciated with the action of the afflictions.

8. HIS REALITY-BASED KNOWLEDGE OF CHARACTERISTICS OF KARMIC ACTIONS

(F) So too does this bodhisattva know with respect to karmic actions:

- Their characteristic of being good, bad, or karmically neutral;
- Their characteristic of being either distinguishable or not yet distinguishable;
- Their characteristic of occurring in association with mind;
- Their characteristic of not arising apart from mind;
- Their characteristic of naturally coming to an end;
- Their characteristic of being ended through practice of the path;
- Their characteristic of serving as seeds;
- Their characteristic of accumulating;
- Their characteristic of never failing to culminate in karmic retribution;
- Their characteristic of being sequential;
- Their characteristic of having brought forth karmic retributions or not yet having brought forth karmic retributions;
- Their characteristic of rewarding black actions with black retributions;²⁶⁵
- Their characteristic of rewarding white actions with white retributions;
- Their characteristic of rewarding a combination of black and white actions with a combination of black and white retributions;
- Their characteristic of being amenable to ending through actions that are neither black nor white;
- He knows the characteristic of karmic actions to have [corresponding] stations of existence wherein [their retribution] arises;
- He knows their characteristic of involving differing means through which their karmic [retribution] is undergone;
- He knows karmic actions' characteristic of involving countless causes and conditions in their arising;²⁶⁶
- He knows the characteristic of worldly karmic actions and world-transcending karmic actions to differ [in their corresponding retributions];
- He knows the characteristics of karmic actions when bound to generate their effects in the present life;
- He knows the characteristics of karmic actions when bound to generate their effects in the immediately ensuing incarnation;

He knows the characteristics of karmic actions when bound to generate their effects in yet more distantly subsequent incarnations;

The characteristics of karmic actions when fixed in their karmic effects;

And he knows the characteristics of karmic actions when unfixed in their karmic effects.

To state it briefly, he knows in accordance with reality even up to eighty-four thousand different characteristics associated with karmic actions.

9. HIS REALITY-BASED KNOWLEDGE OF CHARACTERISTICS OF BEINGS' FACULTIES

{G} This bodhisattva knows the characteristics associated with the faculties, specifically knowing:

Their characteristic of possessing distinct differences associated with being either weak, middling, or sharp;

Their characteristic of either possessing or not possessing distinct differences in the past and future;

Their characteristic of being either superior, middling, or inferior;

Their characteristic of being accompanied by and inseparable from the afflictions;

Their characteristic of involving either fixed or unfixed results as a function of being associated with particular vehicles;

Their characteristic of having become either completely matured or not yet completely matured;

Their characteristic of according with the actions of the mind;

Their characteristic when vulnerable to easy ruination;

Their characteristic when being deeply rooted;

Their characteristic when especially superior;

Their characteristic when invulnerable to ruination;

Their characteristic when reversible;

Their characteristic when irreversible;

Their characteristic of becoming different across the course of the three periods of time;

And their characteristic of being deeply hidden and different in the manner in which they accompany one in their arising.

To state it briefly, he knows in accordance with reality even up to eighty-four thousand different characteristics associated with the faculties.

10. HIS KNOWLEDGE OF BELIEFS, SENSE REALMS, AND RESOLUTE INTENTIONS

This bodhisattva also knows the characteristic of beings' resolute beliefs²⁶⁷ to be either weak, middling, or sharp. Briefly stated, he knows in accordance with reality even up to eighty-four thousand distinctions associated with beings' resolute beliefs.

This bodhisattva also knows the characteristic of beings' sense realms²⁶⁸ to be either weak, middling, or sharp. Briefly stated, he knows in accordance with reality even up to eighty-four thousand distinctions associated with beings' sense realms.

This bodhisattva also knows the characteristic of beings' resolute intentions²⁶⁹ to be either weak, middling, or supremely sharp. Briefly stated, he knows in accordance with reality even up to eighty-four thousand distinctions associated with beings' resolute intentions.

11. HIS KNOWLEDGE OF LATENT TENDENCIES' CHARACTERISTICS

(H) This bodhisattva also distinguishes and knows the characteristics of the latent tendencies²⁷⁰ when in an associative role, knowing:

Their characteristics when arising with thought and when not arising with thought;

Their characteristics when concomitant with mind and when not concomitant with mind;

Their characteristic of deep penetration;

Their characteristic of following and tormenting beings from the beginningless past onward;

Their characteristic of running counter to the realization of any of the *dhyāna* absorptions, liberations, or spiritual super-knowledges;

Their characteristic of holding one tightly in bondage;

Their characteristic of binding one to existence within the three realms;

Their characteristic of involvement in countless mind states even as they do not directly manifest their presence;

Their characteristic of opening the gates to every sort of karmic circumstance, even as one remains unaware of them;

Their characteristic of amenability to counteraction;

Their characteristic of being devoid of anything that exists;

Their characteristic of being devoid of any fixed circumstances;

And their characteristic of being invulnerable to the extinguishing of their activity through any means other than the path of the Āryas.

12. HIS KNOWLEDGE OF CHARACTERISTICS ASSOCIATED WITH BIRTHS

(1) This bodhisattva also knows in accordance with reality the characteristics associated with different rebirth circumstances, specifically knowing:

The characteristics associated with differences between hell realm, animal realm, hungry ghost realm, *asura* realm, human realm, and celestial realm rebirths;

The characteristics associated with differences between form realm and formless realm rebirths;

The characteristics associated with the difference between rebirths with perception and rebirths without perception;

The characteristics associated with karmic action acting as a field, cravings as water, ignorance as sheltering darkness, consciousness as seed, and the subsequent body as sprout;

The characteristics of simultaneous arising and inseparability of name and form;

The characteristic of delusion and craving to instigate continuity of existence;

The characteristics of beings whereby they desire birth, desire actions, desire feeling,²⁷¹ and desire to never be apart from pleasure;

The characteristics associated with distinguishing the differences in the three realms of existence;

And the characteristics associated with the continuity of the three realms of existence.

He knows all of these characteristics in accordance with reality.

13. HIS KNOWLEDGE OF CHARACTERISTICS OF HABITUAL KARMIC PROPENSITIES

(1) This bodhisattva also knows in accordance with reality the characteristics associated with the habitual karmic propensities,²⁷² specifically knowing:

Whether they have residual aspects or do not having residual aspects;

That there are habitual karmic propensities that follow one into the rebirth destiny where one is reborn;

That there are habitual karmic propensities that accompany beings wherever they abide;

That there are habitual karmic propensities that accord with karmic actions and afflictions;

That there are habitual karmic propensities that are good, bad,
or neutral;
That there are habitual karmic propensities associated with
abandoning desire;
That there are habitual karmic propensities that follow one into
subsequent incarnations;
That there are habitual karmic propensities that manifest
sequentially as they follow along in pursuit;
That they are characterized by deep penetration and are sev-
ered by the path;
That they are characterized by sustenance of afflictions;
And that, if they are abandoned, they then become nonexistent
dharmas.

He knows all such things in accordance with reality.

14. HIS KNOWLEDGE OF THOSE FIXED IN RIGHT, IN WRONG, OR UNFIXED

(K) This bodhisattva also knows in accordance with reality beings' fixed and unfixed characteristics, specifically knowing:²⁷³

The characteristic of being fixed in adherence to what is right;
The characteristic of being fixed in adherence to what is wrong;
The characteristic of being unfixed in these regards;
The characteristic of being fixed in what is wrong through pos-
session of wrong views;
The characteristic of being fixed in what is right through pos-
session of right views;
The characteristic of being unfixed through dissociation from
both;
The characteristic of being fixed in what is wrong through com-
mitting each of the five heinous karmic offenses.²⁷⁴
The characteristic of being fixed in what is right through the
five root faculties;
The characteristic of being fixed in what is wrong through
dwelling in stations associated with what is wrong;
The characteristic of being fixed in what is right through dwell-
ing in stations associated with what is right;
The characteristic of being unfixed [in either what is right or
what is wrong] through separating from these two;
The characteristic of being difficult to turn back through deeply
entering into the class [of beings]²⁷⁵ inclined toward what is
wrong;

And the characteristic of having causes and conditions making one amenable to being caused to cultivate the unsurpassable path.

These characteristics of the group that is unfixed, the group that is fixed in what is wrong, and [the group] of beings preserving [what is right]—he knows them all in accordance with reality.

15. HIS KNOWLEDGE-BASED ADAPTIVE TEACHING AND LIBERATION OF BEINGS

(1) Son of the Buddha, the bodhisattva *mahāsattvas* who accord with knowledge such as this are said to dwell securely on the Ground of Sublime Goodness. The bodhisattva dwelling on this ground knows all such characteristics in beings' different practices and, adapting to what will cause them to gain liberation, then provides them with the corresponding causes and conditions.

This bodhisattva knows those dharmas appropriate to the teaching of beings, knows those dharmas conducing to the liberation of beings, and, knowing these in accordance with reality, he then teaches the Dharma for their sakes.

He knows in accordance with reality the characteristics of those with affinity for the Śrāvaka-disciple Vehicle, the characteristics of those with affinity for the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle, the characteristics of those with affinity for the Bodhisattva Vehicle, and the characteristics of those with affinity for the ground of the Tathāgata. He then adapts to the causes and conditions of these beings and teaches the Dharma for their sakes.

He adapts to the differences in their minds, adapts to the differences in their faculties, and adapts to the differences in their predilections, and then teaches the Dharma for their sakes.

So too, he adapts to their bases in practice and their bases in wisdom and then explains the Dharma for their sakes. He knows the bases for all courses of action and, adapting specifically to those, he teaches the Dharma accordingly.

He adapts to beings' sense realms²⁷⁶ and the particular entangling difficulties²⁷⁷ they have deeply entered and teaches Dharma for them accordingly.

He adapts to their rebirth destinies, adapts to the births they have taken on, adapts to their afflictions, and adapts to the permutations in their habitual karmic propensities and therefore teaches Dharma accordingly.

He adapts to whichever vehicle would conduce to liberation and therefore teaches Dharma accordingly.

16. THE BODHISATTVA'S COMMAND OF FOUR TYPES OF UNIMPEDED KNOWLEDGE

{M} This bodhisattva dwelling on this ground becomes a great expounder of the Dharma²⁷⁸ who preserves and protects the Dharma treasury of the Buddhas.

{N} He thereby becomes one who is well equipped with the profound and sublime meaning understood by a great expounder of the Dharma. Consequently he employs measurelessly many wise skillful means and the four types of unimpeded knowledge in bringing forth the bodhisattva's command of phrasing as he explains the Dharma.

This bodhisattva always accords with the four types of unimpeded knowledge²⁷⁹ and never abandons them. What then are these four? They are:

- First, unimpeded knowledge of Dharma.
- Second, unimpeded knowledge of meaning.
- Third, unimpeded knowledge of language.
- Fourth, unimpeded knowledge of eloquence.

a. TEN PERMUTATIONS OF EXPERTISE IN THE FOUR UNIMPEDED KNOWLEDGES

{O} It is through unimpeded knowledge of Dharma that this bodhisattva knows the individual characteristics of any given dharma, through unimpeded knowledge of meaning that he knows the different characteristics by which dharmas differ, through unimpeded knowledge of language that he knows how to discourse on dharmas in a manner free of discriminations, and through unimpeded knowledge of eloquence that his knowledge of all dharmas is presented as sequential and uninterrupted discourse.

{P} Additionally, it is through unimpeded knowledge of Dharma that he knows the insubstantial nature of all dharmas, through unimpeded knowledge of meaning that he knows the production and destruction of dharmas, through unimpeded knowledge of language that he knows all dharmas' conventional designations and presents uninterrupted explanations incorporating these conventional designations, and through unimpeded knowledge of eloquence that he presents boundless explanations that accord with and do no violence to these conventional designations.

{Q} Furthermore, it is through unimpeded knowledge of Dharma that he knows the different characteristics of dharmas of the present. It is through unimpeded knowledge of meaning that he knows the different characteristics of dharmas of the past and future. It is through unimpeded knowledge of language that, knowing all dharmas of the past, future, and present, he

discourses on them in a manner free of discriminations. And it is through unimpeded knowledge of eloquence that he is therefore able to discourse with boundless Dharma light on each of the periods of time.²⁸⁰

(R) Additionally, it is through unimpeded knowledge of Dharma that he knows the differences in dharmas, through unimpeded knowledge of meaning that he knows the differences in dharmas' meanings, through unimpeded knowledge of language that he is able to accord with all languages in discoursing on Dharma for others, and through unimpeded knowledge of eloquence that, in discoursing on Dharma for others, he adapts to their predilections and understandings.

(S) Then again, it is through unimpeded knowledge of Dharma that he uses Dharma knowledge to know dharmas' differentiating aspects even as he uses skillful means to know dharmas' non-differentiating aspects. It is through unimpeded knowledge of meaning that he uses comparative knowledge to know the distinctions among dharmas, through unimpeded knowledge of language that he uses worldly knowledge to discourse on dharmas' distinctions, and through unimpeded knowledge of eloquence that he knows how to discourse skillfully on ultimate truth.

(T) Additionally, it is through unimpeded knowledge of Dharma that he knows all dharmas' singular and indestructible character. It is through unimpeded knowledge of meaning that he thoroughly fathoms the dharmas of the aggregates, sense bases, sense realms, truths, and causes and conditions. It is through unimpeded knowledge of language that he employs such a subtle and wondrous voice in his discourse that all inhabitants of the world are able to understand its import. And it is through unimpeded knowledge of eloquence that whatever he discourses upon becomes ever more supremely able to cause beings to acquire the boundless light of Dharma.

(U) Then again, it is through unimpeded knowledge of Dharma that he knows the absence of differentiating distinctions among all dharmas and knows them to be entirely subsumed within the One Vehicle. It is through unimpeded knowledge of meaning that he enters the gateway of the distinctions between dharmas. It is through unimpeded knowledge of language that he is able to discourse on the meaning of the nonexistence of distinctions between the vehicles. And it is through unimpeded knowledge of eloquence that, employing but a single Dharma gateway, he discourses with boundless Dharma radiance.

(v) Additionally, it is through unimpeded knowledge of Dharma that he is able to enter the practices of all bodhisattvas, the practice of knowledge, the practice of the Dharma, and the practices following from knowledge. It is through unimpeded knowledge of meaning that he is able to distinguish and explain the differentiating aspects in meaning contained within the ten grounds. It is through unimpeded knowledge of language that he discourses without discrimination on progressing along the path of the grounds. And it is through unimpeded knowledge of eloquence that he discourses on the boundless aspects of all practices.

(w) Also, it is through unimpeded knowledge of Dharma that he knows all buddhas' realization of bodhi in but a single mind-moment, through unimpeded knowledge of meaning that he knows all of the distinctions among all different sorts of times and places, through unimpeded knowledge of language that he discourses on different matters related to all buddhas' realization of the path, and through unimpeded knowledge of eloquence that he may discourse on but a single sentence of Dharma for boundlessly many kalpas and still not come to the end of it.

(x) Furthermore, it is through unimpeded knowledge of Dharma that he knows all buddhas' proclamations as well as all buddhas' powers, fearlessnesses, dharmas exclusive to buddhas, great kindness, great compassion, unimpeded knowledges, turning of the Dharma wheel, and other such matters that follow from and accord with their all-knowledge. It is through unimpeded knowledge of meaning that he knows the manner in which the voice of the Tathāgata is brought forth in eighty-four thousand different ways adapted to beings resolute intentions,²⁸¹ adapted to their faculties, and adapted to their different resolute convictions.²⁸² It is through unimpeded knowledge of language that in he employs the Tathāgata's voice to discourse on all of the practices without making discriminations. And it is through unimpeded knowledge of eloquence that he employs the power of all buddhas' wisdom to discourse with a voice adapted to beings' resolute convictions.²⁸³

17. HIS ACQUISITION OF DHĀRAṆĪS & FURTHER RECEIPT OF BUDDHAS' DHARMA

(y) Sons of the Buddha, the bodhisattva *mahāsattva* who thoroughly knows the unimpeded knowledges in these ways dwells securely on the ninth ground wherein he is known as one who has acquired the Dharma treasury of all buddhas. He is able to become a great master of the Dharma who acquires the manifold

meanings *dhāraṇī*, the manifold dharmas *dhāraṇī*, the arising of wisdom *dhāraṇī*, the manifold illuminations *dhāraṇī*, the good intelligence *dhāraṇī*, the manifold wealth *dhāraṇī*, the *dhāraṇī* of wide renown, the awe-inspiring virtue *dhāraṇī*, the unobstructed *dhāraṇī*, the boundless *dhāraṇī*, and the treasury of various meanings *dhāraṇī*, acquiring thus a hundred myriads of *asamkhyeyas* of such *dhāraṇīs*. Adapting to what is appropriate to the circumstances, he employs skillful means in his discourse. In this way, as he expounds on the Dharma, he utilizes measurelessly many different gateways of eloquence.

Having acquired such an immeasurably great number of *dhāraṇī* gateways as these, he is able then to listen to the Dharma in the presence of all buddhas and, having heard it, he does not then forget it. According with the way that he has heard the Dharma spoken, he is able then to use measurelessly many different gateways in expounding for others.

(2) Just as this bodhisattva employs a hundred myriads of *asamkhyeyas* of *dhāraṇīs* in listening to and taking in the Dharma in the presence of a single buddha, so too does he also do so in the presence of all of the other immeasurably and boundlessly many buddhas. When this bodhisattva goes forth and pays reverence to a Buddha, the gateways of Dharma light that he then learns are so extensive that, even in a hundred thousand kalpas, a greatly learned *śrāvaka*-disciple possessed of *dhāraṇī* powers could never succeed in absorbing and retaining them.

18. HIS EXPOUNDING ON DHARMA THROUGHOUT A GREAT TRICHILIOCOSM

Having acquired such *dhāraṇī* power, unimpeded knowledges, and powers of eloquence as these, when this bodhisattva discourses on Dharma, even as he resides there on the Dharma throne, he speaks on Dharma throughout the worlds of a great trichiliocosm in a manner adapted to the mental dispositions²⁸⁴ of the beings therein. As he holds forth from the Dharma throne, the Dharma light acquired in the mind of this bodhisattva is paramount in its supremacy over everyone with the sole exception of buddhas and those bodhisattvas who have already received the consecration.

19. THIS BODHISATVA'S VARIOUS VOICE-LIKE EXPRESSIONS IN TEACHING BEINGS

When this bodhisattva sits on the Dharma throne:

He may employ but a single utterance of his voice to influence everyone in an entire great assembly to gain complete

comprehension, whereupon they immediately succeed in acquiring complete comprehension.

Or he may employ many different sorts of voices to cause everyone in a great assembly to develop an understanding, whereupon they immediately develop an understanding.

Or he may remain silent and only emanate radiant light in order to cause everyone in an entire great assembly to acquire an understanding of Dharma, whereupon they immediately acquire an understanding of Dharma.

Or he may cause all of his hair pores to put forth the sounds of Dharma, or he may cause all things both with and without form throughout an entire great trichilocosm to put forth the sounds of Dharma, or else he may cause a single sound to everywhere fill up the world, thereby causing everyone therein to gain an understanding.

20. HIS INDEPENDENT COMMAND OF COUNTLESS SIMULTANEOUS VOICES

Even if all beings in a great trichilocosm's worlds were to simultaneously present questions to this bodhisattva while each of those beings employed a measureless and boundless number of voices that each presented different questions to him, and even as this was so for each single being, so too did all the other beings also pose entirely different questions, this bodhisattva would still be able in but a single mind-moment to absorb all such questions and then, employing but a single voice, he would be able to cause all those beings to acquire understandings corresponding to their particular questions.

So too would this be the case in a circumstance involving two great trichilocosms filled with such beings, in a circumstance involving three, four, five, ten, twenty, thirty, forty, or fifty great trichilocosms, in a circumstance involving a hundred trichilocosms, in a circumstance involving a thousand great trichilocosms, or in a circumstance involving a myriad, ten myriads, a hundred myriads, a *koṭi*, or even ten *koṭis* of great trichilocosms, a hundred, a thousand, or even a myriad *koṭis* of *nayutas* of trichilocosms, and so forth on up to an ineffable²⁸⁵ number of ineffably many great trichilocosms, all of them filled with such beings. As he expounds the Dharma for them on such a vast scale, he is augmented by the spiritual power of the Buddha. Thus he is able then to engage on a vast scale in performing the works of the Buddha for the sake of all these beings.

21. THE BODHISATTVA'S VIGOR IN QUEST OF THE LIGHT OF KNOWLEDGE

He redoubles the intensity of his vigor in acquisition of the light of knowledge such as this even to this degree: Suppose that on the tip of a single hair there existed great assemblies as numerous as the atoms in an ineffable number of ineffably many world systems wherein buddhas residing in the midst of each of those assemblies were expounding Dharma for beings' sakes. Suppose as well that each buddha therein adapted his discourse on Dharma to the minds of however many beings were present therein, thereby causing each and every one of those beings to acquire in his own mind however countless many dharmas he was setting forth. Suppose also that, just as this circumstance held for any one of those buddhas, so too did it also hold for all the buddhas residing in all of those great assemblies discoursing on Dharma. And suppose too that, just as this circumstance obtained on this one single hair point, so too did it also hold for all such places throughout the worlds of all the ten directions. Even in a circumstance such as this, he is accordingly able to bring forth just such a commensurately immense power of recall that, in but a single mind-moment, he is able to absorb all of the Dharma light received from all those buddhas and still not forget even a single sentence.

In circumstances such as the above described great assemblies full of beings listening to the Dharma, he may even be present therein employing the absolutely pure light of Dharma to expound it in such a way that they are caused to understand it. He is thus able in but a single mind-moment to cause however many beings are present therein to all become filled with delight. How much the more so is he able to accomplish this for the sake of the beings in any particular number of worlds.

The roots of goodness of this bodhisattva dwelling on this ground become ever more supreme. Whether it be day or night, he has no other thought aside from his aspiration to deeply enter the realm in which the Buddhas course.²⁸⁶ Abiding within the assemblies of all buddhas, he always deeply penetrates into the bodhisattva's liberations.

22. THE BODHISATTVA'S SEEING AND SERVING OF COUNTLESS BUDDHAS

As he continues along in his compliance with knowledge such as this, this bodhisattva always sees all buddhas such that, in each and every kalpa, he sees incalculably and boundlessly many hundreds of thousands of myriads of *koṭis* of buddhas and then presents offerings of marvelous gifts to all those buddhas. In the

presence of all those buddhas, he poses all different sorts of queries to them on difficult topics and develops a penetrating comprehension of all of the *dhāraṇīs*.

23. HIS GOOD ROOTS' PURITY LIKE THE GOLD OF A CAKRAVARTIN'S CROWN

The roots of goodness of this bodhisattva become ever more supremely radiant in their purity. In the case of such sons of the Buddha as this, that purity is comparable to when one refines gold to the point where it becomes sufficiently pure to serve in adornments like the jeweled crown of a wheel-turning sage king. In such a circumstance, that crown's radiance becomes such that the necklaces of any of the lesser kings or residents of the four continents could never outshine it.

Sons of the Buddha, so too it is with this bodhisattva *mahāsattva*. As he abides on this Ground of Sublime Goodness, his roots of goodness become ever more supremely radiant in their purity, so much so that they cannot be rivaled by anyone at all. They cannot be rivaled by any *śrāvaka*-disciple, by any *pratyekabuddha*, or by any bodhisattva residing on any of the [lower]²⁸⁷ grounds.

The roots of goodness of this bodhisattva so increase in their brightness that they become able to illuminate beings' affliction-related entangling difficulties²⁸⁸ and, having illuminated them, they then recede.

24. HIS GOOD ROOTS' PURITY LIKE A BRAHMA HEAVEN KING'S RADIANCE

Sons of the Buddha, this circumstance is analogous to that of the Great Brahma Heaven King who is able to illuminate all of the entangling difficulties existing anywhere throughout the entire great trichiliocosm. So too it is in the case of this bodhisattva who, as he abides on this bodhisattva ground, the Ground of Sublime Goodness, he develops such radiant purity in his roots of goodness that he is able to illuminate beings' affliction-related entangling difficulties and, having once illuminated them, they then recede.

25. VAJRAGARBHĀ'S FINAL STATEMENTS ABOUT THE 9TH GROUND BODHISATTVA

Sons of the Buddha, this constitutes a summary explanation of the bodhisattva *mahāsattva*'s ninth bodhisattva ground, the Ground of Sublime Goodness. Were one to engage in an extensive discussion of it, then one could never come to the end of it even in incalculably many kalpas.

a. THE BODHISATTVA'S STATION AND DHARMA PRACTICE

The bodhisattva dwelling on this ground often serves as a Great Brahma Heaven king in which capacity he serves as the leader overseeing a great trichiliocosm, one over whom no one can establish supremacy, one who explains principles in accordance with reality, and one who acts with sovereign mastery wherever such mastery may be exercised. He is well able to proclaim the teachings of *śrāvaka*-disciples and *pratyekabuddhas* as well as the *pāramitās* of the bodhisattvas. Should any being pose a challenging question to him, no one is able to exhaust his ability to completely respond.

b. THE BODHISATTVA'S MINDFULNESS

In all of the good works to which he devotes himself, whether they be in the sphere of giving, pleasing words, beneficial actions, or joint endeavors, he never departs from mindfulness of the Buddha, mindfulness of the Dharma, mindfulness of his bodhisattva companions, and so forth until we come to his never departing from mindfulness of the knowledge of all modes.

c. THE BODHISATTVA'S ASPIRATION TO SERVE BEINGS

He always brings forth this thought: "Oh, when will I be able to finally become one who can serve as a leader for beings, one worthy of their veneration?" and so forth until we come to his thinking, "Oh, when will I be able to become one upon whom all beings can rely?"

d. THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE BODHISATTVA'S VIGOR AND VOWS

If this bodhisattva wishes to devote himself to the diligent application of vigor, then in but a single mind-moment, he succeeds in acquiring *samādhis* as numerous as the atoms in a hundred myriad *asaṃkhyeyas* of trichiliocosms, and so forth until we come to his becoming able to manifest a hundred myriads of *asaṃkhyeyas* of bodhisattvas serving him as a retinue. Were he to avail himself of the power of vows, through sovereign mastery in the spiritual superknowledges, he could manifest these phenomena in even greater numbers so large that one could never describe them even in however many hundreds of thousands of myriads of *koṭis* of *nayutas* of kalpas one might attempt to do so.

26. VAJRAGARBHA BODHISATTVA'S SUMMARIZING VERSES

At that time, Vajragarbha Bodhisattva, wishing to once again clarify his meaning, thereupon uttered verses, saying:

The bodhisattvas who accord
with the power of that immeasurably profound wisdom
that is the most sublimely subtle
and difficult for anyone in the world to know
and who pursue the benefit of beings
become able to reach to the ninth ground. (14)

They succeed in entering the Buddha's
treasury of secrets
and become able to acquire the most supremely subtle and sublime
samādhis and *dhāraṇīs*.

Employing immense powers of spiritual superknowledges,
they skillfully penetrate the characteristic aspects of the world.
With decisive power of wisdom,
they are able to contemplate the dharmas of the Buddha
and, with great vows and compassionate resolve that is pure,
they succeed in entering the ninth ground. (15)

One practicing in accordance with this superior ground
who preserves the treasury of the buddhas
immediately becomes able to penetratingly understand all dharmas
whether they are good, unwholesome, or neutral,
whether they are associated with or free of the contaminants,
associated with the world or transcendent of the world,
and whether they are conceivable
or they are inconceivable. (16)

He knows of dharmas whether they are definite or indefinite
and knows the characteristic features comprising the Three Vehicles.
He contemplates and distinguishes these.
As for the characteristics of the conditioned and the unconditioned,
he brings forth a knowledge of dharmas such as these
and dispels all darkness of ignorance. (17)

As for his mind in its accordance with knowledge such as this,
it reaches the foremost level of subtlety.
He completely knows with respect to all beings their
hazardous entangling difficulties, their minds' diverse manifesta-
tions,
their readily agitated and easily turned minds,
and their boundless and independent minds. (18)

He knows their afflictions' deep and superficial aspects
and their accompanying and never existing apart from the mind.
He also knows the signs of entanglement with the latent tendencies
in the coursing along through continuous existences.

He knows all the different sorts of variations in their karma,
 knows each and every one of its different characteristics,
 knows that, even with destruction of causes, their effects are not lost,
 and thus has a penetrating comprehension of such matters as these.
 (19)

He also knows with respect to beings
 all their various faculties, whether weak, middling, or sharp,
 as well as the vast number of other such distinctions
 including their characteristics in both the past and the future,
 their distinct differences when superior, middling, or inferior,
 as well as all of their various aspirations, predilections, and such,
 even up to the point that he is able to completely know
 their eighty-four thousand different varieties. (20)

He knows the sense realms²⁸⁹ of those in the world in this same way,
 knows their entangling difficulties connected to afflictions and
 views,
 knows they remain unsevered from the beginningless past onward,
 knows their mental intentions and all their latent tendencies,
 all of which act together with the mind,
 and knows that they tie up the mind and are difficult to sever. (21)

He knows all of their latent tendencies and such,
 knows they are but discriminations arising with discursive thinking,
 knows that they are devoid of any place wherein they abide,
 knows that they are also devoid of fixed phenomenal characteristics,
 that they do not exist apart from the body,
 that they are also difficult to become aware of,
 that one is able to block them through the power of *dhyāna* samādhi,
 and knows that one becomes able to sever them on the vajra path. (22)

He is also able to know with respect to beings
 the differences in their entry into the six rebirth destinies, knows that
 cravings serve as water, ignorance serves as darkness that covers,
 karmic actions are the field, and consciousness is the seed
 that gives rise to its sprout as the subsequent life's body
 wherein name-and-form develop and grow together, and that,
 throughout beginningless births and deaths up to the present,
 this continues on within the three realms of existence. (23)

He knows too with respect to the devas, the dragons, and all the rest,
 their afflicted actions and mental propensities,
 knows that, if they were to leave behind such mental propensities,
 then none of these births would occur at all,

and knows too that all beings,
in every case reside within the three categorical types of beings²⁹⁰
that may be either submerged in wrong views
or else abiding on the path of knowledge. {24}

The bodhisattva dwelling on this ground
knows entirely the mental dispositions of beings,
their faculties, their resolute beliefs,
and so forth in all their different variations.

Through profound thought and skillful contemplation,
he adapts to what is appropriate and then teaches them the Dharma.
Through penetrating comprehension of the unimpeded knowledges,
he is skillful in the use of language as he speaks. {25}

In his serving as a master of the Dharma, this bodhisattva
is like the king of the lions,
like the king of the bulls, and like the king of the mountains,
for he abides established in fearlessness,
everywhere raining down in all worlds
the flavor of the finest sweet-dew elixir.
In this, he is like the great king of the dragons
who is able to send down the rains that fill the great oceans. {26}

This bodhisattva thoroughly knows
the unimpeded knowledges of Dharma, meaning, and language
and is well able to adaptively implement
the fully accomplished power of eloquence.

He is able to acquire a hundred myriads
of *asaṃkhyeyas* of comprehensive-retention *dhāraṇīs*
through which he is able to take in the dharmas of all buddhas
just as the ocean takes in the rains sent down by the dragons. {27}

This bodhisattva acquires just such
profoundly marvelous and pure
dhāraṇīs, countless in number, and,
through the power associated with all of his samādhis,
he becomes able in just the space of a single mind-moment
to see incalculably many buddhas.
Having heard their teachings, with a pure Brahman voice,
he then expounds upon those marvelous Dharma jewels. {28}

This bodhisattva may provide instruction
to the beings inhabiting a great trichiliocosm,
adapting in this to their minds' faculties and mental dispositions,
speaking the Dharma in a way that causes them to be delighted. {29}

In a manner such as this, even in the lands throughout an incalculable number of great trichiliocosms, he becomes ever more intensely diligent in his application of vigor in a manner that one could contemplate in this way:

Suppose that on the tip of a single hair there are measurelessly many buddhas speaking Dharma wherein, for the sake of all different sorts of people, those buddhas are expounding on the sublime Dharma.

In such a case, this bodhisattva is able to take it all in in a manner comparable to the earth's taking in of all seeds. ⁽³⁰⁾

Additionally, he makes a vow such as this:

"Supposing all of the beings existing in all lands throughout the ten directions all came together as a single assembly,

I should, in but a single mind-moment, completely know the thoughts in all their minds and then, employing but a single voice, proclaim the Dharma in a manner that causes all of their nets of doubts to be cut away." ⁽³¹⁾

The bodhisattva dwelling on this ground serves as a king of the Dharma for both humans and devas among whom he becomes a great Dharma proclaiming master who adapts his teachings to accord with the minds of beings

and always, throughout both day and night, gathers together with all buddhas and is able to abide in the extremely profound and sublime quiescent knowledge and liberation. ⁽³²⁾

As he presents offerings to countless many buddhas and as his roots of goodness become so increasingly radiant in purity that they become comparable in their radiance to that of the real gold adorning the crown of the Wheel-Turning King,

his light illuminates beings' hazardous difficulties linked to their afflictions just as the light of the Brahma Heaven King illuminates the worlds of the great trichiliocosm. ⁽³³⁾

The bodhisattva dwelling on this ground serves the worlds of a great trichiliocosm as a great Brahma Heaven king whose faculties are all acutely sharp

and who is skillful in using the Dharma of the Three Vehicles
to instruct and awaken all of those beings residing therein.

The good karmic works to which he devotes himself
are all done in a manner accordant with right mindfulness. {34}

He becomes able, in but a single mind-moment,
to acquire deep and sublime samādhis
as numerous as the atoms
in measurelessly many worlds.

He is able to see the buddhas of the ten directions
speaking the Dharma with their sublimely marvelous voices.
The buddhas he sees and the power of his great superknowledges
increase through his additional generation of immeasurable vows. {35}

We hereby now conclude this summary explanation
of such aspects as these of the practice of great knowledge
as it is carried forth on the ninth ground
in profoundly marvelous way that is difficult to know or see. {36}