

PART SIX

The Direct Presence Ground

F. THE SIXTH GROUND: THE DIRECT PRESENCE GROUND

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

Having heard this teaching of supreme practices, the bodhisattvas' minds were filled with joy, they rained down marvelous blossoms, emanated pure light, sprinkled down precious jewels as offerings to the Tathāgata, and praised his excellent discourse. (1)

A hundred thousand assembled devas, full of celebratory delight, at once scattered down from space the many jewels as offerings, together with floral garlands, strands of pearls, banners, jeweled canopies, and perfumes, all offered there to the Buddha. (2)

The Vaśavartin Heaven King, together with his retinue, all with minds filled with joyous delight, stood above in space, scattered jewels forming a cloud holding their offerings, praised him, and said, "O Buddha's Son, may you soon proclaim this teaching." (3)

Countless celestial nymphs residing above in space together made offerings of music and song in praise of the Buddha wherein one heard amidst their voicings such words as these: "The Buddha's discourse can expel the disease of the afflictions. (4)

The nature of dharmas is originally quiescent, devoid of all signs, and like empty space in that one makes no discriminations therein. It transcends all attachments, reaches beyond the path of words, and is genuine, uniformly equal, and eternally pure. (5)

If one can completely comprehend the nature of dharmas, his mind is unmoved by what exists or by what does not exist as he cultivates diligently to rescue the inhabitants of the world. This is a true son of the Buddha, born from the Buddha's mouth. (6)

He does not seize on the various marks in his practicing of giving, fundamentally cuts off all evil, and solidly upholds the precepts. Knowing the Dharma, he is thus free of harming and always patient. Knowing dharmas as by nature transcendent,¹⁵⁷ he is perfect in vigor. (7)

Having ended the afflictions, he enters the *dhyānas*, and, in making distinctions about dharmas, knows well they are devoid of a nature. Replete in wisdom power, he is able to extensively rescue beings and, being rid of the many evils, he gains renown as a great eminence." (8)

Having used such marvelous voices of a thousand myriad sorts in offering praises, they then fell silent and gazed up at the Buddha. (9) Liberation Moon then set forth the request to Vajragarbha, “Through which practice attributes does one enter the next ground?” (10)

2. VAJRAGARBHA COMMENCES THE SIXTH GROUND’S EXPLANATION

(A) Vajragarbha Bodhisattva then informed Liberation Moon Bodhisattva, saying:

3. THE TEN DHARMAS OF IDENTITY ENABLING ACCESS TO THE SIXTH GROUND

O Son of the Buddha, the bodhisattva *mahāsattva* who has already completely fulfilled the fifth ground’s practices and then aspires to enter the sixth ground, the Ground of Direct Presence, should then take up the contemplation of ten dharmas of identity.¹⁵⁸ What then are those ten? As follows, all dharmas:¹⁵⁹

- Are the same due to their signlessness;
- Are the same due to their non-substantiality;
- Are the same due to their being unproduced;
- Are the same due to their being unborn;
- Are the same due to their original purity;
- Are the same due to their being beyond frivolous intellectual ideation;
- Are the same due to their being beyond either grasping or relinquishing;
- Are the same due to their quiescence.
- Are the same due to their being like a conjured illusion, like a dream, like a shadow, like an echo, like the moon reflected on water, like an image in a mirror, like a mirage, and like a magical transformation;¹⁶⁰
- And are the same due to the non-duality in their existence and non-existence.

4. SIXTH GROUND ENTRY, ACQUIESCENT PATIENCE & PRIMACY OF COMPASSION

The bodhisattva who contemplates all dharmas in this way realizes their nature is pure and practices in a manner that is consistent with this and that is free of anything that contradicts this. He thereby succeeds in entering the sixth ground, the Ground of Direct Presence, and acquires the acquiescent patience characterized by clarity and acuity.¹⁶¹ Even so, he has not yet reached the realization of the unproduced-dharmas patience.

(B) Son of the Buddha, once this bodhisattva *mahāsattva* has come to contemplate in this manner, he then additionally takes the great compassion as what is foremost, the great compassion as what is to

be made predominant, and the great compassion as what is to be brought to complete fulfillment.

5. THE BODHISATTVA'S CONTEMPLATION OF CAUSALITY IN CYCLIC EXISTENCE¹⁶²

(c) He contemplates production and extinction as it takes place in the world, thinking, "Taking on rebirth in the world in every case arises through attachment to a self. Were one to abandon this attachment, then there would no longer be any basis for being reborn."

a. CONTEMPLATION OF THE SEQUENTIAL CONTINUITY OF THE CAUSAL FACTORS

He additionally thinks:¹⁶³

Common people, so unknowing, are attached to a self, always seek existence or non-existence, engage in wrong thought, pursue falsely-based actions, and follow erroneous paths wherein they accumulate and increase offense-generating actions, merit-generating actions, or imperturbable actions.¹⁶⁴ Through all courses of actions, they plant mental seeds associated with the contaminants and with the *grasping* that further precipitates subsequent *becoming*, *birth*, *aging*, and *death*. This is a circumstance said to be one wherein one's karmic *volitional actions* serve as a field, one's *consciousness* serves as seeds, *ignorance* keeps them covered in darkness, the water of *cravings* moistens them, and pride in oneself irrigates them.

As the net of views grows, the sprout of *name-and-form* is produced. As *name-and-form* develop, the five physical sense faculties are formed. With the oppositional impingement [of sense objects] on the sense faculties, *contact* is produced. This impingement-generated *contact* produces *feeling*. Subsequent wishing for further *feeling* produces *craving*. Increased *craving* brings about *grasping*. An increase in *grasping* produces *becoming*. Having produced *becoming*, it is one's generating of the five-aggregate bodies as one courses in the various destinies that constitutes *birth*, the deterioration following upon *birth* that constitutes *aging*, and the culmination of this process in mortality that brings about *death*. When *aging* and *death* arrive, one is seized by intense mental torment and, on account of this intense mental torment, one is then beset by distress, worry, sorrowful lamentation, and the accumulation of a multitude of sufferings.

Because this is all simply a product of causes and conditions, there is no entity for whom this accumulation takes place, and, even as this process proceeds on to destruction, there is still no existent entity that is destroyed, either.

The bodhisattva pursues just such an investigative contemplation of the characteristic features of causally-based origination.

b. THE BODHISATTVA CONTEMPLATES THE DEFINITIONS OF CAUSAL LINKS

(D) Son of the Buddha, this bodhisattva *mahāsattva* also thinks thus:

It is the failure to utterly comprehend the ultimate truth that defines *ignorance*.

It is the fruition of karmic actions one has done that constitutes *volitional actions*.

The initial mental factor dependent on *volitional actions* is what constitutes *consciousness*.

The additional four appropriated aggregates arising together with *consciousness* are what constitute *name-and-form*.

The development of *name-and-form* creates *the six sense bases*.

The conjunction of the three phenomena of *sense faculties*, *sense objects*, and *consciousnesses*, constitutes *contact*.

Arising simultaneously with *contact*, there exists *feeling*.

The forming of a defiled attachment for *feeling* is what constitutes *craving*.

Based on an increase in *craving*, *grasping* then occurs.

Those karmic actions associated with the contaminants that arise as a consequence of *grasping* are what constitute *becoming*.

The arising of the aggregates resulting from such karmic actions is what constitutes *birth*.

The progressive maturation of the aggregates is what constitutes *aging*.

When the aggregates perish, this is what constitutes *death*.

The confusion and fond attachment attendant on the separation occurring at the time of dying that then manifest as agitation and depression of the heart—this is what is meant by *worry*.

Weeping and sniveling attended by regretful sighing—this is what is meant by *lamentation*.

That which occurs based on the five physical sense faculties constitutes *pain*, whereas what occurs based on the intellectual mind faculty constitutes *distress*.

As distress and pain increase they result in *mental torment*.

In such circumstances as these, there is only a growing tree of suffering. There is no self in this, nothing belonging to a self, no agent of actions, and no entity undergoing experiences.

He has this additional thought: “If an agent of actions exists, then there exists an endeavor that is done. If no agent of actions exists, then there does not exist any endeavor that is done. From the perspective of ultimate truth, neither of them can even be found.”

c. THE BODHISATTVA'S CONTEMPLATION OF MIND AS THE BASIS OF EXISTENCE

(E) Son of the Buddha, this bodhisattva *mahāsattva* has this additional thought:

Everything throughout the three realms of existence is only mind. (F) Where the Tathāgata has, within this, distinguished and expounded upon these twelve factors comprising the bases of existence, they in every case rely on a single thought and are established on just such a basis. How is this the case?

In accordance with particular circumstances, desire arises together with the mind. In this, the mind constitutes the *consciousness*, whereas the particular circumstances themselves constitute the basis of *volitional actions*. The confusion that exists regarding *volitional actions* constitutes *ignorance*. That which is produced from the cooperation of *ignorance* and the mind is *name-and-form*. That which develops from *name-and-form* is the *six sense bases*. The three-fold conjunction that occurs in association with the *six sense bases* constitutes *contact*. That which arises together with *contact* is *feeling*. Insatiability with respect to such *feeling* constitutes *craving*. *Craving* that becomes focused and is not relinquished culminates in *grasping*. That which all of these branches comprising existence produce is *becoming*. That which *becoming* brings forth is *birth*. The maturation of what has been born constitutes *aging*. The perishing brought on through *aging* is *death*.

d. THE CONTEMPLATION OF 2 FUNCTIONS OF EACH CAUSAL CHAIN LINK

(G) Son of the Buddha, among these, *ignorance* has two types of karmic functions: First, it causes beings to be confused with respect to objective conditions. Second, it serves as a cause for the initiation of *volitional actions*.

Volitional actions also have two types of functions: First, they are capable of generating future retributions. Second, they serve as causes for the initiation of *consciousness*.

Consciousness also has two types of functions: First, it causes continuity of *becoming*. Second, it serves as a cause for the initiation of *name-and-form*.

Name-and-form also have two types of functions: First, they are mutually cooperative in their establishment. Second, they serve as the cause for the initiation of the *six sense bases*.

The *six sense bases* also have two types of functions: First, each of them clings to its own respective objective sense realm. Second, they serve as the cause for the initiation of *contact*.

Contact also has two types of functions: First, it is capable of touching its objective condition. Second, it serves as the cause for the initiation of *feeling*.

Feeling also has two types of functions: First it is capable of serving as the recipient of experiences that are craved, detested, and so forth. Second, it serves as the cause for the initiation of *craving*.

Craving also has two types of functions: First, it consists of a defiled attachment to whatsoever circumstances are deemed desirable. Second, it serves as the cause for the initiation of *grasping*.

Grasping also has two types of functions: First, it causes continuity of the afflictions. Second, it serves as the cause for the initiation of *becoming*.

Becoming also has two types of functions. First, it is capable of causing rebirth into the other destinies. Second, it serves as the cause for the initiation of *birth*.

Birth also has two types of functions. First, it is able to generate the aggregates. Second, it serves as the cause for the initiation of *aging*.

Aging also has two types of functions. First, it causes all of the sense faculties to undergo change. Second, it serves as the cause for the onset of *death*.

Death also has two types of functions. First, it is capable of destroying all actions. Second, because there is then no conscious awareness, it allows this process to continue on and not be cut off.

e. THE CONTEMPLATION OF CAUSAL CHAIN PRODUCTION AND DESTRUCTION

{H} Son of the Buddha, in this circumstance wherein *ignorance* serves as a condition for *volitional actions*, and so on till we have *birth* serving as a condition for *aging-and-death*, it is because *ignorance* and so on up to *birth* serve as conditions that there then occurs the causation of *volitional actions* and so on up to *aging-and-death*. This occurs on account of [the prior conditions'] ceaseless facilitation of the establishment [of the subsequent conditions].

f. CONTEMPLATION OF THE 12 LINKS' ASSOCIATION WITH INSEPARABILITY.

In the circumstances wherein, "if *ignorance* is extinguished, then *volitional actions* will be extinguished," and so forth until we come to "if *birth* is extinguished, then *aging-and-death* will be extinguished," this occurs because, in those circumstances, *ignorance* and so forth on up to *birth*, do not then any longer serve as conditions causing the initiation of *volitional actions* and so on up to

aging-and-death. This extinguishing through severance occurs because there no longer occurs the [prior condition's] facilitating establishment [of the subsequent condition].

g. THE TWELVE LINKS AS CONSTITUENTS OF THREE PATHS

(i) Son of the Buddha, among these, ceaseless *ignorance*, *craving*, and *grasping* constitute *the path of the afflictions*. Ceaseless *volitional actions* and *becoming* constitute *the path of karmic actions*. The ceaseless occurrence of the remaining factors constitutes *the path of suffering*. Analytic extinguishing of these prior and subsequent factors facilitates severance of all three paths.¹⁶⁵ [The factors comprising] these three paths exist apart from any self or possessions of a self and exist only as a process of production and extinction wherein they are analogous to standing sheaves of mutually-supporting reeds.¹⁶⁶

h. THE TWELVE LINKS' CORRELATION WITH THE THREE PERIODS OF TIME

(j) Additionally, where *ignorance* serves as the condition for the occurrence of *volitional actions*, this refers to past circumstances. The factors of *consciousness* on up to and including *feeling* refers to present circumstances. The factors of *craving* and so forth on up to and including *becoming* refer to future circumstances. Henceforth there occurs the unfolding of an ongoing continuity.

In those instances where the cessation of *ignorance* precipitates cessation of *volitional actions*, this is a case of severance occurring due to the dependency [of the latter conditions upon the prior conditions].

i. THE TWELVE LINKS' CORRELATION WITH THE THREE KINDS OF SUFFERING

(k) Additionally, the twelve factors comprising the bases of existence are synonymous with *the three sufferings*. Among these, *ignorance*, *volitional actions*, and so forth on up to and including *the six sense bases* collectively constitute *the suffering associated with the karmic formative factors*.¹⁶⁷ *Contact* and *feeling* constitute *the suffering of suffering*.¹⁶⁸ The remaining factors constitute *the suffering of deterioration*.¹⁶⁹

j. CONTEMPLATION OF THEIR ARISING & CEASING BY CAUSES AND CONDITIONS

Where the cessation of *ignorance* brings about the cessation of *volitional actions*, these three types of suffering are then cut off.

(l) Additionally, in *ignorance's* serving as a condition for the generation of *volitional actions*, *ignorance* is the cause and condition that can produce all manner of *volitional actions*. As for the circumstance wherein, once *ignorance* is extinguished, *volitional actions*

are then extinguished, it is because, once there is an absence of *ignorance*, there are then no *volitional actions*, either. This same circumstance holds for all of the remaining factors as well.

k. CONTEMPLATION OF THEIR CREATION AND DESTRUCTION OF THE BONDS

Also, in *ignorance's* serving as a condition for the generation of *volitional actions*, this conduces to the generation of bondage. Where, with the extinguishing of *ignorance*, *volitional actions* are then extinguished, this then brings about the extinguishing of this bondage. This same principle holds for all of the remaining factors as well.

l. CONTEMPLATION OF "UTTER NONEXISTENCE" AND "UTTER CESSATION"

Then again, in *ignorance's* serving as a condition for the generation of *volitional actions*, this is a circumstance adaptable to the "nonexistence of anything whatsoever" contemplation. Where, with the extinguishing of *ignorance*, *volitional actions* are then extinguished, this is a circumstance adaptable to the "utter cessation of everything" contemplation. This same principle holds for all of the remaining factors as well.

m. A SUMMARY LISTING OF 10 CONTEMPLATIONS OF THE 12 CAUSAL FACTORS

(M) Son of the Buddha, the bodhisattva *mahāsattva* thus engages in ten types of sequential and counter-sequential contemplation of the factors involved in conditioned arising,¹⁷⁰ specifically:¹⁷¹

Contemplation of the sequential continuity in the existential factors.

Contemplation of their all being reducible to the one mind.

Contemplation of their each having their own distinct function.

Contemplation of their inseparability.

Contemplation of the non-severance of the three paths.¹⁷²

Contemplation of their relationship to the past, the present, or the future.

Contemplation in terms of the accumulation of the three kinds of suffering.

Contemplation of their arising and ceasing through causes and conditions.

Contemplation in terms of the creation and destruction of bondage.

Contemplation in terms of "utter nonexistence" and "utter cessation."

6. THE BODHISATTVA'S ACQUISITION OF THE THREE GATES TO LIBERATION

{N} Son of the Buddha, the bodhisattva *mahāsattva* contemplates everything within the realm of conditioned arising in accordance with these ten characteristics. Thus he realizes that there is no self, no person, and no lifespan, that there is an absence of any inherently existent nature, and that there is also no agent of actions or anyone who undergoes experiences. He then immediately acquires the direct manifestation of *the emptiness gate to liberation*.¹⁷³

He contemplates all of the factors associated with becoming as having the nature of cessation, as ultimately synonymous with liberation, and as not having even the smallest dharma characteristic that they produce. He then immediately acquires the direct manifestation of *the signlessness gate to liberation*.¹⁷⁴

Having thus gained entry into both emptiness and signlessness, he then becomes entirely free of anything at all that he seeks with the sole exception of taking the great compassion as foremost in the transformative teaching of beings. He then immediately acquires the direct manifestation of *the wishlessness gate to liberation*.¹⁷⁵

Thus it is that, in his cultivation of *the three gates to liberation*, the bodhisattva abandons conceptions of the existence of either others or a self, abandons conceptions of either any agent of actions or anyone who undergoes experiences, and abandons the conceptions of anything as either existent or nonexistent.

7. THE BODHISATTVA'S COMPASSIONATE RELUCTANCE TO ENTER FINAL NIRVĀṆA

{O} Son of the Buddha, this bodhisattva *mahāsattva's* great compassion progressively increases. He is energetically diligent in his cultivation and, for the sake of bringing about the complete fulfillment of those factors facilitating bodhi he has not yet completely fulfilled, he reflects thus:

All conditioned things possess an ongoing existence through a circumstance involving the conjunction of factors. Where there is no such circumstance involving the conjunction of factors, there is then no ongoing existence. When the conditions gather together, they may then possess an ongoing existence. When those conditions do not gather together, there is no ongoing existence.

Thus I realize that, since conditioned dharmas are beset by many faults, I should cut off this conjunction of causes and conditions. However, for the sake of facilitating the successful

development of other beings, I shall nonetheless refrain from bringing about the ultimate extinguishing of all volitional actions.

Son of the Buddha, thus it is that the bodhisattva contemplatively investigates all conditioned things as possessed of many faults, as devoid of any inherently existent nature, as neither produced nor destroyed, and yet he nonetheless constantly generates the great compassion, refrains from abandoning beings, and then straight-away acquires the direct manifestation of the *prajñāpāramitā* known as the light of unimpeded wisdom.

Having successfully acquired such wisdom light, although he cultivates the causes and conditions related to the factors facilitating bodhi, he still refrains from abiding in the realm of conditioned things. And although he contemplates the nature of conditioned dharmas as that of quiescent cessation, he still does not abide in quiescent cessation either. This is because he has not yet achieved the complete fulfillment of the dharmas that lead to the realization of bodhi.

8. THE BODHISATTVA'S SAMĀDHIS RELATED TO THE 3 GATES TO LIBERATION

(P) Son of the Buddha, the bodhisattva who dwells on this Ground of Direct Presence succeeds in entering:¹⁷⁶

The penetration of emptiness samādhi;
 The emptiness of any inherently existent nature samādhi;
 The emptiness of the supreme meaning samādhi;
 The foremost emptiness samādhi;
 The great emptiness samādhi;
 The emptiness of unities samādhi;
 The emptiness of production samādhi;
 The reality-accordant non-discriminating emptiness samādhi;
 The non-abandonment emptiness samādhi;
 And the transcendent yet not transcendent emptiness samādhi.

With these ten emptiness samādhis as foremost among them, this bodhisattva acquires the direct manifestation of every one of a hundred thousand emptiness samādhis. In this same way, with ten signlessness samādhis and ten wishlessness samādhis as foremost, he also acquires the direct manifestation of every one of a hundred thousand signlessness and wishlessness samādhis.

9. THE BODHISATTVA'S TEN TYPES OF RESOLUTE INTENTIONS

(Q) Son of the Buddha, the bodhisattva who dwells on this Ground of Direct Presence also cultivates and completely perfects:¹⁷⁷

The indestructible resolute intention;¹⁷⁸
 The definitely certain resolute intention;
 The resolute intention of pure goodness;
 The especially profound resolute intention;
 The non-retreating resolute intention;
 The unrelenting resolute intention;
 The vast resolute intention;
 The boundless resolute intention;
 The knowledge-seeking resolute intention;
 And the resolute intention joining skillful means and wisdom.

In every case, he brings all of these to a state of perfect fulfillment.

10. 10 CONSEQUENCES OF THE BODHISATTVA'S 10 TYPES OF RESOLUTE INTENTIONS

(R) Son of the Buddha, in availing himself of these types of resolute intentions, the bodhisattva:

Accords with the bodhi of the Buddhas;
 Remains unfrightened by encounters with proponents of deviant doctrines;
 Enters all the grounds of knowledge;
 Abandons the paths of the Two Vehicles;
 Progresses toward the knowledge of the Buddha;
 Remains invulnerable to obstruction or ruination by any of the afflictions or *māras*;
 Abides within the light of the bodhisattva's wisdom;
 Skillfully cultivates and implements all the dharmas of emptiness, signlessness, and wishlessness;
 In every case skillfully engages in the constantly conjoined practice of skillful means and wisdom;
 And always implements and never relinquishes the dharmas assisting the realization of bodhi.

11. THE BODHISATTVA'S PRAJÑĀPĀRAMITĀ PRACTICE AND PATIENCE ACQUISITION

(S) Son of the Buddha, the bodhisattva abiding on this Ground of Direct Presence acquires an especially supreme degree of realization in the practice of *prajñāpāramitā* and acquires the third of the patiences, the clear and sharp acquiescent patience,¹⁷⁹ this because of acting in accordance with and not contrary to the true character of dharmas.

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

Son of the Buddha, because of the power of his vows, the bodhisattva who has come to dwell on this Ground of Direct Presence

succeeds in seeing many buddhas, that is to say, he can see many hundreds of buddhas and so forth until we come to his seeing of many hundreds of thousands of *koṭis* of *nayutas* of buddhas. In every instance, with a vast mind and a profound mind, he makes offerings to them, pays reverence to them, venerates them, praises them, and presents them with robes, food and drink, bedding, medicines, and all amenities supporting their existence, offering up all of these things while also making offerings to those within all their sangha assemblies. He then proceeds to dedicate the merit associated with these roots of goodness to *anuttarasamyaksambodhi*.

So too does he then respectfully listen to the teachings on Dharma in the presence of those buddhas. Having heard these teachings, he takes them on and retains them, gains reality-concordant samādhis and the light of wisdom, and then accords with these in his cultivation, bearing them in mind and never relinquishing them.

13. PURIFYING GOOD ROOTS LIKE POLISHING GOLD & MOONLIGHT'S COOLNESS

He also gains access to the Buddhas' treasures of extremely profound Dharma and, passing through a hundred kalpas, passing through a thousand kalpas, and so forth on up to incalculably many hundreds of thousands of *koṭis* of *nayutas* of kalpas, his roots of goodness shine ever more brightly in their purity just as when a goldsmith uses a lapis lazuli gem to repeatedly polish real gold, causing it to shine with ever more brilliant purity. So too it is with all the roots of goodness of the bodhisattva who dwells on this ground. Through his use of skillful means and wisdom, in a manner corresponding to his pursuit of meditative contemplation, they become ever brighter and ever more imbued with quiescence to the point where they cannot be outshone by anyone and become like the light of the moon that shines on the bodies of beings and causes them to experience a sense of pristine coolness that the four kinds of wind are incapable of diminishing.

So too it is with all the roots of goodness of the bodhisattva on this ground who is able to use them to extinguish the blazing fires of affliction burning in incalculably many hundreds of thousands of *koṭis* of *nayutas* of beings. In this, they remain invulnerable to destruction by the paths of any of the four kinds of *māras*.

14. THE BODHISATTVA'S SPECIALIZATION IN THE PRAJÑĀPĀRAMITĀ

Among the ten *pāramitās*, this bodhisattva most extensively practices the *prajñā pāramitā*. It is not that he does not practice the

others. Rather, he simply accords them an amount of emphasis corresponding to his own strengths and to what is fitting.

15. VAJRAGARBHA'S FINAL STATEMENTS ABOUT THE 6TH GROUND BODHISATTVA

Sons of the Buddha, this has been a general explanation of the bodhisattva *mahāsattva's*, sixth ground, the Ground of Direct Presence.

a. THE BODHISATTVA'S STATION AND DHARMA PRACTICE

The bodhisattva dwelling on this ground often becomes a king of the Skillful Transformations Heaven¹⁸⁰ who, sovereignly masterful in all that he does, is one who cannot be driven into retreat or submission by any questioning challenge posed by any *śrāvaka*-disciple. He is able to influence beings to do away with arrogance and to deeply enter into a comprehension of conditioned origination.

b. THE BODHISATTVA'S MINDFULNESS

In his practice of giving, pleasing words, beneficial actions, and joint endeavors, and in all such works that he pursues, he never departs from mindfulness of the Buddha, and so forth until we come to his never departing from mindfulness of his quest to achieve complete fulfillment of the knowledge of all modes and the cognition of all-knowledge.

c. THE BODHISATTVA'S ASPIRATION TO SERVE BEINGS

He also has this thought: "I should become one who serves these beings as a leader, as one who is supreme," and so forth until we come to "as one who relies on the cognition of all-knowledge."

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

If this bodhisattva brings forth diligently vigorous practice, then, in but a moment, he will be able to enter hundreds of thousands of *koṭis* of samādhis, and so forth until we come to his becoming able to transformationally manifest a hundred thousand *koṭis* of bodhisattvas to serve as his retinue. If he resorts to the power of vows, he will become freely able to manifest them in numbers beyond even this, such that one would never be able to count them even in a period of hundreds of thousands of *koṭis* of *nayutas* of kalpas.

16. VAJRAGARBHA BODHISATTVA'S SUMMARIZING VERSES

At that time, Vajragarbha Bodhisattva, wishing to once again proclaim the meaning of his discourse, thereupon uttered verses, saying:

After entirely fulfilling the fifth ground's practices, the bodhisattva sees dharmas as the same due to their being signless, natureless, unproduced, unborn, originally pure, beyond frivolous ideation, beyond grasping or relinquishing, ⁽¹¹⁾ quiescent in substance and signs, and illusory, as well as non-dual and beyond discrimination as existent or non-existent. Thus contemplating in accordance with the nature of dharmas, those with this knowledge succeed in entering the sixth ground. ⁽¹²⁾

With clear and acute acquiescent patience and replete in knowledge, he contemplates the world's aspects of production and destruction, the world's production by the power of delusion's darkness, and sees, if delusion's darkness were destroyed, the world would not exist. ⁽¹³⁾

He contemplates all causes and conditions as, in reality, empty, yet does not contradict artificial names' use in designating constructs. Even as there is no doer, no recipient, and no thinker of thoughts, all actions arise and spread forth everywhere like clouds. ⁽¹⁴⁾

Failure to know the actual truth constitutes *ignorance*.

The *volitional actions* that are done are the fruit of delusion.

That which arises together with *consciousness* is *name-and-form*.

Thus it proceeds on forth until the manifold sufferings accumulate. ⁽¹⁵⁾

He utterly comprehends the three realms exist dependent on mind, that the same is true of the twelve causes and conditions, that birth and death in every case are created because of mind, and that, if the mind itself is extinguished, then birth and death end. ⁽¹⁶⁾

That which *ignorance* brings about is in every case of two types:

Non-comprehension of conditions and the causes of *actions*,

This is so all the way through to *aging's* end in *death*.

Suffering is generated endlessly from this. ⁽¹⁷⁾

So long as *ignorance* serves as a condition, these cannot be cut off, but, if that condition is brought to an end, then these are all extinguished.

Ignorance, *craving*, and *grasping* are the factors belonging to afflictions.

Actions and *becoming* form karma, and the rest are suffering. ⁽¹⁸⁾

Ignorance up to the six sense bases relate to *formative-factor suffering*.

The proliferation of *contact* and *feeling* forms the *suffering of suffering*.

The rest of the existential factors relate to the *suffering of deterioration*.

If one sees non-existence of "self," all three sufferings are destroyed. ⁽¹⁹⁾

Ignorance and *actions* both pertain to the past,

Consciousness on through to *feeling* continually unfold in the present.

Craving, *grasping*, and *becoming* generate future suffering.

If their interdependence is severed, such temporal phases all end. ⁽²⁰⁾

When *ignorance* serves as a condition, it is this that creates the bonds. Through abandoning such conditions, the bonds are thus ended. Effects are produced from causes, but if abandoned, they are cut off. Closely contemplating this, one realizes they are, by nature, empty. (21)

Through following the course of *ignorance*, all existence arises. If one but refrains from following its course, all existence is cut off. If this exists, then that exists. So too it is for nonexistence as well. Through the ten reflections, the mind abandons its attachments: (22)

Continuity of existential factors; traceability to a single thought; individual karma; inseparability; non-severance of three paths; three times, three sufferings; generation by causes and conditions; the rising and passing of the fetters; nonexistence and cessation. (23)

Thus he universally contemplates the course of conditioned arising, realizing that it is devoid of any actor, recipient, or reality, that it is like a conjuration, like a dream, like shadows, or like a circumstance wherein a fool chases after a mere mirage. (24)

Through just such analytic contemplation, he enters emptiness, knows conditions as, by nature, separate, realizes signlessness, utterly comprehends their falseness, and becomes free of any wish with the sole exception of the desire to act with kindness for beings. (25)

Thus this great eminence cultivating the three gates to liberation ever increases great compassion and his quest for Buddha's Dharma. He realizes all conditioned things are created as an assemblage and, with resolute fondness for it, resolves to diligently practice the path. (26)

He acquires a hundred thousand emptiness samādhi gateways and gains the same number for signlessness and wishlessness as well. His *prajñā* and acquiescent patience both become ever more superior, and his liberations and wisdom reach complete fulfillment. (27)

With a deep mind, he also makes offerings to many buddhas and cultivates the path through the instruction of those buddhas. He gains Buddhas' Dharma treasuries enhancing roots of goodness just as when gold is subjected to polishing with a lapis lazuli gem. (28)

Just as when the moon's pure and cool radiance shines on beings, though the four winds may blow, none are able to interfere with it, so too, this ground's bodhisattvas step over the paths of Māra and extinguish the heat of all beings' afflictions. (29)

On this ground, he is often King of the Fine Transformations Heaven, one who teaches and guides beings in doing away with pridefulness. All endeavors he pursues are done to seek all-knowledge and they all have already overstepped and become superior to the *śrāvaka* path. (30)

The bodhisattva on this ground who is diligent in practice of vigor
acquires hundreds of thousands of *koṭis* of samādhis
and is also able to see countless many buddhas
that appear to him like suns shining in the midsummer sky. ⁽³¹⁾

This is extremely profound, sublime, and so difficult to know or see
that no *śrāvaka*-disciple or *pratyekabuddha* could ever fully fathom it.
So it is that I have here explained the bodhisattva's sixth ground
for the sake of the Sons of the Buddha. ⁽³²⁾