

CHAPTER 26

The Analogy Chapter

XXVI. CHAPTER 26: THE ANALOGY CHAPTER

A. THE BODHISATTVA SHOULD STUDY, CULTIVATE, AND REACH THE GROUNDS

This bodhisattva should learn of the characteristic features of the grounds and then attain the fruits of their cultivation. It is in order to attain all aspects of the grounds that he is therefore diligent in the practice of vigor.

“Characteristic features” refers here to their appearances. It is due to [learning about them] that one is then able to know them. “Attain” refers here to bringing them to a state of complete development. It is because of this dharma [of “complete development”] that one refers to completely developing this dharma.

“Cultivation” refers to [the two types of cultivation, namely] cultivation associated with acquisition and cultivation associated with practice. As for always bearing in mind “the fruits,” it is from the cause that one achieves the accomplishment of an endeavor that is referred to as its “fruits.”

This bodhisattva who aspires to acquire the practices specific to the ten grounds should learn well to their characteristic features and then acquire the fruits of their cultivation. “Learning” refers to hearing [these teachings] from buddhas, bodhisattvas, and one’s superiors.

“It is in order to gain all aspects of the grounds,” means that it is for the sake of successful acquisition of the aspects of these grounds that one diligently practices vigor. The characteristic aspects of the first ground that are of concern here are as described earlier in this text:

B. SEVEN PRACTICES CHARACTERISTIC OF THE FIRST GROUND BODHISATTVA

The bodhisattva who abides on the first ground has much that he is able to endure. He is not fond of struggle or disputation, and, for the most part, his mind is joyous and pleased. He always delights in purity. He has a compassionate mind and feels pity for beings. He has no thoughts of hatred or anger, and, for the most part, practices these seven things.⁴³⁸

Thus, the seven dharmas consisting of the capacity for endurance, non-disputation, being joyous and pleased, purity, compassion, an absence

of hatred in the mind, and such—these are all characteristic features of the first ground. It is the complete development of these seven dharmas consisting of the “capacity for endurance” and so forth that define their “acquisition.” Furthermore, these seven dharmas comprising the characteristics of “capacity for endurance” and so forth—they are all acquired on the first ground. This is as described in verse, as follows:

C. EIGHT ACCOMPLISHMENTS ASSOCIATED WITH ENTERING THE FIRST GROUND

Having densely planted one's roots of goodness,
 having thoroughly practiced the practices,
 having well accumulated all the provisions,
 having made offerings to all buddhas,
 having become protected by the good spiritual guide,
 having completely developed the resolute intentions,
 having become compassionately mindful of beings,
 and having resolute belief in the unsurpassable Dharma—⁴³⁹

Once one has become completely equipped with these eight dharmas,
 at one's own behest, one should bring forth a vow, saying,
 “After I have accomplished my own liberation,
 I shall return and liberate other beings.”

For the sake of gaining the ten powers,
 one enters the congregation of those at the stage of certainty.⁴⁴⁰
 Then one is born into the family of the Tathāgatas
 that is free of any transgressions.

One immediately turns away from the worldly path
 and enters the supreme path that goes beyond the world.
 It is because of this that one gains the first ground.
 This ground is referred to as “the Ground of Joyfulness.”⁴⁴¹

Therefore, one should understand that the definite resolve one has developed for the sake of attaining bodhi is what constitutes the essence of one's cultivation in gaining the first ground. From that initial bringing forth of the resolve all the way to one's attainment of the samādhi in which all buddhas manifest before one—all of the meritorious qualities thoroughly described as pertaining to that intervening period are what are able to bring forth all of these meritorious qualities. And after they have arisen, their cultivation, accumulation, and growth are what define the first ground.

As for “the fruits of their cultivation,” we have previously already emphasized in place after place that, when one acquires however much merit, one is not to dedicate that merit for the sake of reaching the grounds of either *śrāvaka* disciples or *pratyekabuddhas*. Now we

should state this yet again. When the bodhisattva acquires the fruition of the first ground, he is able to acquire several hundreds of meditative concentrations and other such results.

As for the “aspects” of the first ground, this refers to all the many dharmas that jointly establish the first ground. This is what is meant here by “all aspects.” This is analogous to the yeast, rice, and other ingredients that, when mixed together, are able to make wine. These are what constitute the causes and conditions for the making of wine. So too it is with all the dharmas that are able to contribute to the establishment of the first ground. These are what constitute the “aspects” of the first ground. These are as follows:

D. THE ESSENTIAL ASPECTS OF THE BODHISATTVA’S FIRST GROUND CULTIVATION

The power of faith becomes ever more superior
as one perfects the mind of great compassion.
One feels kindness and pity for all types of beings
and tirelessly cultivates the mind of goodness.

One finds joyous delight in sublime dharmas,
always draws close to the good spiritual guide,
maintains a sense of shame, dread of blame, and reverence,
and makes one’s mind gentle and harmonious.

One delights in contemplating dharmas and stays free of attachment,
single-mindedly strives to acquire abundant learning,
and refrains from coveting offerings of benefits and support,
while staying far from base cheating, flattery, and deception.

One does not defile the family of the Buddhas
and does not damage moral precepts or cheat the Buddhas.
One deeply delights in all-knowledge⁴⁴²
and remains as unmoving as an immense mountain.

One always delights in cultivating the practice
of ever more superior sublime dharmas.
One delights in the world-transcending dharmas
and does not delight in worldly dharmas.

Even as one cultivates the Ground of Joyfulness,
one is able to cultivate what is difficult to cultivate.
Therefore one is always single-minded
in the diligent practice of these dharmas.

The bodhisattva is able to perfect
such supremely sublime dharmas as these.
It is this then that constitutes secure abiding
on the bodhisattva’s first ground.⁴⁴³

Question: What use is there for the bodhisattva in learning of these characteristic features of the first ground and other related matters?

Response: This bodhisattva should thoroughly know the skillful means associated with the characteristic features of the first ground and the other associated dharmas. Therefore he should learn about them.

Question: Should the bodhisattva come to thoroughly know only the skillful means associated with these dharmas or should he also thoroughly know other associated skillful means as well?

Response: He should not only thoroughly know the skillful means associated with all of these dharmas but should also thoroughly know the skillful means associated with other dharmas.

Question: If that is the case, then could you perhaps set forth a summary discussion [of these additional topics]?

Response:

E. ADDITIONAL FACTORS THAT THE BODHISATTVA MUST LEARN

There are dharmas able to assist [in acquisition of] the ground.

There are dharmas running counter to [acquisition of] the ground.

There are dharmas able to give rise to the ground.

There are dharmas able to destroy the ground.

There are the characteristic features and fruits of each ground.

There are those things gained as one abides on each ground.

There are aspects of each ground that facilitate its purification.

There are things gained in advancing from one ground to another.

There are things that increase as one abides on each ground.

There are factors through which no one can cause one's retreat.

From the point where the bodhisattva [begins to] purify the grounds to the point he reaches the ground of the countlessly many buddhas,

when engaged in all these endeavors,

he should thoroughly know the associated skillful means,

should inquire of those who are skilled in such matters,

and should rid himself of arrogance.

As for "dharmas assisting acquisition of the first ground," these include such factors as faith, moral virtue, learning, relinquishing, vigor, mindfulness, and wisdom. It is dharmas of this sort along with the other dharmas that accord with the first ground that constitute what is meant here by "assisting dharmas."

"Dharmas running counter [to acquisition of the ground]" include disbelief, breaking of precepts, having but little learning, covetousness, indolence, chaotic thoughts, absence of wisdom, and any other

dharmas that fail to accord with the first ground and do not assist its acquisition.

As for “dharmas able to destroy the ground,” these include any that might cause one to retreat from and abandon cultivation of this ground, any that might obstruct it, and any that might cause it to not manifest. These would be comparable in their effect to the utter destruction of the myriad things that occurs at the very end of the kalpa.

What are the dharmas said to have the ability to rob one of the resolve to attain bodhi? This is a matter that has already been explained [earlier in this text].

As for “dharmas able to give rise to the ground,” this refers to those that are able to bring forth the first ground and those that are able to bring about successful establishment in the first ground. These are the dharmas preventing one from being robbed of the resolve to realize bodhi. These were explained earlier as well.

The meanings of “characteristic features,” “acquisition of fruition,” and “the aspects of the ground” were explained above.

As for “dharmas facilitating purification,” if one uses these dharmas, one will be able to purify the first ground. As previously explained,⁴⁴⁴ they are as follows:

The bodhisattva who abides on the first ground
has much that he is able to endure.

He is not fond of struggle or disputation,
and, for the most part, his mind is joyous and pleased.

He always delights in purity.

He has a compassionate mind and feels pity for beings.

He has no thoughts of hatred or anger,
and, for the most part, practices these seven things.

It is by resort to dharmas such as these seven that one is able to purify the first ground.

“Advancing from one ground to another,” refers for example to when one advances from the first ground to the second ground, and from the second ground to the third ground. So too it is with the rest [of the grounds]. [That one is able to proceed] from the first ground to the second ground is due to acquiring ten types of mind including refraining from deviousness, and so forth. [And that one is able to proceed] from the second ground to the third ground is due to acquiring the ten types of mind through which one acquires resolute faith, and so forth. It is due to acquiring just such various sorts of mind and various types of dharmas that one is then able to advance from one ground to the next ground.

As for "things that increase as one abides on each ground," this includes for example the fact that the first ground is characterized by much cultivation of the perfection of giving (lit. *dāna pāramitā*), the second ground is characterized by much cultivation of the perfection of moral virtue (lit. *śīla pāramitā*) and an increase in the strength of faith and other such dharmas, and the third ground is characterized by much cultivation of abundant learning and increasing strength in giving, moral virtue, faith, and other such dharmas. The same process occurs on each of the other grounds as well.

Regarding "factors through which no one can cause one's retreat," this refers to the capacity that develops as one dwells on this ground through which no *śramaṇa* or brahmin, and no celestial *māra*, Brahmā, or anyone else in the world can possibly cause one to turn back from it. Why [can't they cause one to turn back]? It is because one has gained the power of great meritorious qualities, because one has deeply penetrated to the very bottom of the nature of all dharmas, and because one has developed great resolute faith.

As for "from the point where the bodhisattva [begins to] purify the grounds to the point he reaches the ground of the countless many buddhas," refers to the fact that, if the bodhisattva finishes the complete purification of all the grounds, he will then succeed in reaching the Buddha Ground.

"When engaged in all of these endeavors," in every case, "he should thoroughly know the associated skillful means."

Regarding "inquiring of those who are skilled in such matters" it is on the basis of having completely perfected one's cultivation of right Dharma that one qualifies as "one who is skilled in such matters."

As for what is meant here by "right Dharma," in summary, this refers to:

- First, faith;
- Second, vigor;
- Third, mindfulness;
- Fourth, meditative concentration;
- Fifth, wisdom;
- Sixth, moral virtue in body, speech, and mind; and
- Seventh, freedom from desire, hatred, and delusion.

Regarding "ridding himself of arrogance," when one regards oneself as superior to those who truly *are* superior, this is known as "great arrogance." When one regards oneself as superior to those who are one's equals and thus elevates oneself in one's own mind, this is what is known as "arrogance." When, with regard to those compared to

whom one is in fact vastly inferior one instead regards oneself as being only slightly inferior, this is what is known as “arrogance even in inferiority.”

F. THE BENEFIT OF KNOWING THESE DHARMAS AND THEIR SKILLFUL MEANS

Question: You have stated that one should come to thoroughly know the skillful means associated with all of these dharmas. Assuming that one does gain all of these skillful means, of what use are they?

Response:

If the bodhisattva thoroughly knows with regard to all the grounds their characteristic features and their acquisition, so long as he has not yet attained buddhahood, he will never turn back from the first ground.

“Characteristic features” refers to the seven [above-listed] dharmas that assist advancement through the grounds. “Acquisition” refers to [avoidance of] the eight [above-listed] dharmas that run counter to acquisition of the grounds.⁴⁴⁵ The eight dharmas that destroy cultivation are those one should not practice. If the bodhisattva thoroughly knows these dharmas, so long as he has not yet attained buddhahood, he will never turn back.

G. AN ANALOGY FOR A BODHISATTVA’S KNOWLEDGE OF THE 10 GROUNDS PATH

Question: As for this bodhisattva who well knows all of these dharmas but will never retreat so long as he has not yet attained buddhahood, what sort of analogy would serve to describe his circumstance?

Response:

It is as if there was a guide possessed of immense powers who knew well the characteristics of the good road and knew how best to get from this place to that place, knew what was appropriate when encountering a turn in the path, knew the provisions and implements to be taken on the trip, knew how they were all to be adequately prepared, knew how in the midst of that dangerous road one ensures that the group can remain safe and secure and succeed in reaching the great city, being able all the while to cause everyone to escape calamities. [Success in this] would be because of this great guide, because of his being well able to know the path, because of his knowing well the changes in the terrain, and due to having completely prepared the provisions for the path. The bodhisattva thoroughly knows the path, the good and bad aspects in this place and that place

so that he can himself cross beyond the dangers of *samsāra* while also leading many other beings across, thereby causing them to arrive at a safe and secure place in the city of unconditioned nirvāṇa,

enabling them all to avoid the many anguishing calamities encountered within the wretched destinies.

The power of a bodhisattva's skillful means is the result of his ability to thoroughly know the path.

As for "the characteristics of the good road," this refers to knowing where there is abundant firewood, forage grasses, and water, knowing where there are no bandits, lions, wolves, tigers or any other sorts of fearsome beasts or venomous insects, knowing where it is neither too cold nor too hot, knowing where there are no fearsome mountains, crevasses, abysses, precipitous river gorges, hazardous ravines, deep thorny underbrush, jungles, or deep coves blocking the path, knowing where there are no steep ascents and plummeting descents, knowing where the path is level, straight, flat, direct in its connections, and having but few forks in the road, and knowing where it is wide, able to accommodate many people, and frequented by many travelers. It refers as well to knowing where traveling is not inordinately wearisome or exhausting, and to knowing where there is an abundance of flowers, fruit, and things one can eat. It is just such circumstances as these that define what is meant by "the characteristics of the best road." Whatever features are opposite to these characteristics are signs of a bad road.

"This place" refers to a location where the band of travelers stops, eats, and rests. "That place" refers to a different place that is reached after departing from this place, or it may also refer to the different places passed through between two overnight stops. "Turn in the path" refers to where one sees that there is a fork in the path. As for [the path that] "reaches the great city," it is this path that should be traveled, whereas all other paths must be avoided.

"Provisions" refers to supplies that are eaten along the road such as balls made of wheat and honey.

The "immense powers" [as possessed by this guide] refers to great strength, the possession of abundant resources in wealth, and a thorough understanding of the methods required to maintain order.

"Adequate preparation" refers to gathering together an abundance of food and drink so that they will encounter no shortages.

"Safety" refers to ensuring that there will be no frightful experiences involving encounters with bandits.

“Security” refers to ensuring that there will be no sickness, intensely painful incidents, or ruinous calamities.

“Great city” refers here to being able to reach a great city accommodating a large population.

This great guide thoroughly understands all of the signs along the road and is himself personally free of any troublesome difficulties while also being well able to prevent the entire group from encountering any troublesome difficulties. This is a result of his thorough familiarity with the path. There are no encounters with intense cold or heat, hunger or thirst, bandits, fearsome beasts, poisonous insects, fearsome mountainous terrain, treacherous rivers, deep chasms or other such calamities. And why is this? This is because he thoroughly knows all of the good and bad signs along the entire road.

This comparison is used as an analogy for one’s progression through the Ground of Joyfulness and the rest of the ten grounds, for it is comparable to when someone who has embarked on a path refrains from resting and thereby becomes able to reach a great city. So too, the bodhisattva travels in this way through the ten grounds and thus succeeds in arriving at the Buddha Dharma’s entry into the great city of nirvāṇa.

This route is comparable to that good road along which there is an abundance of firewood, forage grasses, water, and such. As a consequence, the traveler does not encounter shortages in those things. “Forage grasses” refers to that situation wherein someone traveling by horse does so on a road where, because there are excellent fields of grass along the way, the horse’s strength remains robust. The meritorious qualities associated with the path of the ten grounds are just like this.

Because the four supreme bases [of meritorious qualities] consisting of truth, relinquishment, quiescence, and wisdom facilitate the arising of all the meritorious qualities, they are analogous here to those forage grasses. How is this so? If a person esteems truthfulness in his endeavors, then he delights in speaking in a manner that accords with the truth. One should draw close to those who speak the truth. One sees that truthfulness is beneficial and thus delights in according with truth in his endeavors. Hence he deeply abhors false speech, renounces false speech, sees the faults inherent in false speech, and does not wish to even hear it. Due to causes and conditions such as these, one acquires the supreme basis of truthfulness. The other three supreme bases [of meritorious qualities] consisting of relinquishment and the rest should be similarly understood.

Just as, in traveling that good road, in order to reach the great city, it is essential that the elephants, horses, cattle, donkeys, and such obtain foraging grass through which they are provided with strength, so too it is that the bases of truthfulness, relinquishment, quiescence, and wisdom enable one to reach the Buddha Dharma's entry into the great city of nirvāṇa.

"Firewood" is analogous here to the wisdom associated with extensive learning, [the wisdom associated with] contemplation, and [the wisdom associated with] cultivation by which one is able to perfect the works of great wisdom. Just as firewood is able to cause a fire to burn and also cause it to become fiercely intense, so too is the wisdom of learning, contemplation, and cultivation able to produce the great wisdom that one is then able to cause to grow. In just the same manner as fire is able to burn, is able to cook, and is able to provide illumination, so too is the fire of wisdom able to burn up the afflictions, ripen one's roots of goodness, and illuminate the four truths of the Āryas. Just as fire is analogous to wisdom, firewood is analogous to the various dharmas that are capable of generating wisdom.

"Abundant water" refers to there being numerous flowing rivers and canals one can freely use to satisfy everyone's needs in a way that mere springs, wells, and ponds could not sufficiently serve.

Then again "abundant water" is analogous to when people board boats and then follow the current until they reach a great city. The water contained in wells, springs, reservoirs, and ponds is simply unable to serve in this capacity. As stated in the sutras:

Faith serves as the great river and merit serves as its banks. Just as a river is able to relieve heat, quench thirst, rinse away filth, and produce power [for waterwheels and such], faith in good dharmas is similarly able to extinguish the fire of the three poisons, rinse away the filth of the three types of bad actions, quench the thirst associated with the three realms of existence, and contribute power to good dharmas undertaken for the sake of nirvāṇa.

Just as that good road has an abundance of roots and medicinal herbs along its course by which the traveler will not encounter shortages of those things, so too it is with the path of the ten grounds.

In this case, "roots" signifies whatever is cherished by [virtue of] one's resolute intentions. Just as when roots are established, sprouts, a trunk, branches, leaves, and an abundance of fruit grow forth, so too, when one's resolute intentions cherish the path, they then bring about the growth of right recollective mindfulness, great vows, and the other meritorious qualities.

“Medicinal herbs” here signifies the *pāramitās*. Just as the medicinal herbs are able to extinguish all manner of toxins, the medicinal herbs of the *pāramitās* are able in this same manner to extinguish the poisons of greed, hatred, and delusion and do away with the sickness associated with the afflictions.

[When one possesses these *pāramitās*] it is analogous to when one travels a good road and makes sure not to lose his passport.⁴⁴⁶ He is then able to travel safely along the road.⁴⁴⁷ Just as when a traveler who has not lost his passport is able to go wherever he wishes without being obstructed by anyone, so too, on the path of the ten grounds, so long as one does not lose his passport, the roots of goodness gathered while ascending through the grounds are able to freely assist the increase and growth of the roots of goodness that one currently possesses.

One is then also able to teach those beings who presently abide in the paths of *śrāvaka* disciples, *pratyekabuddhas*, and devas of the desire realm and form realm, thereby influencing them to abide in the path to buddhahood. Then, no matter whether it be Māra or some proponent of a non-Buddhist tradition, one cannot be interfered with or disturbed by anyone. This is what is meant by “not losing one’s passport.”

Just as that good road is free of mosquitoes, horseflies, and the various sorts of poisonous insects, the path of the ten grounds is free of the sounds of sorrow, worry, weeping, and crying. Just as that good road is free of difficulties wrought by bandits, so too is the path of the ten grounds free of the five hindrances’ gang of evil thieves. This is just as described by the Buddha when he told the bhikshus: “The thieves in this village are the so-called “five hindrances.”⁴⁴⁸ Just as thieves start by stealing peoples’ possessions, but then later move on to murder, so too it is with the thieves of the five hindrances. They start by stealing one’s roots of goodness, but then later cut off the life of one’s wisdom with the result that one falls into negligence and finally dies.

Just as that road is free of lions, tigers, wolves, and the various other sorts of fearsome beasts, so too is the path of the ten grounds free of hatred, anger, fighting, and disputation. Just as lions and the other sorts of fearsome beasts enjoy tormenting and harming other beings, so too do hatred, anger, and such arise in order to afflict others in this same way. Just as those fearsome beasts eat flesh and drink blood, so too do hatred, hostility and such consume the flesh of the wisdom that arises from abundant learning. And so too do they drink the blood of the wisdom that arises from cultivation and the other [forms of wisdom]⁴⁴⁹ in this same manner.

And just as that good road is free of terribly extreme cold and heat, so too, because on the path of the ten grounds one does not fall into the

hells of cold and ice, it is free of terribly extreme cold. And because one does not fall into the hot hells, it is free of terribly extreme heat.

Just as that good road is free of deep chasms and other such difficulties, so too is the path of the ten grounds free of the difficulties inherent in the ascetic practices of the non-Buddhist traditions such as:

- Coating the body with ashes;
- Plunging into ice;
- Pulling out one's hair;
- Bathing three times each day;
- Standing on one foot;
- Eating one meal the first day, then one meal every two days, and so forth until one goes a month on only one meal;
- Taking a life-long vow of silence;
- Always holding up one arm;
- Always practicing endurance by subjecting one's body to the five kinds of fire;
- Lying down on beds of nails;
- Plunging into fire;
- Plunging into water;
- Throwing oneself off of high cliffs;
- Burning one's body by standing in a deep cauldron of cattle excrement;
- Going straight off in one direction without avoiding any difficulties one might encounter;
- Always wearing wet clothes;
- Lying down in water;
- Or subjecting oneself to any of the other sorts of physical or mental sufferings.

None of these lead to right wisdom. Because [the path of the ten grounds] is free of such things, it is said to be free of difficulties.

Just as that road is free of deviating pathways, so too it is with the path of the ten grounds. It is because it is free of evil actions of body, mouth, or mind that it is said to be free of deviating pathways.

Just as that road is free of thorny underbrush, so too it is with the path of the ten grounds. It is because it is free of the thorny underbrush of karmic obstacles that it is said to be free of thorny underbrush. Just as when thorns pierce one's feet, one is then prevented from traveling along that road, so too, the thorny underbrush of karmic obstacles impede one's ability to practice the Dharma of the Buddha and thus reach nirvāṇa.

Just as that road is straight and direct, so too it is with the path of the ten grounds. It is because it is free of any ingratiating flattery, deviousness, cheating, or deception that it is said to be straight and direct.

Just as that road has but few forks in it, so too it is with the path of the ten grounds, for it has but few variant paths. How is this so? Those who have set out along the path of the Great Vehicle travel but little on the pathways of *śrāvaka* disciples and *pratyekabuddhas*. Hence there is but little involvement with variant paths. Where there may be cases in which a bodhisattva travels along in the path of those two vehicles, one should realize that he has not yet established himself on the grounds of a bodhisattva. Because he has not yet entered the right and fixed position,⁴⁵⁰ he engages in those peripheral practices.

Just as that good path is free of jungles that obstruct the way, so too it is with the path of the ten grounds. It is free of the jungles of evils associated with the five objects of desire.

Question: Why did you not just state that it is free of *all* jungles associated with the five objects of desire, but instead only stated that it is free of the jungles of “evils” [associated with the five objects of desire]?

Response: For one who has set out in the Great Vehicle, the causes and conditions of one’s merit conduce to possession of the foremost objects of the five desires. Consequently one cannot say that they are utterly nonexistent. It is just that those associated with evil are nonexistent.

Moreover, in the case of a deep jungle, it is difficult to enter, difficult to pass through, and possessed of a multitude of difficult obstructions. The objects of the five desires as encountered by the bodhisattva are not of this sort. He is not like the foolish common person who creates all manner of transgressions in association with the objects of the five desires. Because this is the case, it was only stated here that [the path of the ten grounds] is free of [such evil] jungles.

Just as that road is wide, accommodating of many people, and not conducive to mutual interference, so too is the path of the ten grounds able to accommodate many people, for the countless hundreds of thousands of myriads of *koṭis* of beings could all bring forth the resolve to embark upon this unsurpassable path and there would still be no mutual interference among these hundreds of thousands of myriads of *koṭis* of beings. In fact, all beings could bring forth the resolve to attain *anuttarasamyak sambodhi* and they could all still travel together along this path and there would still be no mutual interference.

Just as that road is one along which many people travel, so too it is with the path of the ten grounds. When they were still cultivating the bodhisattva path, past and present buddhas as numerous as the sands of the Ganges all traveled along this path.

Just as that good road admits of travel without weariness or exhaustion, so too it is with the path of the ten grounds, for this path is associated with abundant bliss produced through cause and effect. For instance, bliss is enjoyed when one is often born into the realms of humans and devas and then enjoys one's karmic rewards there. Because [the practitioner] delights in the abandonment of desire, he then experiences joy and bliss, the bliss of *dhyāna* concentration, the bliss that is free of joy, and the bliss experienced in abiding in this present moment. Because one acquires these various sorts of bliss, one is free of weariness or exhaustion.

Just as that path has along its course an abundance of flowers, fruit, and roots, so too does the path of the ten grounds also possess an abundance of roots, flowers, and fruit. "Roots" refers here to the three types of good roots. "Flowers" refers to the flowers of the seven limbs of bodhi. This is as stated in the sutras where it says, "The seven types of flowers are the seven limbs of bodhi." "Fruit" refers to the four fruits of the *śramaṇa*.

Because one is free of any of these faults that would obstruct the attainment of meritorious qualities as one courses along this good path, one is said to have abandoned evil.

Just as that guide knows with respect to that road that one should stop and eat here, that one should spend the night here, and that one should then stop for the night there, so too it is with a bodhisattva as he travels through the ten grounds wherein he knows in which place one may stop for the night and knows in which place one may eat.

"Where one may stop for the night" refers to those places where buddhas of the present now dwell. "Where one may eat" refers to where one can cultivate the practice of good dharmas.

Just as eating is able to benefit all of one's faculties and also assists the fulfillment of one's lifespan, so too it is with good dharmas. They are able to increase faith and the rest of those faculties⁴⁵¹ while also assisting the fulfillment of one's wisdom life.

"Spending the night in another place" is a reference to going from the dwelling place of that buddha to the dwelling place of yet another buddha. Also, one may interpret "another place" as signifying the places in between this buddha's land and that buddha's land.

"Knowing well where to make a turn in the road" refers for example to when a guide recognizes that a road has become unsafe and so then takes a turn. So too it is with a bodhisattva. He knows that this particular path takes one into the realm of the *śrāvaka* disciples, that this other path takes one into the realm of the *pratyekabuddhas*, and that this other path takes one to the realization of buddhahood. Having

realized this, he relinquishes the paths of *śrāvaka* disciples and *pratyek-abuddhas* and thenceforth travels solely along the path to buddhahood.

Just as that good road has much to eat and drink along the way, so too the path of the ten grounds provides sustenance through the abundant practice of giving, moral virtue, and cultivation of the *dhyāna* concentrations.

Just as that guide has great power because he has abundant wealth and is well able to use the means for maintaining order, so too does the bodhisattva also have great power because he has wealth and the means for maintaining order.

“Wealth” here refers to the seven kinds of wealth, namely: faith, [adherence to] moral precepts, a sense of shame, a dread of blame, relinquishing, learning, and wisdom.

“Means for maintaining order” refers to the ability to defeat all challenges from any *māra* or from any of the various sorts of *śramaṇas*, brahmins, or non-Buddhist treatise masters. This is what is meant by “awesome strength.”

Just as that great city is deemed to be safe and secure because it is free of bandits, pestilence, the causes of violent death, and the many different sorts of distress, so too is the great city of nirvāṇa deemed to be safe and secure, this because it is free of *māras*, non-Buddhists, the contaminants, greed, hatred, neglectfulness, death, sorrow, grief, suffering, anguish, and lamentation.

Just as that great city, because it has an abundance of food and drink, is deemed to be bountiful, so too is the city of nirvāṇa deemed to be bountiful because it has an abundance of deep *dhyāna* absorptions, liberations, and samādhis.

Just as that great city, because it is able to accommodate many people, is said therefore to be a great city, so too is the city of nirvāṇa deemed to be great because it is able to accommodate many beings. If one could cause all beings to enter the nirvāṇa without residue through their non-acceptance of any dharmas [as inherently existent], the nature of nirvāṇa would still neither increase nor decrease.

Just as that guide is deemed to be a guide because he is able to lead many groups of people to safety and security by showing them the good road, so too is a bodhisattva also deemed to be a great guide, for he is able to lead forth beings, showing them the Dharma of the Buddha, showing them nirvāṇa, and guiding them out from the hazardous road of *samsāra* so that they successfully reach nirvāṇa.

And just as that guide, because he so well knows the signs all along that road, is able to ensure that he himself as well as the rest of his group do not encounter any calamities, so too it is with the bodhisattva.

Because he himself does not course in desire, ill will, or the other hindrances, because he does not practice bad ascetic practices, because he does not fall into the deep pit of aging and death, and because he also does not fall into the hot hells, the cold hells or the realms of the hungry ghosts, he is deemed to be one who does not encounter calamities himself while ensuring that his followers do not encounter calamities, either.

It is for these reasons that the verse says that it is due to knowing well the signs along the path that [the guide] does not encounter any calamities himself, nor do any of the others encounter calamities, either.