The Śūraṅgama Sūtra · English

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1. The Ten Doors of Discrimination

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Chapter 1

The Sutra of the Foremost Shurangama at the Great Buddha’s Summit Concerning the Tathagata’s Secret Cause of Cultivation, His Certification to the Complete Meaning and all Bodhisattvas' Myriad Practices 1:1

Translated during the Tang Dynasty by Shramana Paramiti from Central India. 1:70

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Edited by Bodhisattva-precepts Disciple Fang Yong of Qing He, former Censor of State, and concurrently Attendant and Minister, and Court Regulator. 1:77

Thus I have heard. 1:79

At one time the Buddha dwelt at the city of Shravasti in the sublime abode of the Jeta Grove. 1:88

With a gathering of great bhikshus, twelve hundred fifty in all. 1:93

All were great Arhats without outflows, disciples of the Buddha, dwellers and maintainers. They had fully transcended all existence, and were able to travel everywhere, and to accomplish the awesome deportment. 1:99

They followed the Buddha in turning the wheel and were wonderfully worthy of the bequest. Stern and pure in the Vinaya, they were great exemplars in the three realms. Their limitless response-bodies took living beings across and liberated them, pulling out and rescuing those of the future so they could transcend all the bonds of dust. 1:103

The names of the leaders were: the greatly wise Shariputra, Mahamaudgalyayana, Mahakaushthila, Purnamaitreyaniputra, Subhuti, Upanishad, and others. 1:108

Moreover limitless Pratyekas who were beyond learning and those with initial resolve came to where the Buddha was to join the bhikshus' Pravarana at the close of the summer retreat. 1:111

Bodhisattvas from the ten directions who desired counsel in order to resolve the doubts in their minds were respectful and obedient to the Awesome but Compassionate One as they prepared to seek the Secret Meaning. 1:114

Then the Tathagata arranged his seat, sat quietly and peacefully, and for the sake of everyone in the assembly proclaimed the profound and mysterious. Those in the pure assembly at the banquet of Dharma obtained what they had never obtained before. 1:116

The Immortal's kalavinka-sound pervaded the ten directions and Bodhisattvas as numerous as the sands of the Ganges gathered at the Bodhimanda with Manjushri as their leader. 1:118

Then King Prasenajit, for the sake of his father, the late king, arranged on the day of mourning a vegetarian feast and invited the Buddha to the side rooms of the palace. He welcomed the Tathagata in person with a vast array of superb delicacies of unsurpassed wonderful flavors and himself invited the great Bodhisattvas. 1:121

In the city were also elders and laypeople who were also prepared to feed the Sangha at the same time, and they stood waiting for the Buddha to come and receive offerings. 1:125

The Buddha commanded Manjushri to assign the Bodhisattvas and Arhats to receive offerings from the various vegetarian hosts. 1:127

Only Ananda, who, having accepted a special invitation earlier, had traveled far and had not yet returned, was late for the apportioning of the Sangha. No senior-seated one or Acharya was with him, so he was returning alone on the road. 1:127

On that day he had received no offerings, and so at the appropriate time Ananda took up his begging bowl and, as he traveled through the city, begged in successive order. 1:130

As he first began to beg, he thought to himself that down to the very last danapati who would be his vegetarian host he would not question whether they were clean or unclean; whether they were ksatriyas of honorable name or chandalas. While practicing equality and compassion he would not merely select the lowly but was determined to perfect all living beings. limitless merit and virtue. 1:131

Ananda already knew that the Tathagata, the World Honored One, had admonished Subhuti and great Kashyapa for being Arhats whose hearts were not fair and equal, and he regarded with respect the Tathagata’s instructions on impartiality, to save everyone from doubt and slander. 1:132

Having crossed the city moat, he walked slowly through the outer gates, his manner stern and proper as he honored with propriety the method of obtaining food. 1:134

At that time, because Ananda was begging in sequential order, he passed by a house of prostitution and was waylaid by a powerful artifice. By means of a mantra of the Kapila religion, formerly of the Brahma Heaven, the daughter of Matangi drew him onto an impure mat. 1:135

With her licentious body she stroked and rubbed him until he was on the verge of destroying the precept-substance. 1:136

The Tathagata, knowing Ananda was being taken advantage of by the indecent artifice, finished the meal and immediately began his return journey. The king, great officials, elders, and laypeople followed along after the Buddha, desiring to hear the essentials of Dharma. 1:137

Then the World Honored One emitted a hundred rays of jeweled and fearless light from his crown. Within the light appeared a thousand-petalled precious lotus, upon which was seated a transformation-body Buddha in full-lotus posture, proclaiming a spiritual mantra. 1:138

He commanded Manjushri to take the mantra and go provide protection, and, when the evil mantra was extinguished, to lend support, and to encourage Ananda and Matangi's daughter to return to where the Buddha was. 1:142

Ananda saw the Buddha, bowed, and wept sorrowfully, regretting that from time without beginning he had been preoccupied with erudition and had not yet perfected his strength in the Way. He respectfully and repeatedly requested an explanation of the very first expedients of the wonderful shamatha, samapatti, and dhyana, by means of which the Tathagatas of the ten directions had realized Bodhi. 1:144

At that time Bodhisattvas as numerous as the sands of the Ganges, great Arhats, pratyekas, and others from the ten directions, were also present. Pleased at the opportunity to listen, they withdrew silently to their seats to receive the sagely instruction. 1:151

In the midst of the great assembly, the World Honored One then extended his golden arm, rubbed Ananda's crown, and said to Ananda and the great assembly, "There is a samadhi called the King of the Foremost Shurangama at the Great Buddha's Summit Replete with the Myriad Practices; it is a path wonderfully adorned and the single door through which the Tathagatas of the ten directions gained transcendence. You should now listen attentively." Ananda bowed down to receive the compassionate instruction humbly. 1:155

The Buddha said to Ananda, "You and I are of the same family and share the affection of a natural relationship. At the time of your initial resolve, what were the outstanding characteristics which you saw in my Dharma that caused you to suddenly cast aside the deep kindness and love found in the world?" 1:159

Ananda said to the Buddha, "I saw the Tathagata's thirty-two characteristics, which were so supremely wonderful, so incomparable, that his entire body had a shimmering transparence just like that of crystal. 1:161

"I often thought to myself that these characteristics cannot be born of desire and love. Why? The vapors of desire are coarse and murky. From foul and putrid intercourse comes a turbid mixture of pus and blood which cannot give off such a magnificent, pure, and brilliant concentration of purple-golden light. And so I thirstily gazed upward, followed the Buddha, and let the hair fall from my head." 1:162

The Buddha said, “Very good, Ananda. You should all know that all living beings are continually born and continually die, simply because they do not know the everlasting true mind, the bright substance of the pure nature. Instead they engage in false thinking. It has been so since time without beginning. Their thoughts are not true, and so the wheel keeps turning. 1:165

”Now you wish to investigate the unsurpassed Bodhi and actually discover your nature. You should answer my questions with a straightforward mind, because that is exactly the way the Tathagatas of the ten directions escaped birth and death. Their minds were all straightforward, and since their minds and words were consistently that way, from the beginning, through the intermediate stages to the end, they were never in the least evasive. 1:167

”Ananda, I now ask you: at the time of your initial resolve, which arose in response to the Tathagata’s thirty-two characteristics, what was it that saw those characteristics and who delighted in them?” 1:170

Ananda said to the Buddha, “World Honored One, this is the way I experienced the delight: I used my mind and eyes. Because my eyes saw the Tathagata’s outstanding characteristics, my mind gave rise to delight. That is why I became resolved and wished to removed myself from birth and death.” 1:170

The Buddha said to Ananda, “It is as you say, that experience of delight actually occurs because of your mind and eyes. If you do not know where your mind and eyes are, you will not be able to conquer the wearisome dust. 1:171

For example, when a king’s country is invaded by thieves and he sends out his troops to suppress and banish them, the troops must know where the thieves are. 1:172

”It is the fault of your mind and eyes that you flow and turn. I am now asking you specifically about your mind and eyes: where are they now?” 1:172

Ananda said to the Buddha, “World Honored One, all the ten kinds of living beings in the world alike maintain that the conscious mind dwells within the body; and as I regard the Tathagata’s blue lotus-flower eyes, they too are on the Buddha’s face. 1:172

”I now observe that these prominent organs, four kinds of defiling objects, are on my face, and so, too, my conscious mind actually is within my body.” 1:174

The Buddha said to Ananda, “You are now sitting in the Tathagata’s lecture hall looking at the Jeta Grove. Where is it at present?” 1:174

”World Honored One, this great many-storied pure lecture hall is in the Garden of the Benefactor of the Solitary. At present the Jeta Grove is in fact outside the hall.” 1:174

”Ananda, as you are now in the hall, what do you see first?” 1:175

”World Honored One, here in the hall I first see the Tathagata, next I see the great assembly, and from there, as I gaze outward, I see the grove and garden.” 1:175

”Ananda, why it is you are able to see the grove and the garden as you look at them?” 1:176

”World Honored One, since the doors and windows of this great lecture hall have been thrown open wide, I can be in the hall and see into the distance.” 1:176

The Buddha said to Ananda, “It is as you say. When one is in the lecture hall and the doors and windows are open wide, one can see far into the garden and grove. Could there be someone in the hall who does not see the Tathagata and yet sees outside the hall?” 1:176

Ananda answered: “World Honored One, to be in the hall and not see the Tathagata, and yet see the grove and fountains is impossible.” 1:176

”Ananda, you are like that too. 1:176

“Your mind is capable of understanding everything thoroughly. Now if your present mind, which thoroughly understands everything, were in your body, then you should be aware first of what is inside your body. Can there be living beings who first see inside their bodies before they observe things outside? 1:177

”Even if you cannot see your heart, liver, spleen, and stomach, still, the growing of your nails and hair, the twist of your sinews, and the throb of your pulse should be clearly understood. Why don’t you perceive these things? If you cannot perceive what is inside at all, how can you perceive what is outside? 1:178

”Therefore you should know that you state the impossible when you say that the aware and knowing mind is in the body.” 1:179

Ananda bowed his head and said to the Buddha, “Upon hearing such a Dharma-sound as the Tathagata has proclaimed, I realize that my mind is actually outside my body. 1:179

”Why? For example, a lamp alight in a room will certainly illumine the inside of the room first, and only then will it pour through the doorway to reach the recesses of the hall. For all living beings who do not see within their bodies but only see outside them, it is as if the lighted lamp were placed outside the room, so that it cannot illumine the room. 1:180

”This principle is certainly clear: it is absolutely beyond all doubt and exactly the Buddha’s entire meaning, and so it isn’t wrong is it?” 1:180

The Buddha said to Ananda, “All these bhikshus who just followed me to the city of Shravasti to beg in sequence for food have returned to the Jeta Grove and are rolling their food into balls as they eat. I have already finished eating, but consider the bhikshus: when one person eats, does everyone get full?” 1:181

Ananda answered, “No, World Honored One. Why? These bhikshus are Arhats, but their individual lives differ. How could one person’s eating cause everyone to be full?” 1:181

The Buddha told Ananda, “If your mind which understands, knows, sees and is aware were actually outside your body, your body and mind would be mutually exclusive and would have no relationship to one another. The body would be unaware of what the mind perceives, and the mind would not perceive the awareness within the body. 1:182

”Now as I show you my tula-cotton hand, does your mind distinguish it when your eyes see it?” 1:183

Ananda answered, “So it is, World Honored One.” 1:183

The Buddha told Ananda, “If the mind and eyes create a common perception, how then can the mind be outside? 1:183

”Therefore you should know you state the impossible when you say that the mind which knows, understands, and is aware is outside the body.” 1:184

Ananda said to the Buddha, “World Honored One, it is as the Buddha has said, since I cannot see inside, my mind does not reside in the body. Since my body and mind have a common awareness, they are not separate and so my mind does not dwell outside my body. As I now consider it, I know it is in a certain place.” 1:185

The Buddha said, “Now where is it?” 1:185

Ananda said, “Since the mind which knows and understands does not perceive what is inside but can see outside, upon reflection I believe it is concealed in the organ of vision. 1:185

”For example, when someone places crystal bowls over his eyes, the bowls cover his eyes but do not obstruct his vision. The organ of vision is thus able to see, and discriminations are made accordingly. 1:186

”And so my mind which knows, understands, and is aware does not see within because it resides in the organ. It can gaze outside clearly, without obstruction for the same reason: it is concealed in the organ.” 1:187

The Buddha said to Ananda, “Assuming that it is concealed in the organ, as you assert in your analogy of the crystals: if someone were to cover his eyes with the crystals and look at the mountains and rivers, would he see the crystals as well?” 1:188

”Yes, World Honored One, if a person were to cover his eyes with the crystals, he would in fact see the crystals.” 1:188

The Buddha said to Ananda, “If your mind is analogous to the eyes covered with crystals, then when you see the mountains and rivers, why dont you see your eyes? 1:189

”If you could see your eyes, your eyes would be part of the external environment. If you cannot see them, why did you say that the mind which understands, knows, and is aware is concealed in the organ of vision as eyes are covered by crystals? 1:189

“Therefore you should know that you state the impossible when you say that the mind which knows, understands, and is aware is concealed in the organ of vision in the way that the eyes

are covered by crystals.” 1:190

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Chapter 1

Ananda said to the Buddha, “World Honored One, I now offer this reconsideration: viscera and bowels lie inside the bodies of living beings, while the orifices are open to the exterior. There is darkness at the bowels and light at the orifices. 1:191

”Now, as I face the Buddha and open my eyes, I see light: that is to see outside. When I close my eyes and see darkness, that is to see within. How does that principle sound?” 1:192

The Buddha said to Ananda, “When you close your eyes and see darkness, does the darkness you experience lie before your eyes? If it does lie before your eyes, then the darkness is in front of your eyes. How can that be said to be ‘within’? 1:193

”If it were within, then when you are in a dark room without the light of sun, moon, or lamps, the darkness in the room would constitute your .warmers. and viscera. If it is not before you, how can it be seen? 1:193

”If you assert that there is an inward seeing that is distinct from seeing outside. In that case, when you close your eyes and see darkness, you would be seeing inside the body. Therefore, when you open your eyes and see light, why can’t you see your own face? 1:194

”If you cannot see your face, then there can be no seeing within. If you can see your face, then your mind that knows and understands and your organ of vision as well must be suspended in space. How could they be part of your body? 1:194

”If they are in space, then they are not part of your body. Otherwise the Tathagata who now sees your face should be part of your body as well. 1:195

”In that case, when your eyes perceive something, your body would remain unaware of it. If you press the point and say that the body and eyes each have an awareness, then you should have two perceptions, and your one body should eventually become two Buddhas. 1:196

”Therefore you should know that you state the impossible when you say that to see darkness is to see within.” 1:196

Ananda said to the Buddha, “I have heard the Buddha instruct the four assemblies that because the mind arises every kind of dharma arises, and that because dharmas arise, every kind of mind arises. 1:196

”As I now consider it, the substance of that very consideration is truly the nature of the mind. Wherever it comes together with things, the mind exists in response. It does not exist in the three locations of inside, outside and in between.” 1:197

The Buddha said to Ananda, “Now you say that because dharmas arise, every kind of mind arises. Wherever it comes together with things, the mind exists in response. But if it has no substance, the mind cannot come together with anything. If, having no substance, it can yet come together with things, that would constitute a nineteenth realm brought about by a union with the seventh defiling object, and there is no such principle. 1:198

”If it does have substance, when you pinch your body with your hand, does your mind which perceives it come out from the inside or in from the outside? If it comes out from the inside, then, once again, it should see within your body. If it comes in from outside, it should see your face first.” 1:199

Ananda said, “Seeing is done with the eyes. The mind’s perception is not that of the eyes. To say it sees doesn’t make sense.” 1:200

The Buddha said, “To suppose that the eyes can see is like supposing that the doors of a room can see. Also, when someone has died but his eyes are still intact, his eyes should see things. How can it be death if one can still see? 1:201

”Furthermore, Ananda, if your mind which is aware, understands, and knows in fact has substance, then is it a single substance or many substances? Does its substance perceive the body as it now resides in it or does it not perceive it? 1:201

”Supposing that it were a single substance, then when you pinched one limb with your fingers, the four limbs would be aware of it. If they all were aware of it, the pinch could not be at any one place. If the pinch were confined to one place, then the single substance you propose would not be possible. 1:202

”Supposing that it were many substances: then you would be many people. Which substance would be you? 1:203

”Supposing it were a pervasive substance: the case would be the same as before in the instance of pinching. But supposing it were not pervasive; then when you touched your head and touched your foot simultaneously, the foot would not perceive it if the head does. But that is not how you are. 1:203

”Therefore you should know that you state the impossible when you say that wherever it comes together with things, the mind exists in response.” 1:204

Ananda said to the Buddha, “World Honored One, I also have heard the Buddha discuss true appearance with Manjushri and the other disciples of the Dharma king. The World Honored One also said, ‘The mind is not inside and it is not outside.’ 1:204

”As I now consider it, if it were within, it would see things it does not see; if it were outside, there would be no common perception. Since it cannot see inside, it cannot be inside; and since the body and mind have common perception, it does not make sense to say it is outside. Therefore, since there is a common perception and since there is no seeing within, it must be in the middle.” 1:205

The Buddha said, “You say it is in the middle. That middle must not be haphazard or without a fixed location. Where is this middle that you propose? Is it in an external place, or is it in the body? 1:206

”If it were in the body, it could not be on the surface of the body since that is not the middle. But to be in the middle is no different than being inside. If it were in an external place, would there be some evidence of it, or not? If there were no evidence of it, that would be the same as if it did not exist. If there were evidence of it, then it would have no fixed location. 1:206

”Why? Suppose that someone were to indicate the middle by a marker. When regarded from the east, it would be to the west, and when regarded from the south, it would be to the north. The marker is unclear, and the mind would be equally chaotic.” 1:207

Ananda said, “The middle I speak of is neither of those. As the World Honored One has said, the eyes and forms are the conditions which create the eye-consciousness. The eyes make discriminations; forms have no perception, but a consciousness is created between them. That is where my mind is.” 1:208

The Buddha said, “If your mind were between the eye and an object, does the mind’s substance combine with the two or does it not? 1:209

”If it did combine with the two, then objects and the mind-substance would form a chaotic mixture. Since objects have no perception, while the substance has perception, the two would stand in opposition. Which is the middle? 1:209

”If it did not combine with the two, it would then be neither perceiver nor perceived and would have no substance or nature. Where would the characteristic of ‘middle’ be? 1:209

”Therefore you should know that for the mind to be in the middle is impossible.” 1:210

Ananda said to the Buddha, “World Honored One, when I have seen the Buddha turn the Dharma wheel in the past with great Maudgalyayana, Subhuti, Purna, and Shariputra, four of the great disciples, he often said that the nature of the mind which perceives, makes discriminations, and is aware is located neither within nor outside nor in the middle; it is not located anywhere at all. That very non-attachment to anything is what is called the mind. Therefore, is my non-attachment my mind?” 1:210

The Buddha said to Ananda, “You say that the nature of the mind which perceives, makes discriminations, and is aware is not located anywhere at all. The entirety of things existing in the world consists of space, the waters, the land, the creatures that fly and walk, and all external objects. Does your non-attachment also exist? 1:212

”If it does not exist, it is the same as hairs on a tortoise or horns on a rabbit. How can you speak of non-attachment? 1:213

”If non-attachment existed, it could not be said to be non-existent. To be non-existent is to be without attributes. To be existent is to have attributes. Whatever has attributes has a location; how then can it be said to be unattached? 1:213

”Therefore you should know, to call the aware, knowing mind non-attachment to anything is impossible.” 1:214

Then Ananda arose from his seat in the midst of the great assembly, uncovered his right shoulder, placed his right knee on the ground, respectfully put his palms together, and said to the Buddha: 1:215

”I am the Tathagata’s youngest cousin. I have received the Buddha’s compassionate love and have left the home-life, but I have been dependent on his affection, and as a consequence have pursued erudition and am not yet without outflows. 1:216

”I could not overcome the Kapila mantra. I was spun around by it and sank in the house of prostitution, all because I did not know the location of the realm of reality. 1:217

”I only hope that the World Honored One, out of great kindness and pity, will instruct us in the path of shamata to guide the icchantikas and overthrow the mlecchas.” 1:218

After he had finished speaking, he placed his five limbs on the ground along with the entire great assembly. Then they stood on tiptoe waiting attentively and thirstily to respectfully hear the instructions. 1:220

Then the World Honored One radiated forth from his face various kinds of light, dazzling light as brilliant as hundreds of thousands of suns. 1:221

The six kinds of quaking pervaded the Buddharealms, and thus lands as many as fine motes of dust throughout the ten directions appeared simultaneously. 1:222

The Buddha’s awesome spirit caused all the realms to unite into a single realm. 1:224

And in these realms all the great Bodhisattvas, each remaining in his own country, put their palms together and listened. 1:225

“The reason those who cultivate cannot accomplish unsurpassed Bodhi, but instead reach the level of a Sound-Hearer or of one enlightened to conditions, or become accomplished in outside ways as heaven-dwellers or as demon-kings or as members of the retinue of demons is that they do not know the two fundamental roots and are mistaken and confused in their cultivation. They are like one who cooks sand in the hope of creating savory delicacies. They may pass through as many aeons as there are motes of dust, but in the end they will not obtain what they want. 1:231

”What are the two? Ananda, the first is the root of beginningless birth and death, which is the mind that seizes upon conditions and that you and all living beings now make use of, taking it to be the self-nature. 1:234

”The second is the primal pure substance of the beginningless Bodhi Nirvana. It is the primal bright essence of consciousness that can bring forth all conditions. Because of conditions, you consider it to be lost. 1:239

”Living beings lose sight of the original brightness: therefore, though they use it to the end of their days, they are unaware of it, and without intending to they enter the various destinies. 1:242

”Ananda, since you now wish to know about the path of shamatha with the hope of getting out of birth and death, I will question you further.” 1:245

Then the Tathagata raised his golden arm and bent his five wheeled fingers as he asked Ananda, “Do you see?” 1:245

Ananda said, “I see.” 1:245

The Buddha said, “What do you see?” 1:248

Ananda said, “I see the Tathagata raise his arm and bend his fingers into a fist of light which dazzles my mind and my eyes.” 1:248

The Buddha said, “What do you see it with?” 1:248

Ananda said, “The members of the great assembly and I each see it with our eyes.” 1:248

The Buddha said to Ananda, “You have answered me by saying that the Tathagata bends his fingers into a fist of light which dazzles your mind and eyes. Your eyes are able to see, but what is the mind that is dazzled by my fist?” 1:248

Ananda said, “The Tathagata is asking where the mind is located. Now that I use my mind to search for it thoroughly, I propose that precisely what is able to investigate is my mind.” 1:249

The Buddha said, “Hey! Ananda, that is not your mind.” 1:249

Startled, Ananda leapt from his seat, stood and put his palms together, and said to the Buddha, “If it’s not my mind, what is it?” 1:250

The Buddha said to Ananda, “It is your perception of false appearances based on external objects which deludes your true nature and has caused you from beginningless time to your present life to recognize a thief as your son, to lose your eternal source, and to undergo the wheel’s turning.” 1:251

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Chapter 1

Ananda said to the Buddha, “World Honored One, I am the Buddha’s favorite cousin. It is because my mind loved the Buddha that I was led to leave the home-life. It is my mind that not only makes offerings to the Tathagata, but also, in passing through lands as many as the grains of sand in the Ganges River to serve all Buddhas and good, wise advisors, and in martialing great courage to practice every difficult aspect of the dharma, I always use this mind. Even if I am slandering the dharma and eternally withdrawing my good roots, it would also be because of this mind. If this is not my mind, then I have no mind, and I am the same as a clod of earth or a piece of wood. Without this awareness and knowing, nothing would exist. 1:253

”Why does the Tathagata say this is not my mind? I am startled and frightened and not one member of the great assembly is without doubt. I only hope that the World Honored One will regard us with great compassion and instruct those who have not yet awakened.” 1:253

Then the World Honored One gave instruction to Ananda and the great assembly, wishing to cause their minds to enter the state of patience with the non-production of dharmas. 1:256

From the lion’s seat he rubbed Ananda’s crown and said to him, “The Tathagata has often said that all dharmas that arise are only manifestations of the mind. All causes and effects, the worlds as many as fine motes of dust, come into being because of the mind. 1:257

”Ananda, when all the things in the world, including blades of grass and strands of silk thread, are examined at their fundamental source, each is seen to have substance and a nature, even empty space has a name and an appearance. 1:258

”How much the less could the clear, wonderful, pure bright mind, the essence of all thoughts, itself be without a substance? 1:259

”If you insist that the nature which knows and observes and is aware of distinctions is the mind, then apart from all forms, smells, tastes, and touches . apart from the workings of all the defiling objects . that mind should have its own complete nature. 1:259

”And yet now, as you listen to my Dharma, it is because of sound that you are able to make distinctions. 1:260

”Even if you could extinguish all seeing, hearing, awareness, and knowing, and maintain an inner composure, the shadows of your discrimination of dharmas would remain. 1:260

”I do not insist that you grant that it is not the mind. But examine your mind in minute detail to see whether there is a discriminating nature apart from the objects of sense. That would truly be your mind. 1:262

”If this discriminating nature has no substance apart from objects, then it is shadows of discriminations of objects of mind. 1:262

”The objects are not permanent, and when they pass out of existence, such a mind would be like hair on a tortoise or horns on a rabbit. In that case your Dharma-body would be extinguished along with it. Then who cultivates and attains patience with the non-production of dharmas?” 1:263

At that point Ananda and everyone in the great assembly was speechless and at a total loss. 1:264

The Buddha said to Ananda, “There are cultivators in the world who, although they realize the nine successive stages of samadhi, do not achieve the extinction of outflows or become Arhats, all because they are attached to birth-and-death false thinking and mistake it for what is truly real. That is why now, although you are greatly learned, you have not realized the accomplishment of sagehood.” 1:264

When Ananda heard that, he again wept sorrowfully, placed his five limbs on the ground, knelt on both knees, put his palms together, and said to the Buddha, “Since I followed the Buddha and left home, what I have done is to rely on the Buddha’s awesome spirit. I have often thought, ‘There is no reason for me to toil at cultivation’ expecting that the Tathagata would bestow samadhi upon me. I never realized that he could not stand in for me in body and mind. Thus, I lost my original mind and although my body has left the home-life, my mind has not entered the Way. I am like the poor son who renounced his father and roamed around. 1:267

”Therefore, today I realize that although I am greatly learned, if I do not cultivate, it is the same as if I had not learned anything; just as someone who only speaks of food will never get

full. 1:269

”World Honored One, now we all are bound by two obstructions and as a consequence do not perceive the still, eternal nature of the mind. I only hope the Tathagata will take pity on us poor and destitute ones and disclose the wonderful bright mind, and open my Way-eye.” 1:271

Then from the character wan [signifying “myriad virtues”] on his chest, the Tathagata poured forth precious light. Radiant with hundreds of thousands of colors, the brilliant light simultaneously pervaded everywhere throughout the ten directions to Buddharealms as many as fine motes of dust, anointing the crowns of every Tathagata in all the jeweled Buddhalands of the ten directions. Then it swept back to Ananda and all in the great assembly. 1:272

And said to Ananda, “I will now erect the great Dharma banner for you, to cause all living beings in the ten directions to obtain the wondrous subtle secret, the pure nature, the bright mind, and to attain the pure eye. 1:273

2. The Seeing Nature

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Chapter 2

"Ananda, you have told me that you saw my fist of bright light. How did it take the form of a fist? How did the fist become bright? By what means could you see it?” 2:1

Ananda replied, “The body of the Buddha is born of purity and cleanness, and, therefore, it assumes the color of Jambu River gold with deep red hues. Hence, it shone as brilliant and dazzling as a precious mountain. It was actually my eyes that saw the Buddha bend his five-wheeled fingers to form a fist which was shown to all of us.” 2:1

The Buddha told Ananda, “Today the Tathagata will tell you truly that all those with wisdom are able to achieve enlightenment through the use of examples. 2:2

”Ananda, take, for example, my fist: if I didn’t have a hand, I couldn’t make a fist. If you didn’t have eyes, you couldn’t see. If you apply the example of my fist to the case of your eyes, is the idea the same?” 2:4

Ananda said, “Yes, World Honored One. Since I can’t see without my eyes, if one applies the example of the Buddha’s fist to the case of your eyes, the idea is the same.” 2:4

The Buddha said to Ananda, “You say it is the same, but that is not right. Why? If a person has no hand, his fist is gone forever. But one who is without eyes is not entirely devoid of sight. 2:5

”For what reason? Try consulting a blind man on the street: ‘What do you see?’ 2:5

”Any blind man will certainly answer, ‘Now I see only black in front of my eyes. Nothing else meets my gaze.’ 2:5

”The meaning is apparent: if he sees blackness in front of him, how could his seeing be considered ‘lost’?” 2:5

Ananda said, “The only thing blind people see in front of their eyes is blackness. How can that be seeing?” 2:6

The Buddha said to Ananda, “Is there any difference between the blackness seen by blind people, who do not have the use of their eyes, and the blackness seen by someone who has the use of his eyes when he is in a dark room?” 2:6

”So it is, World Honored One. Between the two kinds of blackness, that seen by the person in a dark room and that seen by the blind, there is no difference.” 2:6

”Ananda, if the person without the use of his eyes who sees only blackness were suddenly to regain his sight and see all kinds of forms, and you say it is his eyes which see, then when the person in a dark room who sees only blackness suddenly sees all kinds of forms because a lamp is lit, you should say it is the lamp which sees. 2:7

”If it is a case of the lamp seeing, it would be a lamp endowed with sight - which couldn’t be called a lamp. And if the lamp were to do the seeing, how would you be involved? 2:8

”Therefore you should know that while the lamp can reveal the forms, it is the eyes, not the lamp, that do the seeing. And while the eyes can reveal the forms, the seeing-nature comes from the mind, not the eyes.” 2:8

Although Ananda and everyone in the great assembly had heard what was said, their minds had not yet understood, and so they remained silent. Hoping to hear more of the gentle sounds of the Tathagata's teaching, they put their palms together, purified their minds, and stood waiting for the Tathagata's compassionate instruction. 2:9

Then the World Honored One extended his tula-cotton webbed bright hand, opened his five-wheeled fingers, and told Ananda and the great assembly, "When I first accomplished the Way I went to the Deer Park, and for the sake of Ajnatakaundinya and all five of the bhikshus, as well as for you of the four-fold assembly, I said, 'It is because living beings are impeded by guest-dust and affliction that they do not realize Bodhi or become arhats.' At that time, what caused you who have now realized the holy fruit to become enlightened?" 2:10

Then Ajnatakaundinya arose and said to the Buddha, "Of the elders now present in the great assembly, only I received the name 'understanding' because I was enlightened to the meaning of the word 'guest-dust' and realized the fruition. 2:15

"World Honored One, it is like a traveler who stops as a guest at a roadside inn, perhaps for the night or perhaps for a meal. When he has finished lodging there or when the meal is finished, he packs his baggage and sets out again. He does not remain there at leisure. The host himself, however, does not go far away. 2:16

"Considering it this way, the one who does not remain is called the guest, and the one who does remain is called the host. The word 'guest,' then, means 'one who does not remain.' 2:17

"Again, when the sky clears up, the morning sun rises with all resplendence, and its golden rays stream into a house through a crevice to reveal particles of dust in the air. The dust dances in the rays of light, but the empty space is motionless. 2:17

"Considering it this way, what is clear and still is called space, and what moves is called dust. The word 'dust,' then, means 'that which moves.'" 2:18

The Buddha said, "So it is." 2:19

Then in the midst of the great assembly the Thus Come One bent his five-wheeled fingers. After bending them, he opened them again. After he opened them, he bent them again, and he asked Ananda, "What do you see now?" 2:20

Ananda said, “I see the Thus Come One’s hundred-jeweled wheeled palms opening and closing in the midst of the assembly.” 2:20

The Buddha said to Ananda, “You see my hand open and close in the assembly. Is it my hand that opens and closes, or is it your seeing that opens and closes?” 2:20

Ananda said, “The World Honored One’s jeweled hand opened and closed in the assembly. I saw the Thus Come One’s hand itself open and close; it was not my seeing-nature that opened and closed.” 2:20

The Buddha said, “What moves and what is still?” 2:21

Ananda said, “The Buddha’s hand does not remain at rest. And since my seeing-nature is beyond even stillness, how could it not be at rest?” 2:21

The Buddha said, “So it is.” 2:22

Then from his wheeled palm the Thus Come One sent a precious ray of light flying to Ananda’s right. Ananda immediately turned his head and glanced to the right. He then sent another ray of light to Ananda’s left. Ananda again turned his head and glanced to the left. The Buddha said to Ananda, “Why did your head move just now?” 2:22

Ananda said, “I saw the Thus Come One emit a wonderful precious light which came by my left and right, and so I looked to the left and right. My head moved of itself.” 2:22

”Ananda, when you glanced at the Buddha’s light and moved your head to the left and right, was it your head that moved or your seeing that moved?” 2:23

”World Honored One, my head moved of itself. Since my seeing-nature is beyond even cessation, how could it move?” 2:23

The Buddha said, “So it is.” 2:24

Then the Thus Come One told everyone in the great assembly, “Suppose other living beings called what moves ‘the dust’ and what does not dwell ‘the guest’? 2:24

”You noticed that it was Ananda’s head that moved; the seeing did not move. You also noticed that it was my hand which opened and closed; the seeing did not stretch or bend. 2:25

”Why do you continue to take something moving like your body and its environment to be in substantial existence, so that from the beginning to the end, your every thought is subject to production and extinction? 2:25

”You have lost your true nature and conduct yourselves in upside-down ways. Having lost your true nature and mind, you recognize objects as yourself, and it is you who cling to the flowing and turning of the revolving wheel.” 2:26

When Ananda and the great assembly heard the Buddha’s instructions, they became peaceful and composed both in body and mind. They recollected that since time without beginning, they had strayed from their fundamental true mind by mistaking the shadows of their causally conditioned differentiating minds as something real and substantial. Now on this day they had awakened to such illusions and misconceptions. Like a lost infant who rejoins its beloved mother after a long separation, they put their palms together to make obeisance to the Buddha. 2:28

They wished to hear such words from the Thus Come One as to enlighten them to the dual nature of body and mind - what is false and what is real, what is empty and what is substantial, what is subject to production and extinction and what transcends production and extinction. 2:29

Then King Prasenajit rose and said to the Buddha, “In the past, when I had not yet received the teachings of the Buddha, I met Katyayana and Vairatiputra, both of whom said that this body is annihilated after death, and that this is Nirvana. Now, although I have met the Buddha, I still have doubts about their words. How much I wish to be enlightened to the ways and means to perceive and realize the true mind, thereby proving that it transcends production and extinction! All those who have outflows also wish to be instructed on this subject.” 2:30

The Buddha said to the great king, “Now I ask you, as it is now is your physical body like vajra, indestructible and living forever? Or does it change and go bad?” 2:33

”World Honored One, this body of mine will keep changing until it eventually becomes extinct.” 2:33

The Buddha said, “Great King, you have not yet become extinct. How do you know you will become extinct?” 2:34

”World Honored One, although my impermanent, changing, and decaying body has not yet become extinct, I observe it now, and every passing thought fades away. Each new one fails to remain, but gradually perishes like fire turning to ashes. This perishing without cease convinces me that this body will eventually become completely extinct.” 2:34

The Buddha said, “So it is. 2:35

”Great King, at your present age you are already old and declining. How do your appearance and complexion compare to when you were a youth?” 2:35

”World Honored One, in the past when I was young my skin was moist and shining. When I reached the prime of life, my blood and breath were full. But now in my declining years, as I race into old age, my form is withered and wizened and my spirit dull. My hair is white and my face is in wrinkles and I haven’t much time remaining. How can I be compared to how I was when I was full of life?” 2:36

The Buddha said, “Great King, your appearance should not decline so suddenly.” 2:37

The king said, .World Honored One, the change has been a hidden transformation of which I honestly have not been aware. I have come to this gradually through the passing of winters and summers. 2:37

”How did it happen? In my twenties, I was still young, but my features had aged since the time I was ten. My thirties were a further decline from my twenties, and now at sixty-two I look back on my fifties as hale and hearty. 2:38

”World Honored One, I am contemplating these hidden transformations. Although the changes wrought by this process of dying are evident through the decades, I might consider them further in finer detail: these changes do not occur just in periods of twelve years; there are actually changes year by year. Not only are there yearly changes, there are also monthly transformations. Nor does it stop at monthly transformations; there are also differences day by day. Examining them closely, I find that kshana by kshana, thought after thought, they never stop. 2:39

”And so I know my body will keep changing until it is extinct.” 2:40

The Buddha told the great king, “By watching the ceaseless changes of these transformations, you awaken and know of your extinction, but do you also know that at the time of extinction there is something in your body which does not become extinct?” 2:41

King Prasenajit put his palms together and exclaimed, “I really do not know.” 2:41

The Buddha said, “I will now show you the nature which is not produced and not extinguished. 2:41

”Great King, how old were you when you saw the waters of the Ganges?” 2:42

The king said, “When I was three years old my compassionate mother led me to visit the Goddess Jiva. We passed a river, and at the time I knew it was the waters of the Ganges.” 2:42

The Buddha said, “Great King, you have said that when you were twenty you had deteriorated from when you were ten. Day by day, month by month, year by year until you have reached sixty, in thought after thought there has been change. Yet when you saw the Ganges River at the age of three, how was it different from when you were thirteen?” 2:42

The king said, “It was no different from when I was three, and even now when I am sixty-two it is still no different.” 2:42

The Buddha said, “Now you are mournful that your hair is white and your face is wrinkled. In the same way that your face is definitely more wrinkled than it was in your youth, has the seeing with which you look at the Ganges aged, so that it is old now but was young when you looked at the river as a child in the past?” 2:43

The king said, “No, World Honored One.” 2:43

The Buddha said, “Great King, your face is in wrinkles, but the essential nature of your seeing has not yet wrinkled. What wrinkles is subject to change. What does not wrinkle does not change. 2:44

”What changes will become extinct, but what does not change is fundamentally free of production and extinction. How can it be subject to your birth and death? Furthermore, why bring up what Maskari Goshaliputra and the others say: that after the death of this body there is total extinction?” 2:44

The King heard these words, believed them, and realized that when the life of this body is finished, there will be rebirth. He and the entire great assembly were greatly delighted at having obtained what they had never had before. 2:45

Ananda then arose from his seat, made obeisance to the Buddha, put his palms together, knelt on both knees, and said to the Buddha, “World Honored One, if seeing and hearing are indeed neither produced nor extinguished, why did the World Honored One refer to us as people who have lost their true natures and who go about things in an upside-down way? I hope the World Honored One will give rise to great compassion and wash my dust and defilement away.” 2:46

Then the Thus Come One let his golden arm fall so that his wheeled fingers pointed downward, and, showing Ananda, he said, .”You see my mudra-hand: is it right-side up or upside down?” 2:47

Ananda said, “Living beings in the world take it to be upside down. I do not know what is right-side up and what is upside down.” 2:47

The Buddha said to Ananda, “If people of the world take this as upside down, what do people of the world take to be right-side up?” 2:47

Ananda said, “They call it right-side up when the Thus Come One raises his arm, with the fingers of his tula-cotton hand pointing upward in the air.” 2:48

The Buddha then held up his hand and said: “Worldly people are doubly deluded when they discriminate between an upright and inverted hand. 2:48

”In the same way they will differentiate between your body and the Thus Come One’s pure Dharmabody and will say that the Thus Come One’s body is one of right and universal knowledge, while your body is upside down. 2:48

”But examine your bodies and the Buddha’s closely for this upside-downess: what exactly does the term ‘upside down’ refer to?” 2:49

Thereupon Ananda and the entire great assembly were dazed, and they stared unblinking at the Buddha. They did not know in what way their bodies and minds were upside down. 2:49

The Buddha’s compassion arose and he took pity on Ananda and on all in the great assembly and he spoke to the great assembly in a voice that swept over them like the ocean-tide. 2:50

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Chapter 2

"All of you good people, I have often said that form and mind and all conditions, as well as dharmas pertaining to the mind - all the conditioned dharmas - are manifestations of the mind only. Your bodies and your minds all appear within the wonder of the bright, true, essential, wonderful mind. 2:50

”Why do I say that you have lost track of what is fundamentally wonderful in you, the perfect, wonderful bright mind, and that in the midst of your bright and enlightened nature, you mistake the false for the real because of ignorance and delusion? 2:52

”Mental dimness turns into dull emptiness. This emptiness, in the dimness, unites with darkness to become form. 2:52

”Stimulated by false thinking, the form takes the shape of a body. 2:53

”As causal conditions come together there are perpetual internal disturbances which tend to gallop outside. Such inner disturbances are often mistaken for the nature of mind. 2:54

”The primary misconception about the mind and body is the false view that the mind dwells in the physical body. 2:54

”You do not know that the physical body, as well as the mountains, the rivers, empty space, and the great earth are all within the wonderful bright true mind. 2:55

”It is like ignoring hundreds of thousands of clear pure seas and taking notice of only a single bubble, seeing it as the entire ocean, as the whole expanse of great and small seas. 2:55

”You people are doubly deluded among the deluded. Such inversion does not differ from that caused by my lowered hand. The Thus Come One says you are most pitiable.” 2:56

Having received the Buddha’s compassionate rescue and profound instruction, Ananda’s tears fell, and he folded his hands and said to the Buddha, “I have heard these wonderful sounds of

the Buddha and have realized that the wonderful bright mind is fundamentally perfect; it is the eternally dwelling mind-ground. 2:58

”But now in awakening to the Dharma-sounds that the Buddha is speaking, it is my conditioned mind which I use to contemplate them reverently. Having just obtained the mind, I do not acknowledge that it is the fundamental mind-ground. 2:59

”I pray that the Buddha will take pity on me and proclaim the perfect sound to pull out my doubts by the roots and enable me to return to the unsurpassed Way.” 2:60

The Buddha told Ananda, “You still listen to the Dharma with the conditioned mind, and so the Dharma becomes conditioned as well, and you do not obtain the Dharma-nature. It is like when someone points his finger at the moon to show it to someone else. Guided by the finger, that person should see the moon. If he looks at the finger instead and mistakes it for the moon, he loses not only the moon but the finger also. Why? He mistakes the pointing finger for the bright moon. 2:61

”Not only does he lose the finger, but he also fails to recognize light and darkness. Why? He mistakes the substance of the finger for the bright nature of the moon, and so he does not understand the two natures of light and darkness. The same is true of you. 2:62

”If you take what distinguishes the sound of my speaking Dharma to be your mind, then that mind itself, apart from the sound which is distinguished, should have a nature which makes distinctions. It is like the guest who lodges overnight at an inn; he stops temporarily and then goes on. He does not dwell there permanently, whereas the innkeeper does not go anywhere: he is the host of the inn. 2:64

”Likewise, if it is truly your mind, it does not go anywhere. However, in the absence of sound it has no discriminating nature of its own. Can you tell the reason why? 2:65

”This, then, applies not only to the distinguishing of sound; in distinguishing my appearance, there is no distinction-making nature apart from the mark of form. 2:65

”Thus even when the making of distinctions is totally absent, when there is no form and no emptiness - the obscurity which Goshali and the others take to be the ‘profound truth’ - in the absence of causal conditions, the distinction-making nature ceases to exist. 2:66

”How can we say that the nature of your mind plays the part of host since everything perceived by it returns to something else?” 2:67

Ananda said, “If every state of our mind returns to something else as its cause, then why does the wonderful bright original mind mentioned by the Buddha return nowhere? I hold out the hope that the Buddha will shower us with such compassion as to enlighten us on this point.” 2:68

The Buddha said to Ananda, “As you now see me, the essence of your seeing is fundamentally bright. If the profound bright original mind is compared to the moon, the essence of your seeing is the second moon rather than its reflection. 2:69

”You should listen attentively, for I am now going to show you the place of no returning. 2:70

”Ananda, this great lecture hall is open to the east. It is flooded with light when the sun rises in the sky. It is dark at midnight during a new moon or when obscured by clouds or fog. Looking out through open doors and windows your vision is unimpeded; facing walls or houses your vision is hindered. Your vision is causally conditioned in such places where there are forms of distinctive features; in dull void, you can see only emptiness. Your vision will be distorted when the objects of seeing are shrouded in dust and vapor; you will perceive clearly when the air is fresh. 2:70

”Ananda, observe all these transitory characteristics as I now return each to its place of origin. What are the basic origins? Ananda, among all these transitions, the ‘light’ returns to the sun. Why? Without the sun there is no light; therefore the reason for light belongs with the sun, and so it can be returned to the sun. 2:73

”’Darkness’ returns to the new moon. ‘Penetration’ returns to the doors and windows while ‘obstruction’ returns to the walls and eaves. ‘Conditions’ return to distinctions. ‘Emptiness’ returns to dull emptiness. ‘Darkness’ and ‘distortion’ return to the mist and haze. Bright ‘purity’ returns to freshness, and nothing that exists in this world goes beyond these kinds. 2:73

”To which of the eight states of perception will the essence of your seeing return? Why do I ask? The answer lies in the fact that if it is returned to brightness, you will not see darkness when there is no light. Although such states of perception as light, darkness, and the like differ from one another, your seeing remains unchanged. 2:75

”That which can be returned to other sources is clearly not you; that which can be returned nowhere is none other than you. 2:76

”Therefore I know that your mind is fundamentally wonderful, bright, and pure. You yourself are confused and deluded. You miss what is fundamental, and you are caught in the turning wheel of the six paths, tossing and floating on the stormy sea of birth and death all the time. No wonder the Thus Come One says that you are the most pitiable of creatures.” 2:78

Ananda said, “I recognize that the seeing-nature does not return to anything, but how can I come to know that it is my true nature?” 2:80

The Buddha told Ananda, “Now I have a question for you. At this point you have not yet attained the purity of no outflows. Blessed by the Buddha’s spiritual strength, you are able to see into the first dhyana heavens without any obstruction, just as Aniruddha looks at Jambudvipa with such clarity as he might an amala fruit in the palm of his hand. 2:81

”Bodhisattvas can see hundreds of thousands of realms. The Thus Come Ones of the ten directions see everything throughout the pure lands as numerous as fine motes of dust. Living beings’ sight does not extend beyond a fraction of an inch. 2:87

”Ananda, as you and I now look at the palace where the four heavenly kings reside, and inspect all that moves in the water, on dry land, and in the air, some are dark and some are bright, varying in shape and appearance, yet all are nothing but dust before us - distinctions and obstructions. 2:89

”Among them you should distinguish which is self and which is other. I ask you now to select from within your seeing which is the substance of the self and which is the appearance of things. 2:90

”Ananda, if you take a good look at everything everywhere within the range of your vision extending from the palaces of the sun and moon to the seven gold mountain ranges, all that you see is not you, but are things of different features and lights. At closer range you will gradually see clouds floating, birds flying, wind blowing, dust rising, trees, plants, rivers, mountains, grasses, animals, people, all of which are not you, but things. 2:91

”Ananda, all things, near and far, have the nature of things. Although each is distinctly different, they are seen with the same pure essence of seeing. Thus all the categories of things have their individual distinctions, but the seeing-nature has no differences. This

essential wonderful brightness is most certainly your seeing-nature. 2:94

”If seeing were a thing, then you should also be able to see my seeing. 2:96

”If you say you see my seeing, when we both look at the same thing, then when I am not seeing, why don’t you see my not-seeing? 2:96

”If you do see my not-seeing, it is clearly not the thing that I am not seeing. If you do not see my not-seeing, then it is clearly not a thing, and how can you say it is not you? 2:97

”What is more, if your seeing is a thing, things should also see you when you see things. With substance and nature mixed up together, you and I and everyone in the world are no longer in order. 2:100

”Ananda, if, when you see, it is you and not I who see, then the seeing-nature pervades everywhere. Therefore whose is it if it is not yours? 2:101

”Why do you have doubts about your own true nature and come to me seeking verification, thinking your nature is not true?. 2:102

Ananda said to the Buddha, “World Honored One, given that this seeing-nature is certainly mine and does not belong to anything else, when the Thus Come One and I regard the palace of the Four Heavenly Kings with its supreme store of jewels and stay at the palace of the sun and moon, this seeing completely pervades the lands of the Saha world. Upon returning to the sublime abode, I only see the monastic grounds and in the pure central hall I only see the eaves and corridors. 2:103

”World Honored One, that is how the seeing is. At first its substance pervaded everywhere throughout the one realm, but now in the midst of this room it fills one room only. Does the seeing shrink from great to small, or do the walls and eaves press in and cut it off? Now I do not know where the meaning in this lies and hope the Buddha will let fall his vast compassion and proclaim it for me thoroughly.” 2:104

The Buddha told Ananda, “All the aspects of everything in the world, such as big and small, inside and outside, are classed as the dust before you. You should not say the seeing stretches and shrinks. 2:107

”Consider the example of a square container in which a square of emptiness is seen. I ask you further: is the square emptiness that is seen in the square container a fixed square shape, or is it not fixed as a square shape? 2:108

”If it is a fixed square shape, when it is switched to a round container the emptiness would not be round. If it is not a fixed shape, then when it is in the square container it should not be a square-shaped emptiness. 2:108

”You say you do not know where the meaning lies. The nature of the meaning is thus; how can you speak of its location? 2:109

”Ananda, if you now wished there to be neither squareness nor roundness, you would only need to take the container away. The substance of emptiness has no shape, and so you should not say that you would also have to take the shape away from the emptiness. 2:110

”If, as you ask, your seeing shrinks and becomes small when you enter a room, then when you look up at the sun is your seeing pulled out until it reaches the sun’s surface? If you build walls and eaves which can press in and cut off your seeing why then is there no evidence of a joining when you drill a small hole? Therefore, that idea is incorrect. 2:111

”From beginningless time until now, all living beings have mistaken themselves for things and, having lost the original mind, are turned around by things. That is why they contemplate bigness and smallness in the midst of all this. 2:111

”If you can turn things around, then you are the same as the Thus Come One. 2:112

”With body and mind perfect and bright, you are an unmoving place of the Way. 2:114

”The tip of a single fine hair can completely contain the lands of the ten directions.. 2:114

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Chapter 2

Ananda said to the Buddha, “World Honored One, if this seeing-essence is indeed my wonderful nature, my wonderful nature is now in front of me. If the seeing is truly me, what, then, are my present body and mind? Yet it is my body and mind which make distinctions whereas the seeing does not make distinctions and does not discern my body. 2:116

”If it is really my mind which causes me to see now, then the seeing-nature is actually me, and the body is not me. 2:117

”How is this different from the question the Thus Come One asked about things being able to see me? I only hope the Buddha will let fall his great compassion and explain for those who have not yet awakened.” 2:117

The Buddha told Ananda, “What you have now said - that the seeing is in front of you - is actually not the case. 2:118

”If it were actually in front of you, it would be something you would actually see, and then the seeing-essence would have a location. It wouldn’t be that there is no evidence of it. 2:118

”Now as you sit in the Jeta Grove you look about everywhere at the grove, the ponds, the halls, as far as the sun and moon, with the Ganges River before you. Now, before my lion’s seat, point out these various appearances: what is dark is the groves, what is bright is the sun, what is obstructing is the walls, what is clear is emptiness, and so on from the grasses and trees to the finest particle of hair. Their sizes vary, and since they all have appearances, none cannot be located. 2:119

”If it is certain that your seeing is in front of you, then with your hand you should with certainty point out what the seeing is. Ananda, if emptiness is the seeing, then how can it remain empty since it has already become your seeing? If a thing is the seeing, how can it be external to you as an object, since it has already become your seeing? 2:120

”You can cut through and peel away the myriad appearances to the finest degree in order to distinguish and bring forth the essential brightness and pure wonder of the source of seeing, pointing it out and showing it to me from among all these things, so that it is perfectly clear beyond any doubt.” 2:121

Ananda said, “From where I am now in this many-storied lecture hall, as far as the distant Ganges River and the sun and moon overhead, all that I might raise my hand to point to, all that I indulge my eyes in seeing, are all things; they are not the seeing. World Honored One, it is as the Buddha has said. Not merely myself, who am a shravaka of the first stage who still has outflows, but even Bodhisattvas cannot break open and reveal, among the myriad appearances which are before them, an essence of seeing which has a special self-nature apart from all things.” 2:122

The Buddha said, “So it is, so it is.” 2:122

The Buddha said further to Ananda, “It is as you have said. There is no seeing-essence to be found existing separately among all the things. Therefore, all the things you point to are things, and none is the seeing. 2:123

”Now I will tell you: you and the Thus Come One sit in the Jeta Grove and look again at the groves and gardens, as far as the sun and moon, and at all the various different appearances, and it is certain that the seeing-essence is not among whatever you point to. You can go ahead and reveal what, among these things, is not your seeing.” 2:124

Ananda said, “I see clearly all over this Jeta Grove, and I do not know what in the midst of it is not my seeing. 2:125

”Why? If trees are not the seeing, why do I see trees? If trees are the seeing, then what becomes of trees? The same is true of everything up to and including emptiness: if emptiness is not the seeing, why do I see emptiness? If emptiness is the seeing, then what becomes of emptiness? 2:125

”As I consider it again and reveal the subtlest aspects of the myriad appearances, none is not my seeing.” 2:126

The Buddha said, “So it is, so it is.” 2:127

Then all in the great assembly who had not reached the stage beyond learning were stunned upon hearing these words of the Buddha, and could not perceive where the meaning began or ended. They were agitated and taken aback at the same time, having lost what they had adhered to. 2:127

The Thus Come One, knowing they were anxious and uneasy in spirit, let pity rise in his heart as he consoled Ananda and everyone in the great assembly. “Good people, what the unsurpassed Dharma King says is true and real. He speaks things as they are. He does not deceive. He does not lie. He is not Maskari Goshaliputra with his four kinds of non-dying theories that are deceptive and confusing. You should consider this attentively. It is no disgrace to pity or to implore.” 2:129

Then Manjushri, son of the Dharma King, took pity on the four assemblies, rose from his seat in the midst of the great assembly, bowed at the Buddha’s feet, placed his palms together

respectfully, and said to the Buddha, “World Honored One, the great assembly has not awakened to the principle of the Thus Come One’s two-fold disclosure of the essence of seeing as being both form and emptiness and as being neither of them. 2:131

”World Honored One, if the causal form, emptiness and other phenomena mentioned above were the seeing, there should be an indication of its distance; and if they were not the seeing, there should be nothing visible to be seen. Now we do not know what is meant, and this is why we are alarmed and concerned. 2:133

”It is not that our good roots from former lives are deficient. We only hope the Thus Come One will have the great compassion to reveal exactly what all the things are and what the seeing-essence is. Is it that there is no question of ‘is’ or ‘is not’ in all of this?” 2:134

The Buddha told Manjushri and the great assembly, “To the Thus Come Ones and the great Bodhisattvas of the ten directions, who dwell in this samadhi, seeing and the conditions of seeing, as well as the characteristics of thought, are like flowers in space - fundamentally non-existent. 2:135

”This seeing and its conditions are originally the wonderful pure bright substance of Bodhi. How can one speak of ‘is’ and ‘is not’? 2:136

”Manjushri, I now ask you: take yourself as an example, Manjushri. Is there still another Manjushri? Is there a Manjushri who is and a Manjushri who is not?” 2:137

”So it is, World Honored One: I am truly Manjushri. There is no Manjushri who ‘is.’ Why? If there were still another Manjushri who ‘is’ Manjushri, there would be two Manjushris. But it is not that now I am not Manjushri. In fact, neither of the two characteristics ‘is’ and ‘is not’ exist.” 2:137

The Buddha said, “This is not only the case with the seeing, the basic substance of wonderful Bodhi, but also with emptiness and mundane objects. 2:138

”They are basically the projections or manifestations of the wonderful brightness of unsurpassed Bodhi, the pure, perfect, true mind. They are falsely taken to be form and emptiness, as well as hearing and seeing. 2:139

”Just as with the second moon: which one ‘is’ the moon and which ‘is not’ the moon? Manjushri, there is only one true moon, and within it there is not a moon that ‘is’ or a moon

that ‘is not.’ 2:140

”Therefore, now as you contemplate the seeing and the mundane things together, all the things you disclose are called false thoughts. You cannot transcend ‘is’ and ‘is not’ from within them. 2:140

”With the true essence, the wonderful enlightened bright nature, you can get beyond trying to point out or not point out.” 2:141

Ananda said to the Buddha, “World Honored One, it is truly as the Dharma King has said: the condition of enlightenment pervades the ten directions: clear, everlasting, and by nature neither produced nor extinguished. How does it differ, then, from the first brahma Kapila’s teaching of the ‘profound truth’ or from the teaching of the ascetics who throw ashes on themselves or from the other externalist sects that say there is a ‘real self’ which pervades the ten directions? 2:142

”Also, in the past, the World Honored One gave a lecture on Mount Lanka explaining the principle thoroughly for the sake of Great Wisdom Bodhisattva and others: ‘Externalist sects always speak of spontaneity. I speak of causes and conditions which is an entirely different principle.’ 2:144

”Now as I contemplate the nature of enlightenment as spontaneous, as neither produced nor extinguished, and as apart from all empty falseness and inversion, it seems to have nothing to do with your causes and conditions or the spontaneity advocated by others. Would you please enlighten us on this point lest we should fall into deviant paths, thus enabling us to obtain the true mind, the bright nature of wonderful enlightenment?” 2:146

The Buddha told Ananda, “Now I have instructed you with such expedients in order to tell you the truth, yet you do not awaken to it but mistake it for spontaneity. 2:147

”Ananda, if it definitely were spontaneous, you should be able to distinguish the substance of the spontaneity. 2:148

”Now you look into the wonderful bright seeing. What is its self? Does the seeing take bright light as its self? Does it take darkness as its self? Does it take emptiness as its self? Does it take solid objects as its self? 2:148

”Ananda, if its self consists in light, you should not see darkness. Moreover, if it takes emptiness as the substance of its self, you should not see solid objects. Continuing in the same way, if it takes all dark appearances as its self, then when it is light, the seeing-nature is cut off and extinguished, and how can you see light?” 2:149

Ananda said, “I am certain that the nature of this wonderful seeing is not spontaneous. Now I discern that it is produced from causes and conditions. But I do not yet have it clear in my mind. I now ask the Thus Come One how this idea is consonant with the nature of causes and conditions.” 2:150

The Buddha said, “You say it is causes and conditions. I ask you again: because you are now seeing, the seeing-nature manifests. Is it because of light that the seeing exists? Is it because of darkness that the seeing exists? Is it because of emptiness that the seeing exists? Is it because of solid objects that the seeing exists? 2:151

”Ananda, if light brings it into existence, you should not see darkness, and if it exists because of darkness, you should not see light. It is the same with emptiness and solid objects. 2:152

”Moreover, Ananda, does the seeing derive from the condition of light? Does the seeing derive from the condition of darkness? Does the seeing derive from the condition of emptiness? Does the seeing derive from the condition of solid objects? 2:153

”Ananda, if it exists because of the condition of emptiness, you should not see solid objects. If it exists because of the condition of solid objects, you should not see emptiness: it is the same with light and darkness. 2:153

”Thus you should know that the essential, enlightened wonderful brightness is due to neither causes nor conditions and it does not arise spontaneously. 2:154

”It is not that which is not spontaneous. It is not that it is not; nor is it that it is not not. It is not that which ‘is’ or 'is not.’ 2:154

”Any dharma is that which is apart from all characteristics. 2:155

”Now in the midst of dharmas, how can you use your mind to make distinctions that are based on worldly sophistries, terms, and characteristics? That is like grasping at empty space with your hand: you only succeed in tiring yourself out. How could empty space possibly yield to your grasp?” 2:155

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Chapter 2

Ananda said to the Buddha, “If the nature of the wonderful enlightenment has neither causes nor conditions, then why does the World Honored One always tell the bhikshus that the nature of seeing derives from the four conditions of emptiness, brightness, the mind, and the eyes? What does that mean?” 2:159

The Buddha said, “Ananda, what I have said about all the worldly causes and conditions has nothing to do with the primary meaning. 2:160

”Ananda, I ask you again: people in the world say, ‘I can see.’ What is meant by seeing? What is not seeing?” 2:162

Ananda said, “Due to the light of the sun, the moon, and lamps, people in the world can see all kinds of appearances: that is called seeing. If it were not for these three kinds of light, they would not be able to see.” 2:162

”Ananda, if it is called ‘not seeing’ when there is no light, you should not see darkness. If in fact you do see darkness, which is none other than the lack of light, how can you say there is an absence of seeing? 2:163

”Ananda, if, when it is dark, you call it ‘not seeing’ because you do not see light, then since it is now light and you do not see the characteristic of darkness, it should also be called ‘not seeing.’ Thus, the two characteristics would both be called ‘not seeing.’ 2:163

”Although these two characteristics replace one another, your seeing-nature does not lapse for an instant. Thus you can know that there is seeing in both cases. How, then, can you say there is no seeing? 2:164

”Therefore, Ananda, you should know that when you see light, the seeing is not the light. When you see darkness, the seeing is not the darkness. When you see emptiness, the seeing is not the emptiness. When you see solid objects, the seeing is not the solid objects. 2:165

”Having realized these four meanings, you should also know that when you see your seeing, the seeing is not the seeing to be seen. Since the former seeing is beyond the latter, the latter cannot reach it. That being the case, how can you say that your absolute intuitive perception has something to do with causes and conditions or spontaneity or that it has something to do

with mixing and uniting? 2:165

”You narrow-minded Sound Hearers are so inferior and ignorant that you are unable to penetrate through to the purity of the characteristic of reality. Now I will teach you. You should consider it well, and do not become weary or negligent on the wonderful road to Bodhi.” 2:168

Ananda said to the Buddha, “World Honored One, it is still not clear in my mind what the Buddha, the World Honored One, has explained for me and for others like me about causes and conditions, spontaneity, the characteristic of mixing and uniting, and the absence of mixing and uniting. And now to hear further that to see seeing is not seeing adds yet another layer of confusion. 2:172

”Humbly, I hope that with your vast compassion you will bestow upon us the great wisdom-eye so as to show us the bright pure enlightened mind.” After saying this he wept, made obeisance, and waited to receive the holy instruction. 2:173

Then the World Honored One, out of pity for Ananda and the great assembly, began to explain extensively the wonderful path of cultivation of all samadhis of the Great Dharani. 2:174

He said to Ananda, “Although you have a strong memory, it only benefits your wide learning. But your mind has not yet understood the subtle secret contemplation and illumination of shamatha. Listen attentively now as I explain it for you in detail. 2:175

”And may this explanation cause all those of the future who have outflows to obtain the fruition of Bodhi. 2:175

Ananda, all living beings turn on the wheel of rebirth in this world because of two upside-down discriminating false views. Wherever these views arise, revolution through the cycle of appropriate karma occurs. 2:177

”What are the two views? The first consists of the false view based on living beings’ individual karma. The second consists of the false view based on living beings’ collective share. 2:180

”What is meant by false views based on individual karma? Ananda, it is like a person in the world who has red cataracts on his eyes so that at night he alone sees around the lamp a circular reflection composed of layers of five colors. 2:183

”What do you think? Is the circle of light that appears around the lamp at night the lamp’s colors, or is it the seeing’s colors? 2:184

”Ananda, if it is the lamp’s colors, why is it that someone without the disease does not see the same thing, and only the one who is diseased sees the circular reflection? If it is the seeing’s colors, then the seeing has already become colored; what, then, is the circular reflection the diseased person sees to be called? 2:184

”Moreover, Ananda, if the circular reflection is in itself a thing apart from the lamp, then it would be seen around the folding screen, the curtain, the table, and the mats. If it has nothing to do with the seeing, it should not be seen by the eyes. Why is it that the person with cataracts sees the circular reflections with his eyes? 2:185

”Therefore, you should know that in fact the colors come from the lamp, and the diseased seeing brings about the reflection. Both the circular reflection and the faulty seeing are the result of the cataract. But that which sees the diseased film is not sick. Thus you should not say that it is the lamp or the seeing or that it is neither the lamp nor the seeing. 2:186

”It is like a second moon often seen when one presses on one’s eye while looking up into the sky. It is neither substantial nor a reflection because it is an illusory vision caused by the pressure exerted on one’s eye. Hence, a wise person should not say that the second moon is a form or not a form. Nor is it correct to say that the illusory second moon is apart from the seeing or not apart from the seeing. 2:187

”It is the same with the illusion created by the diseased eyes. You cannot say it is from the lamp or from the seeing: even less can it be said not to be from the lamp or the seeing. 2:188

”What is meant by the false view of the collective share? Ananda, in Jambudvipa, besides the waters of the great seas, there is level land that forms some three thousand continents. East and west, throughout the entire expanse of the great continent, there are twenty-three hundred large countries. In the other, smaller continents in the seas there may be two or three hundred countries, or perhaps one or two, or perhaps thirty, forty, or fifty. 2:189

”Ananda, suppose that among them there is one small continent where there are only two countries. The people of just one of the countries together experience evil conditions. On that small continent, all the people of that country see all kinds of inauspicious things: perhaps they see two suns, perhaps they see two moons with circles, or a dark haze, or girdle-ornaments around them; or comets, shooting stars, ‘ears’ on the sun or moon, rainbows, secondary rainbows, and various other evil signs. 2:190

”Only the people in that country see them. The living beings in the other country from the first do not see or hear anything unusual. 2:193

”Ananda, I will now go back and forth comparing these two matters for you, to make both of them clear. 2:193

”Ananda, in the case of the living being’s false view of individual karma by which he sees the appearance of a circular reflection around the lamp, the appearance seems to be real, but in the end, what is seen comes into being because of the cataracts on the eyes. 2:194

”The cataracts are the result of the weariness of the seeing rather than the products of form. However, the essence of seeing which perceives the cataracts is free from all diseases and defects. For example, you now use your eyes to look at the mountains, the rivers, the countries, and all the living beings. They are all brought about by the disease of your seeing contracted since time without beginning. 2:194

”Seeing and the conditions of seeing seem to manifest what is before you. Originally my enlightenment is bright. The seeing and conditions arise from the cataracts. Realize that the seeing arises from the cataracts: the enlightened condition of the basically enlightened bright mind has no cataracts. 2:195

”That which is aware of the faulty awareness is not diseased. It is the true perception of seeing. How can you continue to speak of feeling, hearing, knowing, and seeing? 2:196

”Therefore, you now see me and yourself and the world and all the ten kinds of living beings because of a disease in the seeing. What is aware of the disease is not diseased. 2:197

”The true essential seeing by nature has no disease. Therefore it is not what we normally call seeing. 2:198

”Ananda, let us compare the false views of those living beings’ collective share with the false views of the individual karma of one person. 2:198

”The individual person with the diseased eyes is the same as the people of that one country. He sees circular reflections erroneously brought about by a disease of the seeing. The beings with a collective share see inauspicious things. In the midst of their karma of identical views

arise pestilence and evils. 2:203

”Both are produced from a beginningless falsity in the seeing. It is the same in the three thousand continents of Jambudvipa, throughout the four great seas and in the Saha World and throughout the ten directions. All countries that have outflows and all living beings are the enlightened bright wonderful mind without outflows. Because of the false, diseased conditions that are seen, heard, felt, and known, they mix and unite in false birth, mix and unite in false death. 2:204

”If you can leave far behind all conditions which mix and unite and those which do not mix and unite, then you can also extinguish and cast out the causes of birth and death, and obtain perfect Bodhi, the nature which is neither produced nor extinguished. It is the pure clear basic mind, the everlasting fundamental enlightenment. 2:205

”Ananda, although you have already realized that the wonderfully bright basic enlightenment does not by nature come from causes and conditions and is not by nature spontaneous, you have not yet understood that the enlightened source is produced neither from mixing and uniting nor from a lack of mixing and uniting. 2:208

”Ananda, now I will once again make use of the mundane objects before you to question you. You now hold that false thoughts mix and unite with the causes and conditions of everything in the world, and you wonder whether certification to Bodhi might arise from mixing and uniting. 2:212

”Accordingly, right now, does the wonderful pure seeingessence mix with light, does it mix with darkness, does it mix with emptiness or does it mix with solid objects? If it mixes with light, look further at the light: what place there in the light before you is combined with the seeing? If you can distinguish the characteristic of seeing, what does it look like in combination? 2:213

”If it is not the seeing, how can you see the light? If it is the seeing, how can the seeing see itself? 2:214

”If it is certain that the seeing is complete, what room will there be for it to mix with the light? If the light is complete, it cannot unite and mix with the seeing. 2:214

”If seeing is different from light, then both the nature and the light lose their identity when they combine. Since the combination results in the loss of the light and the nature, it is

meaningless to say it mixes with light. The same principle applies to its mixing with darkness, with emptiness, or with solid objects. 2:215

”Moreover, Ananda, as you are right now, once again, does the wonderful pure seeing-essence unite with light, does it unite with darkness, does it unite with emptiness, or does it unite with solid objects? 2:217

”If it unites with light, then when darkness comes the characteristic of light is extinguished, how will you be able to see darkness, since the seeing does not unite with darkness? If you do see darkness and yet at that time there is no union with darkness, but rather a union with light, then you would not have seen light. Since you would not have seen light, why is it that, when there is union with light, you are able to know clearly that it is light and not darkness? 2:217

”The same is true of its union with darkness, with emptiness, or with solid objects.” 2:218

Ananda said to the Buddha, “World Honored One, as I consider it, the source of this wonderful enlightenment does not mix or unite with any conditioned mundane object or with the mind’s speculation. Is that the case?” 2:219

The Buddha said, “Now you say further that the enlightened nature is neither mixed nor united. So now I ask you further: as to this wonderful seeing-essence’s neither mixing nor uniting, does it not mix with light? Does it not mix with darkness? Does it not mix with emptiness? Does it not mix with solid objects? 2:219

”If it does not mix with light, then between seeing and light there must be a boundary. 2:220

”Examine it further: what place is light? What place is seeing? Where are the boundaries of the seeing and the light? 2:220

”Ananda, if there is no seeing within the boundaries of light, then there is no contact between them, and clearly one would not know where the characteristic of light is. Then how could its boundaries be realized? 2:221

”As to its not mixing with darkness, with emptiness, or with solid objects, the principle is the same. 2:221

”Moreover, as to the wonderful seeing essence’s neither mixing nor uniting, does it not unite with light? Does it not unite with darkness? Does it not unite with emptiness? Does it not unite with solid objects? 2:221

”If it does not unite with light, then the seeing and the light are at odds with each other by nature, as are the ear and the light, which do not come in contact. 2:222

”Since the seeing does not know where the characteristic of light is, how can it determine clearly whether there is union? 2:222

”As to its not uniting with darkness, with emptiness, or with solid objects, the principle is the same. 2:223

3. False Is Just True

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Chapter 3

"Ananda, you have not yet understood that all the defiling objects that appear, all the illusory, ephemeral characteristics, spring up in the very spot where they also come to an end. They are what is called ‘illusory falseness.’ But their nature is in truth the bright substance of wonderful enlightenment. 3:1

”Thus it is throughout, up to the five skandhas and the six entrances, to the twelve places and the eighteen realms; the union and mixture of various causes and conditions account for their illusory and false existence, and the separation and dispersion of the causes and conditions result in their illusory and false extinction. 3:2

”Who would have thought that production, extinction, coming, and going are fundamentally the everlasting, wonderful light of the Treasury of the Thus Come One, the unmoving, all pervading perfection, the wonderful nature of true suchness! If within the true and eternal nature one seeks coming and going, confusion and enlightenment, or birth and death, there is nothing that can be obtained. 3:3

”Ananda, why do I say that the five skandhas are basically the wonderful nature of true suchness, the Treasury of the Thus Come One? 3:5

”Ananda, consider this example: when a person who has pure clear eyes looks at clear, bright emptiness, he sees nothing but clear emptiness, and he is quite certain that nothing exists within it. 3:5

”If, for no apparent reason, the person does not move his eyes, the staring will cause fatigue, and then of his own accord, he will see strange flowers in space and other unreal appearances that are wild and disordered. 3:6

”You should know that it is the same with the skandha of form. 3:7

”Ananda, the strange flowers come neither from emptiness nor from the eyes. 3:7

”The reason for this, Ananda, is that if the flowers were to come from emptiness, they would return to emptiness. If there is a coming out and a going in, the space would not be empty. If emptiness were not empty, then it could not contain the appearance of the arisal and extinction of the flowers, just as Ananda’s body cannot contain another Ananda. 3:7

”If the flowers were to come from the eyes, they would return to the eyes. 3:8

”If the nature of the flowers were to come from the eyes, it would be endowed with the faculty of seeing. If it could see, then when it left the eyes it would become flowers in space, and when it returned it should see the eyes. If it did not see, then when it left the eyes it would obscure emptiness, and when it returned, it would obscure the eyes. 3:9

”Moreover, when you see the flowers, your eyes should not be obscured. So why is it that the eyes are said to be ‘pure and bright’ when they see clear emptiness? 3:9

”Therefore, you should know that the skandha of form is empty and false, because it neither depends on causes and conditions for existence nor is spontaneous in nature. 3:10

”Ananda, consider the example of a person whose hands and feet are relaxed and at ease and whose entire body is in balance and harmony. He is unaware of his life processes, because there is nothing agreeable or disagreeable in his nature. However, for some unknown reason, the person rubs his two hands together in emptiness, and sensations of roughness, smoothness, cold, and warmth seem to arise from nowhere between his palms. 3:10

”You should know that it is the same with the skandha of feeling. 3:11

”Ananda, all this illusory contact does not come from emptiness, nor does it come from the hands. 3:11

”The reason for this, Ananda, is that if it came from emptiness, then since it could make contact with the palms, why wouldn’t it make contact with the body? It should not be that emptiness chooses what it comes in contact with. 3:12

”If it came from the palms, it could be readily felt without waiting for the two palms to be joined. 3:12

”What is more, if it were to come from the palms, then the palms would know when they were joined. When they separated, the contact would return into the arms, the wrists, the bones, and the marrow, and you also should be aware of the course of its entry. 3:12

”It should also be perceived by the mind because it would behave like something coming in and going out of the body. In that case, what need would there be to put the two palms together to experience what is called ‘contact’? 3:13

”Therefore, you should know that the skandha of feeling is empty and false, because it neither depends on causes and conditions for existence nor is spontaneous in nature. 3:13

”Ananda, consider the example of a person whose mouth waters at the mention of sour plums, or the soles of whose feet tingle when he thinks about walking along a precipice. 3:14

”You should know that it is the same with the skandha of thinking. 3:15

”Ananda, you should know that the watering of the mouth caused by the mention of the plums does not come from the plums, nor does it come from the mouth. 3:16

”The reason for this, Ananda, is that if it were produced from the plums, the plums should speak for themselves, why wait for someone to mention them? If it came from the mouth, the mouth itself should hear, and what need would there be to wait for the ear? If the ear alone heard, then why doesn’t the water come out of the ear? 3:16

”Thinking about walking along a precipice is explained in the same way. 3:17

”Therefore, you should know that the skandha of thinking is empty and false, since it neither depends upon causes and conditions for existence, nor is spontaneous in nature. 3:17

”Ananda, consider, for example, a swift rapids whose waves follow upon one another in orderly succession, the ones behind never overtaking the ones in front. 3:18

”You should know that it is the same with the skandha of activity. 3:19

”Ananda, thus the nature of the flow does not arise because of emptiness, nor does it come into existence because of the water. It is not the nature of water, and yet it is not separate from either emptiness or water. 3:20

”The reason for this, Ananda, is that if it arose because of emptiness, then the inexhaustible emptiness throughout the ten directions would become an inexhaustible flow, and all the worlds would inevitably be drowned. 3:20

”If the swift rapids existed because of water, then their nature would differ from that of water and the location and characteristics of its existence would be apparent. 3:21

”If their nature were simply that of water, then when they became still and clear they would no longer be made up of water. 3:21

”Suppose it were to separate from emptiness and water: there isn’t anything outside of emptiness, and outside of water there isn’t any flow. 3:21

”Therefore, you should know that the skandha of activity is empty and false, since it neither depends upon causes and conditions for existence nor is spontaneous in nature. 3:22

”Ananda, consider, for example, a man who picks up a kalavinka pitcher and stops up its two holes. He lifts up the pitcher filled with emptiness and, walking some thousand li away, presents it to another country. You should know that the skandha of consciousness is the same way. 3:22

”Thus, Ananda, the space does not come from one place, nor does it go to another. 3:24

”The reason for this, Ananda, is that if it were to come from another place, then when the stored up emptiness in the pitcher went elsewhere there would be less emptiness in the place where the pitcher was originally. 3:25

”If it were to enter this region: when the holes were unplugged and the pitcher was turned over, one would see emptiness come out. 3:25

”Therefore, you should know that the skandha of consciousness is empty and false, since it neither depends upon causes and conditions for existence nor is spontaneous in nature. 3:26

”Moreover, Ananda, why do I say that the six entrances have their origin in the wonderful nature of true suchness, the Treasury of the Thus Come One? 3:27

”Ananda, although the eye’s staring causes fatigue, the eye and the fatigue originate in Bodhi. Staring gives rise to the characteristic of fatigue. 3:28

”Because a sense of seeing is stimulated in the midst of the two false, defiling objects of light and dark, defiling appearances are taken in; this is called the nature of seeing. Apart from the two defiling objects of light and dark, this seeing is ultimately without substance. 3:28

”Thus, Ananda, you should know that seeing does not come from light or dark, nor does it come forth from the sense organ, nor is it produced from emptiness. 3:29

”Why? If it came from light, then it would be extinguished when it is dark, and you would not see darkness. If it came from darkness, then it would be extinguished when it is light, and you would not see light. 3:29

”Suppose it came from the sense organ, which is obviously devoid of light and dark: a nature of seeing such as this would have no self-nature. 3:30

”Suppose it came forth from emptiness. When it looks in front of you, it sees the shapes of the defiling dust; turning around, it would see your sense organ. Moreover, if it were emptiness itself which sees, what connection would that have with your entrance? 3:30

”Therefore, you should know that the eye entrance is empty and false, since it neither depends upon causes and conditions for existence nor is spontaneous in nature. 3:31

”Ananda, consider, for example, a person who suddenly stops up his ears with two fingers. Because the sense organ of hearing has become fatigued, a sound is heard in his head. However, both the ears and the fatigue originate in Bodhi. Monotony will produce the characteristic of fatigue. 3:32

”Because a sense of hearing is stimulated in the midst of the two false, defiling objects of movement and stillness, defiling appearances are taken in; this is called the nature of hearing. Apart from the two defiling objects of movement and stillness, this hearing is ultimately without substance. 3:33

”Thus, Ananda, you should know that hearing does not come from movement and stillness; nor does it come from the sense organ, nor is it produced from emptiness. 3:35

”Why? If it came from stillness, it would be extinguished when there is movement, and you would not hear movement. If it came from movement, then it would be extinguished when there is stillness, and you would not be aware of the stillness. 3:35

”Suppose it came from the sense organ, which is obviously devoid of movement and stillness: a nature of hearing such as this would have no self nature. 3:36

”Suppose it came from emptiness: emptiness would then become hearing and would no longer be emptiness. Moreover, if it were emptiness itself which hears, what connection would it have with your entrance? 3:36

”Therefore, you should know that the ear entrance is empty and false, since it neither depends upon causes and conditions for existence, nor is spontaneous in nature. 3:37

”Ananda, consider, for example, a person who inhales deeply through his nose. After he has inhaled for a long time it becomes fatigued, and then there is a sensation of cold in the nose. Because of that sensation, there are the distinctions of penetration and obstruction, of emptiness and actuality, and so forth, including all fragrant and stinking vapors. However, both the nose and the fatigue originate in Bodhi. Overexertion will produce the characteristic of fatigue. 3:37

”Because a sense of smelling is stimulated in the midst of the two false, defiling objects of penetration and obstruction, defiling appearances are taken in; this is called the nature of smelling. Apart from the two defiling objects of penetration and obstruction, this smelling is ultimately without substance. 3:39

”You should know that smelling does not come from penetration and obstruction, nor does it come forth from the sense organ, nor is it produced from emptiness. 3:40

”Why? If it came from penetration, the smelling would be extinguished when there is obstruction, and then how could it experience obstruction? If it existed because of obstruction, then where there is penetration there would be no smelling; in that case, how would the awareness of fragrance, stench, and other such sensations come into being? 3:41 .

”Suppose it came from the sense organ, which is obviously devoid of penetration and obstruction. A nature of smelling such as this would have no self nature. 3:42

”Suppose it came from emptiness: smelling itself would turn around and smell your own nose. Moreover, if it were emptiness itself which smelled, what connection would it have with your entrance? 3:42

”Therefore, you should know that the nose entrance is empty and false, since it neither depends upon causes and conditions for existence nor is spontaneous in nature. 3:42

”Ananda, consider, for example, a person who licks his lips with his tongue. His excessive licking causes fatigue. If the person is sick, there will be a bitter flavor; a person who is not sick will have a subtle sweet sensation. Sweetness and bitterness demonstrate the tongue’s sense of taste. When the organ is inactive, a sense of tastelessness prevails. However, both the tongue and the fatigue originate in Bodhi. Stress produces the characteristic of fatigue. 3:43

Because the two defiling objects of sweetness and bitterness, as well as tastelessness, stimulate a recognition of taste which in turn draws in these defiling sensations, it becomes what is known as a sense of taste. Apart from the two defiling objects of sweetness and bitterness and apart from tastelessness, the sense of taste is originally without a substance. 3:46

”Thus, Ananda, you should know that the perception of sweetness, bitterness, and tastelessness does not come from sweetness or bitterness, nor does it exist because of tastelessness, nor does it arise from the sense organ, nor is it produced from emptiness. 3:47

”For what reason? If it came from sweetness and bitterness, it would cease to exist when tastelessness was experienced, so how could it recognize tastelessness? If it arose from

tastelessness, it would vanish when the flavor of sweetness was tasted, so how could it perceive the two flavors, sweet and bitter? 3:47

”Suppose it came from the tongue which is obviously devoid of the defiling objects of sweetness and bitterness and of tastelessness. An essence of tasting such as this would have no self nature. 3:48

”Suppose it came from emptiness: the sense of taste would be experienced by emptiness instead of by the mouth. Suppose, moreover, that it was emptiness itself which tasted; what connection would that have with your entrance? 3:48

”Therefore, you should know that the tongue entrance is empty and false since it neither depends upon causes and conditions for existence nor is it spontaneous in nature. 3:49

”Ananda, consider, for example, a person who touches his warm hand with his cold hand. If the cold is in excess of the warmth, the warm hand will become cold; if the warmth is in excess of the cold, his cold hand will become warm. So the sensation of warmth and cold is felt through the contact and separation of the two hands. Fatiguing contact results in the interpenetration of warmth and cold. However, both the body and the fatigue originate in Bodhi. Protraction produces the characteristic of fatigue. 3:49

”Because a physical sensation is stimulated in the midst of the two defiling objects of separation and union, defiling appearances are taken in; this is called the awareness of sensation. Apart from the two sets of defiling objects of separation and union, and pleasantness and unpleasantness, the awareness of sensation is originally without a substance. 3:50

”Thus, Ananda, you should know that this sensation does not come from separation and union, nor does it exist because of pleasantness and unpleasantness, nor does it arise from the sense organ, nor is it produced from emptiness. 3:51

”For what reason? If it arose when there was union, it would disappear when there was separation, so how could it sense the separation? The two characteristics of pleasantness and unpleasantness are the same way. 3:51

”Suppose it came from the sense organ, which is obviously devoid of the four characteristics of union, separation, pleasantness, and unpleasantness; an awareness of physical sensation such as this would have no self nature. 3:52

”Suppose it came from emptiness; the awareness of sensations would be experienced by emptiness itself, what connection would that have with your entrance? 3:52

”Therefore you should know that the body entrance is empty and false, since it neither depends upon causes and conditions for existence, nor is spontaneous in nature. 3:53

”Ananda, consider, for example, a person who becomes so fatigued that he goes to sleep. Having slept soundly, he awakens and tries to recollect what he experienced while asleep. He recalls some things and forgets others. Thus, his upside-downness goes through production, dwelling, change, and extinction, which are taken in and returned to a center habitually, each following the next without ever being overtaken. This is known as the mind organ or intellect. The mind and the fatigue are both Bodhi. Persistence produces the characteristic of fatigue. 3:53

”The two defiling objects of production and extinction stimulate a sense of knowing which in turn grasps these inner sense data, reversing the flow of seeing and hearing. Before the flow reaches the ground it is known as the faculty of intellect. 3:56

”Apart from the two sets of defiling objects of waking and sleeping and of production and extinction, the faculty of intellect is originally without substance. 3:56

”Thus, Ananda, you should know that the faculty of intellect does not come from waking, sleeping, production, or extinction, nor does it arise from the sense organ, nor is it produced from emptiness. 3:57

”For what reason? If it came from waking, it would disappear at the time of sleeping, so how could it experience sleep? If it came from production, it would cease to exist at the time of extinction, so how could it undergo extinction? If it came from extinction it would disappear at the time of production, so how could it know about production? 3:57

”Suppose it came from the sense organ; waking and sleeping cause only a physical opening and closing respectively. Apart from these two movements, the faculty of intellect is as unsubstantial as flowers in space, because it is fundamentally without a self nature. 3:58

”Suppose it came from emptiness; the sense of intellect would be experienced by emptiness instead of by the mind. Then what connection would that have with your entrance? 3:58

”Therefore, you should know that the mind entrance is empty and false, since it neither depends upon causes and conditions for existence nor is spontaneous in nature. 3:59

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Chapter 3

"Moreover, Ananda, why do I say that the twelve places are basically the wonderful nature of true suchness, the Treasury of the Thus Come One? 3:60

Ananda, look again at the trees in the Jeta Grove and the fountains and pools. 3:61

”What do you think? Do these things come into being because the forms are produced and thus the eyes see, or because the eyes produce the characteristics of form? 3:61

”Ananda, if the organ of sight were to produce the characteristics of form, then the nature of form would be obliterated when you see emptiness, which is not form. Once it was obliterated, everything that is manifest would disappear. Since the characteristics of form would then be absent, who would be able to understand the nature of emptiness? The same is true of emptiness. 3:61

”If, moreover, the defiling objects of form were to produce the eye’s seeing, then seeing would perish upon looking at emptiness, which is not form, and once it perished, everything would disappear. Then who would be able to understand emptiness and form? 3:62

”Therefore, you should know that neither seeing nor form nor emptiness has a location, and thus the two places of form and seeing are empty and false. Their origin is not in causes and conditions, nor do their natures arise spontaneously. 3:63

”Ananda, listen again to the drum being beaten in the Jeta Garden when the food is ready. The Assembly gathers as the bell is struck. The sounds of the bell and the drum follow one another in succession. 3:63

”What do you think? Do these things come into existence because the sound comes to the region of the ear, or because the ear goes to the place of the sound? 3:65

”Again, Ananda, suppose that the sound comes to the region of the ear. Similarly, when I go to beg for food in the city of Shravasti, I am no longer in the Jeta Grove. If the sound definitely goes to the region of Ananda’s ear, then neither Maudgalyayana nor Kashyapa would hear it,

and even less the twelve hundred and fifty Shramanas who, upon hearing the sound of the bell, come to the dining hall at the same time. 3:66

”Again, suppose that the ear goes to the region of the sound. Similarly, when I return to the Jeta Grove, I am no longer in the city of Shravasti. When you hear the sound of the drum, your ear will already have gone to the place where the drum is being beaten. Thus, when the bell peals, you will not hear the sound . even the less that of the elephants, horses, cows, sheep, and all the other various sounds around you. 3:68

”If there is no coming or going, there will be no hearing, either. 3:69

”Therefore, you should know that neither hearing nor sound has a location, and thus the two places of hearing and sound are empty and false. Their origin is not in causes and conditions, nor do their natures arise spontaneously. 3:69

”Moreover, Ananda, you smell the chandana in this censer. When one particle of this incense is lit, it can be smelled simultaneously through forty li around the city of Shravasti. 3:70

”What do you think? Is this fragrance produced from the chandana wood? Is it produced in your nose, or does it arise within emptiness? 3:71

”Again, Ananda, suppose this fragrance is produced from your nose. What is said to be produced from the nose should come forth from the nose. Your nose is not chandana, so how can the nose have the fragrance of chandana? When you say you smell fragrance, it should enter your nose. For the nose to emit fragrance is not the meaning of smelling. 3:71

”Suppose it is produced from within emptiness. The nature of emptiness is everlasting and unchanging, and so the fragrance should be eternally present. What need should there be to rely on burning the dry wood in the censer? 3:72

”Suppose it is produced from the wood. Now, the nature of this incense is such that it gives off smoke when it is burned. If the nose smells it, it should be filled with smoke. The smoke rises into the air, and before it has reached the distance, how is it that the fragrance is already being smelled at a distance of forty li? 3:73

”Therefore, you should know that neither the fragrance, nor the nose’s smelling has a location, and so the two places of smelling and fragrance are empty and false. Their origin is not in causes and conditions, nor do their natures arise spontaneously. 3:74

”Ananda, twice every day you take up your bowl along with the rest of the assembly, and among what you receive may be things of supreme flavor, such as curds, buttermilk, and clarified butter. 3:74

”What do you think? Are these flavors produced from emptiness, do they come forth from the tongue, or are they produced from the food? 3:77

”Again, Ananda, suppose that the flavors came from your tongue; now there is only one tongue in your mouth. When that tongue had already become the flavor of curds, then it would not change if it encountered some dark rock candy. 3:77

”Suppose it did not change: that would not be what is called knowing tastes. Suppose it did change: the tongue is not many substances, and how could one tongue know so many tastes? 3:78

”Suppose it were produced from the food. The food does not have consciousness; how could it know tastes? Moreover, if the food itself were to recognize them, that would be the same as someone else eating. Then what connection would that have with what is called your recognition of tastes? 3:79

”Suppose it were produced in emptiness. When you eat emptiness, what flavor does it have? Suppose that emptiness had the flavor of salt. Then since your tongue was salty, your face would also be salty, and likewise everyone in the world would be like fish in the sea. Since you would be constantly influenced by salt, you would never know tastelessness. If you did not recognize tastelessness, you would not be aware of the saltiness, either. You would not know anything at all. How could that be what is called taste? 3:79

”Therefore, you should know that neither flavors nor the tongue’s tasting has a location; and, so the two places of tasting and flavor are empty and false. Their origin is not in causes and conditions, nor do their natures arise spontaneously. 3:80

”Ananda, early every morning you rub your head with your hand. 3:81

”What do you think? When there is a sensation of the rubbing, where does the ability to make contact lie? Is the ability in the hands or is it in the head? 3:82

”If it were in the hands, then the head would have no knowledge of it, and how could that be what is called touch? If it were in the head, then the hands would be useless, and how could that be what is called touch? 3:82

”If each had it, then you, Ananda, would have two bodies. 3:87

”If there were only one touch in the head and the hand, then the hand and the head would be of one substance. If they were one substance, then no touch would be possible. 3:87

”If they were two substances, to which would the touch belong? The one which was capable of touch would not be the one that was touched. The one that was touched would not be the one that was capable of touch. Nor should it be that the touch came into being between you and emptiness. 3:87

”Therefore, you should know that neither the sensation of touch nor the body has a location. And so the two places of the body and touch are empty and false. Their origin is not in causes and conditions, nor do their natures arise spontaneously. 3:88

”Ananda, your mind is always conditioned by three qualities - good, bad, and indeterminate - which produce patterns of dharmas. 3:89

”Are these dharmas produced by the mind, or do they have a special place apart from the mind? 3:90

”Ananda, if they were the mind, the dharmas would not be its defiling objects. Since they would not be conditions of the mind, how could you say that they had a location? 3:91

”Suppose they were to have a special place apart from the mind: then would the dharmas themselves be able to know? 3:91

”If they were to have a sense of knowing, they would be called a mind. If they were something other than you, they would be someone else’s mind, since they are not defiling objects. If they were the same as you, they would be your own mind. But, how could your mind stand apart from you? 3:92

”Suppose they were to have no sense of knowing; yet these defiling objects are not forms, sounds, smells, or tastes; they are neither cold nor warmth, nor the characteristic of

emptiness. Where would they be located? 3:92

”We have established that they are represented in neither form nor emptiness; nor is it likely that they exist somewhere in the human realm beyond emptiness, for if they did, the mind could not be aware of them. Whence, then, would they arise? 3:93

”Therefore, you should know that neither dharmas nor the mind has a location. And, so the two places of mind and dharmas are empty and false. Their origin is not in causes and conditions, nor do their natures arise spontaneously. 3:93

”Moreover, Ananda, why do I say that the eighteen realms are basically the wonderful nature of true suchness, the Treasury of the Thus Come One? 3:95

”Ananda, as you understand it, the eyes and form create the conditions that produce the eye consciousness. 3:97

”Is the consciousness produced because of the eyes, such that the eyes are its realm? Or is it produced because of form, such that form is its realm? 3:97

”Ananda, if it were produced because of the eyes, then in the absence of emptiness and form it would not be able to make distinctions; and, so even if you had a consciousness, what use would it be? 3:97

”Moreover, your seeing is neither green, yellow, red, nor white. There is virtually nothing in which it is represented, therefore, what is the realm established from? 3:98

”Suppose it were produced because of form. In emptiness, when there was no form, your consciousness would be extinguished. Then, why is it that the consciousness knows the nature of emptiness? 3:98

”Suppose a form changes. You are also conscious of the changing appearance; but your eye consciousness does not change. Where is the boundary established? 3:99

”If the eye consciousness were to change when form changed, then there would be no appearance of a realm. If it were not to change, it would be constant, and given that it was produced from form, it should have no conscious knowledge of where there was emptiness. 3:100

”Suppose the eye consciousness arose both from the eyes and from form. If they were united, there would still be a point of separation. If they were separate, there would still be a point of contact. Hence, the substance and nature would be chaotic and disorderly; how could a realm be set up? 3:100

”Therefore, you should know that as to the eyes and form being the conditions that produce the realm of eye-consciousness, none of the three places exists. Thus, the three aspects of the eyes, form, and the form realm do not have their origin in causes and conditions, nor do their natures arise spontaneously. 3:101

”Moreover, Ananda, as you understand it, the ear and sound create the conditions that produce the ear consciousness. 3:102

”Is this consciousness produced because of the ear such that the ear is its realm, or is it produced because of sound, such that sound is its realm? 3:102

”Ananda, suppose the ear consciousness were produced because of the ear. The organ of hearing would have no awareness in the absence of both movement and stillness. Thus, nothing would be known by it. Since the organ would lack awareness, what would characterize the consciousness? 3:103

”You may hold that the ears hear, but when there is no movement and stillness, hearing cannot occur. How, then, could the ears, which are but physical forms, unite with external objects to be called the realm of consciousness? Once again, therefore, how would the realm of consciousness be established? 3:104

”Suppose it was produced from sound. If the consciousness existed because of sound, then it would have no connection with hearing. Without hearing, then the characteristic of sound would have no location. 3:104

”Suppose consciousness existed because of sound. Given that sound exists because of hearing, which causes the characteristic of sound to manifest, then you should also hear the hearing consciousness. 3:105

”If the hearing consciousness is not heard, there is no realm. If it is heard, then it is the same as sound. If the consciousness itself is heard, who is it that perceives and hears the consciousness? If there is no perceiver, then in the end you would be like grass or wood. 3:105

”Nor is it likely that the sound and hearing mix together to form a realm in between. Since a realm in between could not be established, how could the internal and external characteristics be delineated? 3:106

”Therefore, you should know that as to the ear and sound creating the conditions which produce the realm of the ear consciousness, none of the three places exists. Thus, the three aspects of the ear, sound, and sound consciousness do not have their origin in causes and conditions, nor do their natures arise spontaneously. 3:107

”Moreover, Ananda, as you understand it, the nose and smells create the conditions that produce the nose-consciousness. 3:108

”Is this consciousness produced because of the nose, such that the nose is its realm? Or, is it produced because of smells, such that smells are its realm? 3:108

”Suppose, Ananda, that the nose consciousness were produced because of the nose, then in your mind, what do you take to be the nose? Do you hold that it takes the form of two fleshy claws, or do you hold it is an inherent ability of the nature which perceives smells as a result of movement? 3:109

”Suppose you hold that it is fleshy claws which form an integral part of your body. Since the body’s perception is touch, the sense organ of smelling would be named ‘body’ instead of ‘nose,’ and the objects of smelling would be objects of touch. Since it would not even have the name ‘nose,’ how could a realm be established for it? 3:109

”Suppose you held that the nose was the perceiver of smells. Then, in your mind, what is it that perceives? Suppose it were the flesh that perceived. Basically, what the flesh perceives is objects of touch, which have nothing to do with the nose. 3:110

”Suppose it were emptiness that perceived. Then emptiness would itself be the perceiver, and the flesh would have no awareness. Thus, empty space would be you, and since your body would be without perception, Ananda would not exist. 3:111

”If it is the smell that perceives, perception itself would lie with the smell. What would that have to do with you? 3:111

”If it is certain that vapors of fragrance and stench are produced from your nose, then the two flowing vapors of fragrance and stench would not arise from the wood of airavana or chandana. Given that the smell does not come from these two things, when you smell your own nose, is it fragrant, or does it stink? What stinks does not give off fragrance; what is fragrant does not stink. 3:112

”Suppose you say you can smell both the fragrance and the stench; then you, one person, would have two noses, and I would now be addressing questions to two Anandas. Which one is you? 3:113

”Suppose there is one nose; then fragrance and stench would not be two. Since stench would be fragrance and fragrance would become stench, there would not be two natures, thus what would make up the realm? 3:114

”If the nose consciousness were produced because of smells, it follows that it is in existence just because of smells. Just as the eyes can see but are unable to see themselves, so, too, if it exists because of smells, it would not be aware of smells. 3:114

”If it is aware of smells, then it is not produced from smells. If it had no awareness, the realm of smelling would not come into being. If the consciousness were not aware of smells, then the realm would not be established from smells. 3:115

”Since there is no intermediate realm of consciousness, there is no basis for establishing anything internal or external, either. Therefore, the nature of smelling is ultimately empty and false. 3:116

”Therefore, you should know that, as to the nose and smells being the conditions which produce the realm of the nose consciousness, none of the three places exists. Thus, the three aspects of the nose, smells, and the realm of smelling do not have their origin in causes and conditions, nor do their natures arise spontaneously. 3:116

”Moreover, Ananda, as you understand it, the tongue and flavors create the conditions that produce the tongue-consciousness. 3:119

”Is the consciousness produced because of the tongue, such that the tongue is its realm, or is it produced because of the flavors, such that the flavors are its realm? 3:119

”Suppose, Ananda, that it were produced because of the tongue. Then all the sugar cane, black plums, huang lien, salt, wild ginger, ginger, and cassia in the world would be entirely without flavor. Also, when you taste your own tongue, is it sweet or bitter? 3:120

”Suppose the nature of your tongue were bitter. Then, what would it be that tasted the tongue? Since the tongue cannot taste itself, who would have the sense of taste? 3:120

”If the nature of the tongue were not bitter, there would be no flavor engendered by it. Thus, how could a realm be established? 3:121

”If it were produced because of flavor, the consciousness itself would be a flavor. The case would be the same as with the tongue organ being unable to taste itself. How could the consciousness know whether it had flavor or not? 3:121

”Moreover, flavors do not all come from one thing. Since flavors are produced from many things, the consciousness would have many substances. 3:122

”Suppose that the consciousness were of a single substance and that the substance was definitely produced from flavor. Then, when salt, bland, sweet, and pungent were combined, their various differences would change into a single flavor and there would be no distinctions among them. 3:122

”If there were no distinctions, it could not be called consciousness. So, how could it further be called the realm of tongue, flavor, and consciousness? 3:123

”Nor can it be that empty space produces your conscious awareness. 3:123

”The tongue and flavors could not combine without each losing its basic nature. How could a realm be produced? 3:124

”Therefore, you should know that, as to the tongue and flavors being the conditions that produce the realm of tongue consciousness, none of the three places exists. Thus, the three aspects of the tongue, flavors, and the realm of the tongue do not have their origin in causes and conditions, nor do their natures arise spontaneously. 3:124

”Moreover, Ananda, as you understand it, the body and objects of touch create the conditions that produce the body consciousness. 3:125

”Is this consciousness produced because of the body, such that the body is its realm, or is it produced because of objects of touch, such that objects of touch are its realm? 3:125

”Suppose, Ananda, that it were produced because of the body. When there was no awareness of the two conditions of contact with and separation from objects of touch, what would the body be conscious of? 3:126

”Suppose it were produced because of objects of touch. Then you would not need your body. Without a body, what could perceive contact with and separation from objects of touch? 3:126

”Ananda, things do not perceive objects of touch. It is the body that perceives objects of touch. 3:127

”What the body knows is objects of touch, and what is aware of objects of touch is the body. What is objects of touch is not the body, and what is the body is not objects of touch. 3:127

”The two characteristics of body and objects of touch are basically without a location. If it united with the body, it would be the body’s own substance and nature. If it were apart from the body, it would have the same appearance as empty space. 3:128

”Since the inside and the outside don’t stand up, how can one set up a middle? The middle cannot be set up, either. The inside and the outside are by nature empty. From what realm, then, is your consciousness born? 3:129

”Therefore, you should know that, as to the body and objects of touch being the conditions that produce the realm of body consciousness, none of the three places exists. Thus, the three aspects of the body, objects of touch, and the realm of the body do not have their origin in causes and conditions, nor do their natures arise spontaneously. 3:129

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Chapter 3

"Moreover, Ananda, as you understand it, the mind and dharmas create the conditions that produce the mind consciousness. 3:131

”Is this consciousness produced because of the mind, such that the mind is its realm, or is it produced because of dharmas, such that dharmas are its realm? 3:131

”Suppose, Ananda, that it were produced because of the mind. In your mind there certainly must be thoughts; these give expression to your mind. If there are no dharmas before you, the mind does not give rise to anything. Apart from conditions, it has no shape; thus, what use would the consciousness be? 3:131

”Moreover, is your conscious awareness the same as your mind organ, with its capacity to understand and make distinctions, or is it different? If it were the same as the mind, it would be the mind; how could it be something else that arises? If it were different from the mind, it should thereby be devoid of consciousness. If there were no consciousness, how would it arise from the mind? If there were consciousness, how would it differ from the mind? Since it is by nature neither the same nor different, how can a realm be established? 3:132

”Suppose it were produced because of dharmas. None of the dharmas of the world exists apart from the five defiling objects. Consider the dharmas of form, the dharmas of sound, the dharmas of smell, the dharmas of taste, and the dharmas of touch: each has a clearly distinguishable appearance and is matched with one of the five organs. They are not what the mind takes in. 3:134

”Suppose your consciousness were indeed produced through a reliance on dharmas. Take a close look at them now: what does each and every dharma look like? 3:134

”Underlying the characteristics of form and emptiness, movement and stillness, penetration and obstruction, unity and separation, and production and extinction there is nothing at all. 3:135

”When there is production, then form, emptiness, and all dharmas are produced. When there is extinction, then form, emptiness, and all dharmas are extinguished. Since what is causal does not exist, if those causes produce the consciousness, what appearance does the consciousness assume? If there is nothing discernable about the consciousness, how can a realm be established for it? 3:135

”Therefore, you should know that, as to the mind and dharmas being the conditions that produce the realm of the mind consciousness, none of the three places exists. Thus, the three aspects of the mind, dharmas, and the realm of the mind do not have their origin in causes and conditions, nor do their natures arise spontaneously.” 3:136

Ananda said to the Buddha, ”World Honored One, the Thus Come One has often spoken of the mixture and union of causes and conditions, saying that the transformations of everything in

the world are created from the mixing and uniting of the four elements. 3:138

”Why does the Thus Come One reject causes and conditions and spontaneity as well? I do not know how to understand your meaning now. 3:140

”Please be so compassionate as to instruct us living beings in the final meaning of the Middle Way: in the dharmas which are not idle theories.” 3:140

The World Honored One then told Ananda, “You have renounced the Small Vehicle dharmas of the Sound Hearers and those enlightened to conditions and have resolved to diligently seek unsurpassed Bodhi. Because of that, I will now explain the foremost truth to you. 3:141

”Why do you still bind yourself up in the idle theories and false thoughts current among people of the world? 3:142

”Although you are very learned, you are like someone who can discuss medicines but cannot distinguish a real medicine when it is placed before you. The Thus Come One says that you are truly pitiful. 3:143

”Listen attentively now as I explain this point in detail for you and also for those of the future who cultivate the Great Vehicle, so that you all can penetrate to the real appearance.” 3:143

Ananda was silent and awaited the Buddha’s holy instruction. 3:143

”Ananda, according to what you said, the mixing and uniting of the four elements create the myriad transformations of everything in the world. 3:144

”Ananda, if the nature of those elements does not mix and unite in substance, then they cannot combine with other elements, just as empty space cannot combine with forms. 3:145

”Assuming that they do mix and unite, they are then only in a process of transformation in which they depend on one another for existence from beginning to end. In the course of transformation they are produced and extinguished, being born and then dying, dying and then being born, in birth after birth, in death after death, the way a torch spun in a circle forms an unbroken wheel of flame. 3:145

”Ananda, the process is like water becoming ice and ice becoming water again. 3:146

”Consider the nature of earth: its coarse particles make up the great earth. Its fine particles make up motes of dust, down to and including motes of dust bordering upon emptiness. 3:150

”If one divides those fine motes of dust, their appearance is at the boundaries of form. Then divide those into seven parts. 3:151

”Ananda, if this mote of dust bordering upon emptiness is divided and becomes emptiness, it should be that emptiness can give rise to form. 3:151

”Just now you asked if mixing and uniting doesn’t bring about the transformations of everything in the world. 3:152

”You should carefully consider how much emptiness mixes and unites to make a single mote of dust bordering upon emptiness, since it makes no sense to say that dust bordering on emptiness is composed of dust bordering on emptiness. 3:152

”Moreover, since motes of dust bordering upon emptiness can be reduced to emptiness, of how many motes of such form as this must emptiness be composed? 3:153

”When these motes of form mass together, a mass of form does not make emptiness; when emptiness is massed together, a mass of emptiness does not make form. Besides, although form can be divided, how can emptiness be massed together? 3:153

”You simply do not know that in the Treasury of the Thus Come One the nature of form is true emptiness, and the nature of emptiness is true form. Pure at its origin, it pervades the Dharma Realm. It accords with living beings’ minds, in response to their capacity to know. 3:154

”It is experienced to whatever extent is dictated by the law of karma. Ignorant of this fact, people in the world are so deluded as to assign its origin to causes and conditions or to spontaneity. These mistakes, which arise from the discriminations and reasoning processes of the conscious mind, are nothing but the play of empty words which have no real meaning. 3:155

”Ananda, fire, which has no nature of its own, depends upon various causes and conditions for its existence. Consider a family in the city that has not yet eaten. When they wish to prepare

food, they hold up a speculum to the sun, seeking fire. 3:156

”Ananda, let us look into your suggestion that the fire comes forth from mixing and uniting. By way of example, you and I and the twelve hundred and fifty bhikshus unite together to form a community. However, a careful analysis of the community reveals that every member composing it has his own body, birthplace, clan, and name. For instance, Shariputra is a Brahman, Uruvilva is of the Kashyapa clan, and you, Ananda, come from the Gautama family. 3:157

”Ananda, suppose fire existed because of mixing and uniting. When the hand holds up the speculum to the sun to seek fire, does the fire come out of the speculum? Does it come out of the moxa tinder? Or does it come from the sun? 3:159

”Suppose, Ananda, that it came from the sun. Not only would it burn the moxa tinder in your hand, but as it came across the groves of trees, it should burn them up as well. 3:160

”Suppose that it came from the speculum. Since it came out from within the speculum to ignite the moxa tinder, why doesn’t the speculum melt? Yet your hand that holds it feels no heat; how, then, could the speculum melt? 3:160

”Suppose that the fire came from the moxa tinder. Then why is fire generated only when the bright mirror comes into contact with the dazzling light? 3:161

”Furthermore, on closer examination you will find the speculum held in hands, the sun high up in the sky, and moxa grown from the ground. Where does the fire come from? How can it travel some distance to reach here? 3:161

”The sun and the speculum cannot mix and unite, since they are far apart from each other. Nor can it be that the fire exists spontaneously, without an origin. 3:161

”You simply do not know that in the Treasury of the Thus Come One the nature of fire is true emptiness, and the nature of emptiness is true fire. Pure at its origin, it pervades the Dharma Realm. It accords with living beings’ minds, in response to their capacity to know. 3:162

”Ananda, you should know that fire is generated in the place where a speculum is held up to the sunlight, and fire will be generated everywhere if specula are held up to the sunlight throughout the Dharma Realm. Since fire can come forth throughout the whole world, can there be any fixed place to which it is confined? 3:163

”It is experienced to whatever extent is dictated by the law of karma. Ignorant of this fact, people in the world are so deluded as to assign its origin to causes and conditions or to spontaneity. These mistakes, which arise from the discriminations and reasoning processes of the conscious mind, are nothing but the play of empty words which have no real meaning. 3:163

”Ananda, water is by nature unstable. It may keep on flowing or come to a stop. Kapila, Chakra, Padma, and Hasta, and other great magicians of Shravasti often hold up instruments to the light of the full moon at midnight to extract from the moon the essence of water to mix with their drugs. 3:163

”Does the water come out of the crystal ball? Does it exist of itself in space? Or, does it come from the moon? 3:165

”Ananda, suppose the water came from the distant moon. Water then should also flow from all the grass and trees when the moonlight passes over them on its way to the crystal ball. If it does flow from them, why wait for it to come out of the crystal ball? If it does not flow from the trees, then it is clear that the water does not descend from the moon. 3:165

”If it came from the crystal balls, then it should flow from the crystal all the time. Why would they have to wait for midnight and the light of the full moon to receive it? 3:166

”If it came from space, which is by nature boundless, it would flow everywhere, until everything between earth and sky was submerged. How, then, could there still be travel by water, land, and space? 3:166

”Furthermore, upon closer examination you will find that the moon moves through the sky, the crystal ball is held in the hand, and the pan for receiving the water is put there by someone; but, where does the water that flows into the pan come from? 3:167

”The moon and the crystal balls cannot mix or unite, since they are far apart. Nor can it be that the essence of water exists spontaneously without an origin. 3:168

”You still do not know that in the Treasury of the Thus Come One the nature of water is true emptiness, and the nature of emptiness is true water. Pure in its origin, it pervades the Dharma Realm. It accords with living beings’ minds, in response to their capacity to know. 3:168

”A crystal ball is held up at a certain place, and there water comes forth. If crystal balls were held up throughout the Dharma Realm, then throughout the Dharma Realm water would come forth. Since water can come forth throughout the entire world, can there be any fixed place to which it is confined? 3:169

”It is experienced to whatever extent is dictated by the law of karma. Ignorant of this fact, people in the world are so deluded as to assign their origin to causes and conditions or to spontaneity. These mistakes, which arise from the discriminations and reasoning processes of the conscious mind, are nothing but the play of empty words which have no real meaning. 3:170

”Ananda, by nature, the wind has no substance, and its movements and stillness are erratic. You always adjust your robe as you enter the great assembly. When the corner of your samghati brushes the person next to you, there is a slight breeze which stirs against that person’s face. 3:170

”Does this wind come from the corner of the kashaya, does it arise from emptiness, or is it produced from the face of the person brushed by the wind? 3:171

”Ananda, if the wind comes from the corner of the kashaya, you are then clad in the wind, and your kashaya should fly about and leave your body. I am now speaking dharma in the midst of the assembly, and my robe remains motionless and hangs straight down. You should look closely at my robe to see whether there is any wind in it. It cannot be that the wind is stored somewhere in the robe, either. 3:171

”If it arose from emptiness, why wouldn’t the wind brush against the man even when your robe did not move? Emptiness is constant in nature; thus, the wind should constantly arise. When there was no wind, the emptiness should disappear. You can perceive the disappearance of the wind; but, what would the disappearance of emptiness look like? If it did arise and disappear, it could not be what is called emptiness. Since it is what is called emptiness, how can it generate wind? 3:172

”If the wind came from the face of the person by your side, it would blow upon you while you set your robe in order. Why would it blow backwards upon the person from whom it was generated? 3:174

”Upon closer examination, you will find that the robe is set in order by yourself, the face blown by the wind belongs to the person by your side, and the emptiness is tranquil and not involved

in movement. Where, then, does the wind come from that blows in this place? 3:174

”The wind and emptiness cannot mix and unite, since they are different from each other. Nor should it be that the wind spontaneously exists without an origin. 3:175

”You still do not know that in the Treasury of the Thus Come One the nature of wind is true emptiness, and the nature of emptiness is true wind. Pure at its origin, it pervades the Dharma Realm. It accords with living beings. minds, in response to their capacity to know. 3:175

”Ananda, in the same way that you, as one person, move your robe slightly, and a small wind arises, so a wind arises in all countries if there is a similar movement throughout the Dharma Realm. Since it can be produced throughout the world, how can there be any fixed place to which it is confined? 3:176

”It is experienced to whatever extent is dictated by the law of karma. Ignorant of this fact, people in the world are so deluded as to assign their origin to causes and conditions or to spontaneity. These mistakes, which arise from the discriminations and reasoning processes of the conscious mind, are nothing but the play of empty words which bear no real meaning. 3:176

”Ananda, the nature of emptiness has no shape; it is only apparent because of form. For instance, Shravasti is far from the river, so when the Kshatriyas, Brahmans, Vaishyas, Shudras, Bharadvajas, Chandalas, and so forth, build their homes there, they dig wells seeking water. Where a foot of earth is removed, there is a foot of emptiness; where as many as ten feet of earth are removed, there are ten feet of emptiness. The depth of the emptiness corresponds to the amount of earth removed. 3:177

”Does this emptiness come out of the dirt, does it exist because of the digging, or does it arise of itself without a cause? 3:179

”Moreover, Ananda, suppose this emptiness arose of itself without any cause. Why wasn’t it unobstructed before the earth was dug? Quite the contrary, one saw only the great earth; there was no emptiness evident in it. 3:179

”If emptiness came about because of the removal of the earth, we should have seen it entering the well as the earth was removed. If emptiness was not seen entering the well when the earth was first removed, how can we say that emptiness came about because of the removal of the earth? 3:180

”If there is no going in or coming out, then there is no difference between the earth and emptiness. Why, then, doesn’t emptiness come out of the well along with the earth in the process of digging? 3:180

”If emptiness appeared because of the digging, then the digging would bring out emptiness instead of the earth. If emptiness does not come out because of the digging, then the digging yields only earth. Why, then, do we see emptiness appear as the well is dug? 3:181

”You should consider this even more carefully. Look into it deeply, and you will find that the digging comes from the person’s hand as its means of conveyance, and the earth exists because of a change in the ground. But what causes the emptiness to appear? 3:181

”The digging and the emptiness, one being substantial and the other insubstantial, do not function on the same plane. They do not mix and unite. Nor can it be that emptiness exists spontaneously without an origin. 3:182

”Although the nature of emptiness is completely pervasive, it is basically unmoving. You should know that it and earth, water, fire, and wind are together called the five elements. Their natures are true and perfectly fused, and all are the Treasury of the Thus Come One, fundamentally devoid of production and extinction. 3:182

”Ananda, your mind is murky and confused, and you do not awaken to the fact that the source of the four elements is none other than the Treasury of the Thus Come One. Why do you not take a look at emptiness to see whether it is subject to such relativities as coming and going? 3:183

”You do not know at all that in the Treasury of the Thus Come One the nature of enlightenment is true emptiness, and the nature of emptiness is true enlightenment. Pure at its origin, it pervades the Dharma Realm. 3:184

”It accords with living beings’ minds, in response to their capacity to know. 3:184

”Ananda, if in one place there is a well empty of earth, there will be emptiness filling up that one place. If there are wells empty of earth in the ten directions, there will be emptiness filling them up in the ten directions. Since it fills up the ten directions, is there any fixed location in which emptiness is found? 3:184

”It is experienced to whatever extent is dictated by the law of karma. Ignorant of this fact, people in the world are so deluded as to assign their origin to causes and conditions or to spontaneity. These mistakes, which arise from the discriminations and reasoning processes of the conscious mind, are nothing but the play of empty words which bear no real meaning. 3:185

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Chapter 3

"Ananda, the seeing awareness does not perceive by itself. It depends upon form and emptiness for its existence. You are now in the Jeta Grove where you see brightness in the morning and darkness in the evening. Deep in the night you will see brightness when the moon arises and darkness when no moon is visible. The brightness and darkness are discerned by the seeing. 3:186

”Is the seeing identical in substance with brightness, darkness, and emptiness, or are they not the same substance? Are they the same and yet different, or are they not the same and yet not different? 3:187

”Ananda, suppose seeing were one with brightness, darkness, and emptiness. It so happens that where there is darkness there is no brightness, and where there is brightness there is no darkness, because the two cancel each other out. If it were one with darkness, it would cease to exist in brightness; if it were one with brightness, it would cease to exist in darkness. Such being the case, how could it perceive both brightness and darkness? If brightness and darkness differ from each other, how can they form a unity with seeing, which transcends production and destruction? 3:187

”Suppose that the essence of seeing were not of one substance with brightness and darkness, and that you were separate from light, darkness, and emptiness. Then what shape and appearance would the source of the seeing have, as you distinguish it? 3:188

”In the absence of darkness, brightness, and emptiness, the seeing would be the same as hair on a tortoise or horns on a hare. How could we establish the seeing perception without the presence of the three qualities of brightness, darkness, and emptiness? 3:189

How could we say that the seeing was one with darkness and brightness, since brightness and darkness are opposites? Yet, how can we say that it was different from the three qualities mentioned, since in their absence the seeing perception can never be established? 3:189

”How could we say that the seeing was not one with emptiness, since no boundary is established between them when they are separated from each other? How could we say that they were not different, since the seeing always remains unchanged, regardless of whether it is perceiving brightness or perceiving darkness? 3:190

”You should examine this in even greater detail, investigate it minutely, consider and contemplate it carefully. The light comes from the sun and darkness from the absence of the moon; penetration belongs to emptiness, and solidity returns to the earth. From what does the essence of seeing arise? 3:191

”Seeing has awareness, and emptiness is inanimate: they do not mix and unite. Nor can it be that the essence of seeing arises spontaneously without an origin. 3:191

”If the faculties of seeing, hearing, and knowing are by nature all pervasive and unmoving, you should know that the stable, boundless emptiness, together with the unstable elements such as earth, water, fire, and wind, are together known as the six elements. They are, in nature, true and perfectly fused and thus are the Treasury of the Thus Come One, fundamentally devoid of production and destruction. 3:192

”Ananda, your nature is so submerged that you have not realized that your seeing, hearing, awareness, and knowing are basically the Treasury of the Thus Come One. You should contemplate seeing, hearing, awareness, and knowing to see whether they are subject to production and extinction; whether they are identical or different; whether they are not subject to production and extinction; and whether they are not identical and not different. 3:192

”You still don’t know that in the Treasury of the Thus Come One the nature of seeing is enlightened brightness; the essence of enlightenment is bright seeing. Pure at its origin, it pervades the Dharma Realm. 3:193

”It accords with living beings’ minds in response to their capacity to know. Consider, for example, the sense organ of seeing. Its seeing pervades the Dharma Realm. The same is true of the luster of the wonderful virtue of hearing, smelling, tasting, contact, and knowing. Since they fill emptiness in the ten directions throughout the Dharma Realm, how could there be any fixed location in which they are found? 3:194

”It is experienced to whatever extent is dictated by the law of karma. Ignorant of this fact, people in the world are so deluded as to assign its origin to causes and conditions or to spontaneity. These mistakes, which arise from the discriminations and reasoning processes of

the conscious mind, are nothing but the play of empty words which have no real meaning. 3:195

”Ananda, the nature of consciousness has no source, but is a false manifestation based on the six organs and objects. Now, take a look at the entire holy assembly gathered here. As you glance at each one in turn, everything you see is like what is seen in a mirror, where nothing has any special distinction. 3:195

”However, your consciousness will identify them one by one: for example, Manjushri, Purna, Maudgalyayana, Subhuti, and Shariputra. 3:198

”Does the discerning faculty of the conscious mind come from seeing, from forms, or from emptiness, or does it arise suddenly without a cause? 3:199

”Ananda, suppose your consciousness came from seeing. If there were no brightness, darkness, form, and emptiness - if these four did not exist you could not see. With seeing non existent, what would be the origin of your consciousness? 3:200

”If your consciousness arose from form rather than from seeing, it would not see either in brightness or in darkness. In the absence of brightness and darkness, it would not see form or emptiness, either. In the absence of form, where would your consciousness come from? 3:200

”If it came from emptiness, it is neither an appearance nor the seeing. Since it does not see, it is unable by itself to discern brightness, darkness, form, or emptiness. Since it is not an appearance, it is in itself devoid of external conditions. Therefore, there is no place for seeing, hearing, awareness, and knowing to be established. 3:201

”Since its location is devoid of these two, the consciousness that arises from emptiness would be the same as non existent. Even if it did exist, it would not be the same as a thing. Even if your consciousness came forth from it, how would it discern anything? 3:202

”If it suddenly comes forth without a cause, why can’t you discern the moonlight within the sunlight? 3:202

”You should investigate this even more carefully, discriminate it in detail, and look into it. The seeing belongs to your eyes; the appearances are considered to be the environment; what has an appearance is existent; what is without any appearance is non existent. What, then, are the conditions that cause the consciousness to come into being? 3:203

”The consciousness moves and the seeing is quiet; they do not mix and unite. Smelling, hearing, awareness, and knowing are the same way. Nor should it be that the condition of consciousness exists spontaneously without an origin. 3:203

”If this conscious mind does not come from anywhere, you should know that the same is true of the mind, which makes distinctions, and the seeing, hearing, awareness, and knowing, which are all complete and tranquil. Their nature is without an origin. They and emptiness, earth, water, fire, and wind are together called the seven elements. Their true natures are perfectly fused, and all are the Treasury of the Thus Come One, fundamentally devoid of production and extinction. 3:204

”Ananda, your mind is coarse and shallow, and so you do not realize that the seeing and hearing are the Treasury of the Thus Come One, and you do not discover that knowing is the same way. You should contemplate these six locations of consciousness: are they the same or different? Are they empty or existent? Are they neither the same nor different? Are they neither empty nor existent? 3:205

”You basically do not know that in the Treasury of the Thus Come One the nature of consciousness is bright and knowing. Enlightened brightness is the true consciousness. The wonderful enlightenment is tranquil and pervades the Dharma Realm. 3:206

”It encompasses the emptiness of the ten directions and issues forth in it. How can it have a location? 3:206

”It is experienced to whatever extent is dictated by the law of karma. Ignorant of this fact, people in the world are so deluded as to assign its origin to causes and conditions or to spontaneity. These mistakes, which arise from the discriminations and reasoning processes of the conscious mind, are nothing but the play of empty words which have no real meaning.” 3:207

At that time, Ananda and the Great Assembly, filled with the subtle, wonderful instruction of the Buddha, the Thus Come One, were peaceful in body and mind and were without obstructions. Everyone in the Great Assembly became aware that his or her mind pervaded the ten directions, beholding emptiness in the ten directions as one might look at a leaf or at an object held in one’s hands. 3:208

All the things that exist in the world were the wonderfully bright inherent mind of Bodhi. 3:211

The essence of the mind was completely pervading and contained the ten directions. 3:212

Then they looked back upon their bodies born of their parents as a fine mote of dust blown about in the emptiness of the ten directions; sometimes visible, sometimes not, as a single bubble floating on the clear, vast sea, appearing from nowhere and disappearing into oblivion. They comprehended and knew for themselves, and obtained their fundamental wonderful mind, which is everlasting and cannot be extinguished. 3:212

They bowed to the Buddha and placed their palms together, having obtained what they had never had before. Then, facing the Thus Come One, Ananda spoke verses in praise of the Buddha. 3:214

”The wonderfully deep Dharani,

the unmoving Honored One,

The Foremost Shurangama King

is seldom found in the world. 3:214

“It melts away my upside down thoughts

gathered in a million kalpas.

So I needn’t endure asamkhyeya aeons

to obtain the dharma body. 3:216

“I wish now to achieve the result

and become an honored king,

Who then returns to save as many beings

as there are sand grains in the Ganges.

I offer this deep thought to those who are as countless

as the motes of dust of the Buddhalands,

To repay the kindness shown me by the Buddha. 3:217

“In obeisance I ask the World Honored One to certify

my vow to first enter the five turbid evil realms.

If there is even one being who hasn’t become a

Buddha, at death I will not reach for Nirvana. 3:220 .

“May the exalted hero’s awesome strength,

his kindness and compassion,

Search out and dispel even the most subtle

of my doubts. 3:223

“Causing me to quickly attain the

supreme enlightenment,

And sit in the Bodhimanda of the

worlds of the ten directions. 3:225

“Should even the shunyata nature entirely melt away,

This vajra mind will never waver.” 3:225

4. The Reason for Continual Arisal

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Chapter 4

Then Purnamaitreyaniputra arose from his seat in the midst of the Great Assembly, uncovered his right shoulder, knelt on his right knee, put his palms together respectfully, and said to the Buddha, “The most virtuous and awe-inspiring World Honored One has for the sake of living beings expounded the primary truth of the Thus Come One with remarkable eloquence. 4:1

”The World Honored One often singles me out as the foremost among speakers of dharma. But now when I hear the wonderful and subtle expression of the dharma, I am like a deaf person who at a distance of more than a hundred paces tries to hear a mosquito, which in fact cannot be seen, let alone heard. 4:3

”World Honored One, although Ananda and those like him have become enlightened, they have not yet cast out their habits and outflows. 4:5

”We in the assembly have reached the level of no outflows. Yet, although we have no outflows, we still have doubts about the dharma we have now heard the Thus Come One speak. 4:7

”World Honored One, if all the sense organs, sense objects, skandhas, places, and realms in all the world are the Treasury of the Thus Come One, originally pure, why do all conditioned appearances such as the mountains, the rivers, and the great earth suddenly arise? 4:7

”Moreover, the Thus Come One said that earth, water, fire, and wind are by nature perfectly fused, are all-pervasive in the Dharma Realm, and are all tranquil and everlasting. 4:8

”World Honored One, if the nature of earth is pervasive, how can it contain water? If the nature of water is pervasive, then fire does not arise. Further, how do you explain that the natures of fire and water can each pervade empty space with out displacing one another? World Honored One, the nature of earth is solid; the nature of emptiness is penetrating. How can they both pervade the Dharma Realm? I don’t know where this doctrine is leading. 4:8

”I only hope the Thus Come One will compassionately explain in order to rend the clouds of confusion in me and among the Great Assembly.” After saying this, he made a full prostration and respectfully and expectantly awaited the Thus Come One’s unsurpassed compassionate instruction. 4:10

The World Honored One then told Purna and all the Arhats in the assembly who had extinguished their outflows and had reached the level of no study, “Today the Thus Come One will explain in depth the true, supreme meaning within the supreme meaning in order to cause all of you in the assembly who are fixed-nature Sound-Hearers and those arhats who have not realized the two kinds of emptiness, but are dedicated to the superior vehicle, as well as the others, to obtain the place of still extinction, the one vehicle, the true aranya, the proper place of cultivation. Listen attentively and I will explain it for you.” 4:11

Purna and the others, revering the Buddha’s expression of Dharma, listened silently. 4:11

The Buddha said, “Purna, you have asked why in fundamental purity the mountains, the rivers, and the great earth suddenly arise. 4:14

”Have you not often heard the Thus Come One expound upon the wonderful light of the enlightened nature and the bright wonder of the fundamental enlightenment.” 4:14

Purna said, “Yes, World Honored One, I have often heard the Buddha expound upon this subject.” 4:14

The Buddha said, “You speak of the light of enlightenment; is it that the natural light is called enlightenment? Or are you saying that enlightenment is initially without light and that then there is a socalled brightening of the enlightenment?” 4:15

Purna said, “If the absence of light is called enlightenment, then there is no light whatever.” 4:16

The Buddha said, “If there is no bright enlightenment without light added to it, then it is not enlightenment with it; and it is not light without it. The absence of light is not the still, bright nature of enlightenment, either. 4:16

”The nature of enlightenment is essentially bright. It is false for you to make it bright enlightenment. 4:17

”Enlightenment is not something that needs to be made bright, for once that is done, an object is established because of this light. Once an object is falsely set up, you as a false subject come into being. 4:17

”In the midst of what is neither the same nor different, difference blazes forth. And what is different from that difference becomes sameness, because of the difference. Once sameness and difference are created then due to them what is neither the same nor different is further established. 4:19

”This turmoil eventually brings about weariness. Prolonged weariness produces defilement. The combination of these in a murky turbidity creates affliction with respect to wearisome defilement. 4:20

”Arisal is the world; stillness is emptiness. Emptiness is sameness; the world is difference. What is neither sameness nor difference is the actual conditioned dharmas. 4:22

”The interaction of bright enlightenment and dark emptiness sets them in a perpetual rotation; thus there is the pervasiveness of wind which supports the world. 4:23

”Because emptiness produces movement, hardened light sets up a solidity which is the store of metal. Bright enlightenment makes this hardness; thus there is the pervasiveness of metal which secures the lands. 4:24

”Obstinate attachment to unenlightened awareness results in the formation of metals, while the vibration of illusory awareness causes wind to rise up. The wind and metal rub together; thus there is the light of fire which is changeable by nature. 4:24

”The brightness of the metal produces moisture, and from the light of fire steam arises; thus there is the pervasiveness of water which encompasses realms in the ten directions. 4:25

”Fire rises and water falls, and the combination sets up a solidity. What is wet becomes the oceans and seas; what is dry becomes the continents and islands. 4:25

”Because of this, fire often rises up in the oceans, and on the continents the streams and rivers ever flow. 4:26

”When the power of water is less than that of fire, high mountains result. So it is that mountain rocks give off sparks when struck, and become liquid when melted. 4:26

”When the power of earth is less than that of water, the outcome is grasses and trees. So it is that groves and meadows turn to ashes when burned and ooze water when twisted. 4:26

”A falseness is produced with interaction as the seeds, and from these causes and conditions comes the continuity of the world. 4:27

”Moreover, Purna, the false brightness is none other than the mistake of adding light to enlightenment. 4:27

”After the falseness of an object is established, the faculty of understanding cannot transcend it. Due to this cause and condition, hearing does not go beyond sound, and seeing does not surpass form. 4:28

”Forms, smells, tastes, and objects of touch . six falsenesses are realized. Because of them there is division into seeing, sensation, hearing, and knowing. 4:28

”Similar karma binds together: union and separation bring about transformation. 4:29

”One sees that a bright spot is generated. At the sight of the bright spot conception comes into being. Differing views produce hatred; similar views create love. The flow of love becomes a seed, and the conception is drawn into the womb. Intercourse happens with a mutual attraction of similar karma. And so there are the causes and conditions that create the kalala, the arbuda, and the rest. 4:29

”The womb-born, egg-born, moisture-born, and transformation- born come about in response: the egg-born come from thought, the womb-born are due to emotion, the moisture-born arise from union, and transformations occur through separation. 4:36

”Emotion, thought, union, and separation go through further changes, and from all the karma received one either rises or sinks. From these causes and conditions comes the continuity of living beings. 4:38

”Purna, thought and love become bound together so that people love each other and cannot bear to be apart. As a result, the world has seen an endless succession of births of parents, children, and grandchildren. And the basis for all of this is desire and greed. 4:39

”Greed and love feed on one another until greed becomes insatiable. As a result, in the world all the sentient beings born of eggs, wombs, moisture, and by transformation tend to devour one another for the nourishment of their bodies to the extent that their strength permits. And the basis for all of this is killing and greed. 4:39

A person eats a sheep. The sheep dies and becomes a person. The person dies and becomes a sheep, and it goes on that way through ten births and more. Through death after death and birth after birth, they come back to eat one another. The evil karma becomes innate and exhausts the bounds of the future. And the basis for all of this is stealing and greed. 4:41

”’You owe me a life; I have to repay my debt to you.’ From these causes and conditions we pass through hundreds of thousands of aeons, in a sustained cycle of birth and death. 4:43

”’You love my mind; I adore your form.’ From these causes and conditions we pass through hundreds of thousands of aeons, in a sustained mutual entanglement. 4:44

”Killing, stealing, and lust are themselves the basic roots. From these causes and conditions comes the continuity of karmic retribution. 4:44

”Therefore, Purna, the three kinds of upside down continuity come from the light which is added to enlightenment. With this false enlightening of the knowing-nature, subjective awareness gives rise to objective appearances. Both are born of false views, and from this falseness the mountains, the rivers, the great earth, and all conditioned appearances unfold themselves in a succession that recurs in endless cycles.” 4:45

Purna said, “If this wonderful enlightenment, this basic miraculous enlightened brightness which is neither greater than nor less than the mind of the Thus Come One, abruptly brings forth the mountains, the rivers, and the great earth, and all conditioned appearances, then now that the Thus Come One has attained the wonderful empty bright enlightenment, will the mountains, the rivers, the great earth, and all conditioned habitual outflows arise again?” 4:50

The Buddha said to Purna, “Consider for example a person who has become confused in a village, mistaking south for north. Is this confusion the result of confusion or of awareness?” 4:52

Purna said, “This person’s confusion is the result neither of confusion nor of awareness. Why? Confusion is fundamentally baseless, so how could it arise because of confusion? Awareness does not produce confusion, so how could it arise because of awareness?” 4:52

The Buddha said, “If a person who is aware points out the way to the person who is in the midst of confusion, and makes him aware, then do you suppose, Purna, that once the person is over his confusion he could lose his sense of direction again in that village?” 4:54

”No, World Honored One.” 4:54

”Purna, the Thus Come Ones of the ten directions are the same way. Confusion is groundless and ultimately empty in nature. There had basically been no confusion: it merely seemed as if there were confusion and enlightenment. When the delusion about confusion and enlightenment is ended, enlightenment does not give rise to confusion. 4:55

”It is also like a person with an eye-ailment who sees flowers in space. If he gets rid of his eye-ailment, the flowers in space will disappear. If he were so stupid as to quickly return to the spot where the flowers disappeared and wait for them to reappear, would you consider that

person to be stupid or smart?” 4:57

Purna said, “Originally there weren’t any flowers in space. It was through a falseness in the seeing that they were produced and extinguished. To see the disappearance of the flowers in space is already upside down. To wait for them to reappear is sheer madness. Why bother to determine further if such a person is stupid or smart?” 4:57

The Buddha said, “Since you explain it that way, why do you ask if the wonderful enlightened bright emptiness can once again give rise to the mountains, the rivers, and the great earth? 4:58

”It is like a piece of ore containing gold and a mixture of other metals. Once the pure gold is extracted, it will not become an ore again. It is like wood that has been burned to ashes; it will not become wood again. 4:60

”The Bodhi and Nirvana of all Buddhas, the Thus Come Ones, are the same way. 4:61

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Chapter 4

"Purna, you also asked whether the natures of water and fire would not destroy each other if the natures of earth, water, fire, and wind were all perfectly fused and pervaded the Dharma Realm, and whether subtle emptiness and the great earth would not be incompatible if both pervaded the Dharma Realm. 4:62

”For example, Purna, the substance of emptiness is not the myriad things, and yet it does not prevent the inclusion of all appearances within it. 4:63

”Do you know the reason why? Purna, the empty space is bright on a sunny day, and dark when the sky is cloudy. It moves when the wind rises up, it is fresh when the sky clears. It is turbid and hazy when the weather is foul, it is obscure when a dust-storm breaks out. It casts a bright reflection on a pool of clear water. 4:63

”What do you think of these conditions which come into existence at different places? Are they created from these conditions themselves or do they find their origin in emptiness? If they arise from those conditions, Purna, then on a sunny day since the sun is bright, all the worlds of the ten directions should take the form of the sun. Then how does it happen that on a sunny day one still sees the round sun in the sky? If emptiness is bright, emptiness itself should shine. How does it happen that when there is a covering of clouds and fog there is no

light in evidence? 4:64

”You should know that brightness is not the sun, is not emptiness, and is not other than the emptiness and the sun. 4:65

”The truly wonderful enlightened brightness is the same way. If your karma finds expression in emptiness, then emptiness will appear. If your karma finds expression in one or another of earth, water, fire, or wind, that one will appear. If your karma finds expression in them all, they will all appear. 4:65

”How can they all appear? Suppose, Purna, the sun’s reflection appears in a single body of water, and two people gaze at it, both at the same time. Then one person walks east and the other walks west. Each person, still looking in the water, will see a sun go along with him, one to the east, one to the west, seemingly without there being any fixed direction for the movement of the sun’s reflection. 4:66

”You shouldn’t belabor the question and say, ‘If there is one sun, how can it follow both people? Since the sun is double, why does only one appear in the sky?’ This is just to revolve in falseness, because it cannot be proved. 4:67

”Contemplate the fundamental falseness of appearances. They are just like flowers that are conjured up in space and produce empty fruit. Why, then, investigate the meaning of their formation and disappearance? 4:67

”Contemplate the fundamental truth of the nature. It is solely the wonderful enlightened brightness, the wonderful enlightened bright mind. Originally, it is neither water nor fire. Why, then, ask about incompatibility? 4:68

”Purna, you think that form and emptiness overcome and destroy one another in the Treasury of the Thus Come One. Thus the Treasury of the Thus Come One accordingly appears to you as form and emptiness throughout the Dharma Realm. 4:68

”And so, within it the wind moves, emptiness is still, the sun is bright, and the clouds are dark. The reason for this lies in the delusion of living beings who have turned their backs on enlightenment and joined with the ‘dust.’ Thus, the wearisome defilements come into being and mundane appearances exist. 4:69

”With the wonderful brightness that is not extinguished and not produced, I unite with the Treasury of the Thus Come One. Thus the Treasury of the Thus Come One is the unique and wonderful enlightened brightness which completely illumines the Dharma Realm. 4:70

”That is why, within it, the one is limitless; the limitless is one. In the small appears the great; in the great appears the small. 4:71

”Unmoving in the Bodhimanda, yet pervading the ten directions, my body contains the ten directions and endless emptiness. On the tip of a single hair appear the lands of the Jeweled Kings. Sitting in a mote of dust, I turn the great Dharma wheel, destroy the defilements, and unite with enlightenment, so, true suchness, the wonderful enlightened bright nature, comes into being. 4:71

”The Treasury of the Thus Come One is the fundamental, wonderful, perfect mind. 4:73

”It is not the mind, nor emptiness, nor earth, nor water, nor wind, nor fire; it is not the eyes, nor the ears, the nose, the tongue, the body, or the mind. It is not form, nor sound, smells, tastes, objects of touch, or dharmas. It is not the realm of eye-consciousness, nor any other, up to and including the realm of mind-consciousness. 4:74

”It is not understanding, nor ignorance, nor the ending of understanding or ignorance, nor any other, up to and including old age and death and the ending of old age and death. 4:75

”It is not suffering, nor accumulation, nor extinction, nor the way. It is neither knowing nor attaining. 4:78

”It is not dana, nor shila, nor virya, nor kshanti, nor dhyana, nor prajna, nor paramita. 4:85

Nor any other: it is not the Tathagata, nor the arhats, nor samyaksambodhi, nor parinirvana, nor eternity, nor bliss, nor true self, nor purity. 4:88

”Therefore, it is neither mundane nor transcendental, since the Treasury of the Thus Come One is the fundamental brightness of the wonderful mind. 4:89

”It is the mind, it is emptiness, it is earth, it is water, it is wind, it is fire, it is the eyes, it is the ears, the nose, the tongue, the body, and the mind. It is form, it is sounds, smells, tastes, objects of touch, and dharmas. It is the realm of eye-consciousness, and so forth up, to and

including the realm of mind-consciousness. 4:90

It is understanding and ignorance and the ending of understanding and ignorance, and so forth up to and including old age and death and the ending of old age and death. It is suffering, it is accumulation, it is extinction, and it is the way. It is knowing and attaining. It is dana, it is shila, it is virya, it is kshanti, it is dhyana, it is prajna, and it is paramita, and so forth, up to and including the Tathagata, the arhats, samyaksambodhi, parinirvana, eternity, bliss, true self, and purity. 4:91

”It is both mundane and transcendental, since the Treasury of the Thus Come One is the wonderful brightness of the fundamental mind. 4:92

”It is apart from ‘is’ and ‘is not.’ It is identical with ‘is’ and ‘is not.’ 4:92

”How can living beings in the three realms of existence on the level of worldliness and the Sound-Hearers and Those Enlightened to Conditions on the level of transcendence make suppositions about the supreme Bodhi of the Thus Come One with the minds that they know of, or enter the knowledge and vision of the Buddha through the medium of worldly language and expressions? 4:93

”For example, lutes, flutes, and guitars can make wonderful sounds, but if there are no skilled fingers to play them, their music will never come forth. 4:94

”You and all living beings are the same way. The precious, enlightened mind is perfect in everyone. Thus, I press my finger upon it and the ocean-impression emits light; you move your mind, and the wearisome defilements spring up. 4:94

”It is all because you do not diligently seek the unsurpassed enlightened Way, but are fond of the lesser vehicle and are satisfied with little attainment.” 4:95

Purna said, “I am non-dual and complete with the Thus Come One’s perfect brightness of the precious enlightenment, the true wonder of the pure mind. But long ago I was victimized by false thoughts that have no beginning and I have long endured the turning wheel of rebirth. Now I have attained the sagely vehicle, but it is not yet ultimate. The World Honored One has completely extinguished all falseness and obtained wonderful true eternity. 4:99

”I venture to ask the Thus Come One why all living beings exist in falseness and conceal their own wonderful brightness, so that they keep drowning in this deluge?” 4:100

The Buddha said to Purna, “Although you have cast off doubts, you still have not ended residual delusions. I will now employ a worldly event in questioning you. 4:101

”Have you not heard of Yajnadatta in Shravasti who on impulse one morning held a mirror to his face and fell in love with the head in the mirror? He gazed at the eyes and eyebrows but got angry because he could not see his own face. He decided he must be a li mei ghost. Having lost all his bearings, he ran madly out. What do you think? Why did this person set out on a mad chase for no reason?. 4:101

Purna said, “That person was insane. There’s no other reason.” 4:101

The Buddha said, “What reason can you give for calling false the wonderful enlightened bright perfection, the fundamentally perfect bright wonder? If there is a reason, then how can you say it is false? 4:104

”All your own false thinking becomes in turn the cause for more. From confusion you accumulate confusion through kalpa after kalpa; although the Buddha is aware of it, he cannot counteract it. 4:104

”From such confused causes, the cause of confusion perpetuates itself. When one realizes that confusion has no cause, the falseness becomes baseless. Since it never arose, why would you hope for its extinction? One who obtains Bodhi is like a person who awakens to realize the events of a dream; even though his mind is awake and clear, he cannot get hold of the things in the dream and physically display them. 4:106

”How much the more is that the case with some thing which is without a cause and basically non-existent, such as Yajnadatta’s situation that day in the city? Was there any reason why he became fearful for his head and went running about? If his madness were suddenly to cease, it would not be that he had obtained his head from someplace outside; and so before his madness ceases, how can his head have been lost? 4:108

”Purna, falseness is the same way. How can it exist? 4:109

”All you need do is not follow discriminations, because none of the three causes arises when the three conditions of the three continuities of the world, living beings, and karmic retribution are cut off. 4:109

”Then the madness of the Yajnadatta in your mind will cease of itself, and just that ceasing is Bodhi. The supreme, pure, bright mind originally pervades the Dharma Realm. It is not something obtained from anyone else. Why, then, labor and toil with marrow and joint to cultivate and be certified? 4:110

”This is to be like the person who has a wish fulfilling pearl sewn in his clothing without-realizing it. Thus he roams abroad in a state of poverty, begging for food and always on the move. Although he is indeed destitute, the pearl is never lost. 4:111

”Suddenly, a wise person shows him the pearl: all his wishes are fulfilled, he obtains great wealth, and he realizes that the pearl did not come from somewhere outside.” 4:113

Ananda then bowed at the Buddha’s feet, arose in the Great Assembly, and said to the Buddha, “The World Honored One now explains that when the three conditions of the karma of killing, stealing, and lust are cut off, the three causes for them do not arise. Then the madness of Yajnadatta in the mind ceases of itself, and just that ceasing is Bodhi. It is not something obtained from anyone else. These clearly are causes and conditions; why, then, does the Thus Come One abruptly reject causes and conditions? 4:115

”It was through causes and conditions that my mind became enlightened, World Honored One, and that is not only true of us who are young in years, of us Sound-Hearers who still have to study. Mahamaudgalyayana, Shariputra, and Subhuti, who are now in this assembly and who followed the elder Brahmans, became enlightened and obtained the state of no outflows upon hearing the Buddha expound upon causes and conditions. 4:116

”Now you say that Bodhi does not come from causes and conditions. So the spontaneity that Maskari Goshaliputra and others advocated in Rajagriha then becomes the primary meaning! I only hope you will let fall great compassion and break through my confusion.” 4:117

The Buddha said to Ananda, “Let us take the case of Yajnadatta in the city: if the causes and conditions of his madness cease, the nature that is not mad will spontaneously come forth. The entire principle of spontaneity and causes and conditions is nothing more than that. 4:118

”Ananda, Yajnadatta’s head was spontaneously there, it was a spontaneous part of him. There was never a time when it was not. Why, then, did he suddenly fear that he had no head and start running about madly? 4:118

”If he naturally had a head and went mad due to causes and conditions, would it not be just as natural for him to lose his head due to causes and conditions? 4:119

”Basically his head was not lost. The madness and fear arose from falseness. There was never any change that took place. Why, then, labor the point about causes and conditions? 4:119

”If the madness were spontaneous, the madness and fear would be fundamental. Before he went mad, then, where was his madness hidden? 4:119

”If the madness were not spontaneous, and his head were in fact not lost, why did he run about in a state of madness? 4:120

”If you realize that you have a head and recognize the madness of your pursuit, then both spontaneity and causes and conditions become idle theories. That is why I say that the three conditions’ ceasing to be is itself the Bodhi mind. 4:120

”The Bodhi mind’s being produced and the mind subject to production and extinction’s being extinguished is simply production and extinction. 4:121

”The ending of both production and extinction is the effortless Way. If there is spontaneity, then clearly it must be that the thought of spontaneity arises and the mind subject to production and extinction ceases: that, then, is still production and extinction. 4:121

”To call the lack of production and extinction spontaneity is the same as to say that the single substance formed by the combination of all mundane appearances is a mixed and united essence, and that whatever is not mixed and united is basically spontaneous in nature. 4:121

”When spontaneity is devoid of spontaneity, and mixing and uniting are devoid of their unifying quality, so that spontaneity and unity alike are abandoned, and both the abandonment of them and their existence cease to be - that is no idle theory. 4:122

”Bodhi and Nirvana are still so far away that you must undoubtedly pass through kalpas of bitterness and diligence before you cultivate them and are certified. 4:123

”You can hold in memory the twelve divisions of the sutras spoken by the Buddhas of the ten directions and their pure, wonderful principles as many as the sands of the River Ganges, but it only aids your idle theorizing. 4:123

You can discuss causes and conditions and spontaneity and understand them perfectly clearly, and people in the world refer to you as the one foremost in learning. You have spent aeons upon aeons saturating yourself with learning, yet you could not avoid the difficulty of Matangi. 4:124

”Why did you have to wait for me to use the spiritual mantra of the Buddha’s summit? The fire of lust in Matangi’s daughter’s heart died instantly, and she attained the position of an Anagamin. Now she is one of a vigorous group in my dharma assembly. The river of love dried up in her, and she was able to set you free. 4:125

”Therefore, Ananda, your ability to keep in mind the Thus Come One’s wonderful secret teachings of aeon after aeon is not as good as a single day of no-outflow cultivation that is intent upon getting far away from the two worldly sufferings of love and hate. 4:129

”In Matangi’s daughter, a former prostitute, love and desire were dispelled by the spiritual power of the mantra. Now her name in dharma is Bhikshuni ‘Nature.’ 4:131

”She and Rahula’s mother, Yashodhara both became aware of their past causes and knew that for many kalpas they had endured the suffering of greed and love. Because they single-mindedly became permeated with the cultivation of the goodness of no outflows, they were both freed from their bonds and received predictions. Why, then, do you cheat yourself and still remain caught up in looking and listening?” 4:132

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Chapter 4

When Ananda and the Great Assembly heard the Buddha’s instruction, their doubts and delusion were dispelled. Their minds awakened to the actual appearance, they experienced “light ease” both physically and mentally, and they obtained what they had never had before. 4:133

Once again he wept, bowed at the Buddha’s feet, knelt on both knees, placed his palms together, and said to the Buddha, “The Unsurpassed, Great, Compassionate, Pure, and Precious King has instructed me well, so that, by means of these various causes and conditions, expedients, and encouragements, all of us who were immersed in the sea of suffering have escaped it. 4:135

”World Honored One, having heard the sound of dharma like this, I know that the Treasury of the Thus Come One, the wonderful, enlightened, bright mind, pervades the ten directions and

includes the Thus Come One, the lands of the ten directions, and the pure, precious adornments of the land of the Wonderfully Enlightened King. Yet, the Thus Come One once again admonishes that erudition is of no merit and is not as good as cultivation. 4:136

”So now I am like a wanderer who suddenly encounters a reigning king who bestows upon him an elegant house. He has obtained a mansion, but there needs to be a door in order for him to enter it. 4:137

”I only hope the Thus Come One will not withhold his great compassion in instructing those of us in the assembly who are covered over by darkness, so that we may renounce the small vehicle and attain at last the Thus Come One’s Nirvana without residue, the fundamental path of resolve, and that he will enable those who still must study to know now how to subdue the age-old seeking of advantage from conditions, to obtain Dharani, and to enter into the knowledge and vision of the Buddha.” Having said this, he made a full prostration, and together with the members of the assembly, he single-mindedly awaited the Buddha’s compassionate instruction. 4:138

The World Honored One then took pity on the Sound-Hearers and the Condition-Enlightened Ones in the assembly - all those who were not yet at ease with the Bodhi mind - and on all living beings to come after the Buddha’s extinction during the Dharma-ending Age. He revealed the wonderful path of cultivation of the unsurpassed vehicle. 4:142

He proclaimed to Ananda and to the Great Assembly, “If you want to have decisive resolve for Bodhi and not grow weary of the Wonderful Samadhi of the Buddha, the Thus Come One, you must first understand the two resolutions regarding initial resolve for enlightenment. What are the two resolutions regarding initial resolve for enlightenment? 4:144

”Ananda, the first resolution is this: if you wish to renounce the position of Sound-Hearer and cultivate the Bodhisattva Vehicle, and to enter the knowledge and vision of the Buddha, you must carefully consider whether the resolve on the cause ground and the enlightenment on the ground of fruition are the same or different. 4:145

”Ananda, it is impossible while on the cause-ground to use the mind subject to production and extinction as the basis for cultivating in quest of the Buddha vehicle, which is neither produced nor extinguished. 4:146

For this reason, you should realize that all existing dharmas in the material world will decay and disappear. Ananda, contemplate the world: what thing is there that will not waste away? 4:146

”But, has anyone ever heard of the disintegration of the void? Why not? It is because the void does not exist, and so it can never be destroyed. 4:147

”While you are in your body, what is solid is of earth, what is moist is of water, what is warm is of fire, and what moves is of wind. Because of these four bonds, your tranquil and perfect, wonderfully enlightened bright mind divides into seeing, hearing, sensation, and cognition. From beginning to end there are the five layers of turbidity. 4:147

”What is meant by ‘turbidity?’ Ananda, pure water, for instance, is fundamentally clear and clean, whereas dust, dirt, ashes, silt, and the like, are basically solid substances. Such are the properties of the two; their natures are not compatible. Suppose, then, that an ordinary person takes some dirt and tosses it into the pure water. The dirt loses its solid quality and the water is deprived of its transparency. The cloudiness which results is called ‘turbidity.’ Your five layers of turbidity are similar to it. 4:148

”Ananda, you see that emptiness pervades the ten directions. There is no division between emptiness and seeing. However, although emptiness has no substance and your seeing has no awareness, the two become entangled in a falseness. This is the first layer, called the turbidity of time. 4:150

”Your body appears in full, with the four elements composing its substance, and from this, seeing, hearing, sensation, and cognition become firmly defined. Water, fire, wind, and earth fluctuate between sensation and cognition and become entangled in a falseness. This is the second layer, called the turbidity of views. 4:151

”Further, the functions of memory, discrimination, and verbal comprehension in your mind bring into being knowledge and views. From out of them appear the six defiling objects. Apart from the defiling objects there are no appearances. Apart from cognition they have no nature. But they become entangled in a falseness. This is the third layer, called the turbidity of afflictions. 4:152

”And then day and night there is endless production and extinction as your knowledge and views continually wish to remain in the world, while your karmic patterns constantly move you to various places. This entanglement becomes a falseness, which is the fourth layer, called the turbidity of living beings. 4:154

”Originally, your seeing and hearing were not different natures, but a multitude of defiling objects has divided them until suddenly they became different. Their natures have a mutual

awareness, but their functions are in opposition. Sameness and difference arise and they lose their identity. This entanglement becomes a falseness, which is the fifth layer, called the turbidity of a lifespan. 4:155

”Ananda, you now want to cause your seeing, hearing, sensation, and cognition to return to and tally with the permanence, bliss, true self, and purity of the Thus Come One. 4:156

You should first decide what the basis of birth and death is by relying on the perfect, tranquil nature which is neither produced nor extinguished. 4:156

By means of this tranquility, turn the empty and false production and extinction so that they are subdued and return to the source of enlightenment. The attainment of this source of bright enlightenment, which is neither produced nor extinguished, is the mind on the cause-ground. 4:157

”Then you can completely accomplish the cultivation of and certification to the ground of fruition. 4:157

”It is like purifying muddy water by placing it in a quiet vessel which is kept completely still and unmoving. The sand and silt settle, and the pure water appears. This is called the initial subduing of the guest-dust affliction. 4:158

”The complete removal of the mud from the water is called the eternal severance of fundamental ignorance. 4:159

”When clarity is pure to its essence, then no matter what happens there is no affliction. Everything is in accord with the pure and wonderful virtues of Nirvana. 4:160

”The second resolution is this: if you definitely wish to bring forth the resolve for Bodhi and to be especially courageous and dedicated in your cultivation of the Bodhisattva Vehicle, you must decisively renounce all conditioned appearances. 4:161

You should carefully consider the origin of affliction and the beginningless creation of karma and perpetuation of rebirth - who creates it and who endures it? 4:163

”Ananda, if in your cultivation of Bodhi you do not carefully consider the origin of affliction, you cannot realize the empty falseness of the sense-organs and sense-objects or the location

of delusion. If you don’t even know its location, how can you subdue it and reach the level of the Thus Come One? 4:163

”Ananda, consider the ordinary person who wants to untie a knot. If he can’t see where the knot is, how can he untie it? 4:164

But I have never heard that one can obliterate empty space. Why? It is because emptiness has no form or appearance; therefore there are no knots to untie. 4:164

”But now your visible eyes, ears, nose and tongue, as well as your body and mind, are like six thieving matchmakers who plunder the jewels of your household. 4:164

”And, thus, from beginningless time living beings and the world have been bound up together, so that the material world cannot be transcended. 4:169

”Ananda, what is meant by the time and space of living beings? ‘Time’ refers to change and flow; .space. refers to location. 4:170

”You should know by now that north, east, south, west, northeast, northwest, southeast, southwest, above and below are space. Past, present, and future are periods of time. There are ten directions in space and three periods of time. 4:170

”All living beings come into being because of false interaction. Their bodies go through changes and they are caught up in time and space. 4:171

”However, although there are ten directions in space, those known in the world as north, south, east, and west are the only ones that can be clearly fixed. Above and below have no position; the intermediates have no definite direction. Determined clearly to be four in number, they are then combined with the three periods of time. Three times four, or, alternately, four times three, make twelve. 4:171

”Increase it three times: itself multiplied by ten and again by ten, to reach the thousands: one thousand two hundred is the greatest possible efficacy of the six organs. 4:172

”Ananda, you can thereby establish their value. For example, the eyes see darkness behind and light in front. The front is totally light; the back is totally dark. With your peripheral vision included, you can see two thirds around at most. Therefore, its capacity can be expressed as

an efficacy which is not complete. One third of its efficacy is without virtue. Know, then, that the eyes have an efficacy of only eight hundred. 4:172

”For example, the ears hear everywhere in the ten directions, without loss. They hear movements, whether far or near, and stillness without bounds. Know, then, that the organ of hearing is complete with an efficacy of twelve hundred. 4:173

”For example, the nose smells odors with each inhalation and exhalation of the breath. It is deficient at the point between the inhalation and exhalation. The organ of smell can be considered to be deficient by one third. Know, then, that the nose has an efficacy of only eight hundred. 4:174

”For example, the tongue can proclaim the entirety of worldly and transcendental wisdom. Although language varies according to locality, the principles go beyond boundaries of any kind. Know, then, that the organ of the tongue is complete with an efficacy of twelve hundred. 4:174

”For example, the body is aware of touch, registering it as pain or pleasure. When it makes contact, it is aware of the thing touched; when in isolation, it has no tactile knowledge of other things. Isolation has a single and contact has a dual aspect. The organ of the body can be considered as deficient by one third. Know, then, that the body has an efficacy of only eight hundred. 4:175

”For example, the mind silently includes all worldly and transcendental dharmas of the ten directions and the three periods of time. Regardless of whether it be sagely or ordinary, everything is included in its boundlessness. Know, then, that the organ of the mind is complete with an efficacy of twelve hundred. 4:176

”Ananda, now you wish to oppose the flow of desire that leads to birth and death. You should turn back the flow of the organs to reach a state of neither production nor extinction. 4:176

”You should investigate all of these six functioning organs to see which are uniting, which are isolated, which are deep, which are shallow, which will penetrate perfectly, and which are not perfect. 4:177

”Once you have awakened to the organ which penetrates perfectly, you should thereupon reverse the flow of its beginningless involvement in false karma. Then you will know the difference between one that penetrates perfectly and one that does not. Then a day and an

aeon will be one and the same. 4:177

”I have now revealed to you the fundamental efficacy of the tranquil perfect brightness of these six. This is what the numbers are; it is up to you to select which one to enter. I will explain more to aid your progress in it. 4:178

”The Thus Come Ones of the ten directions cultivated by means of all of the eighteen realms and obtained perfect, unsurpassed Bodhi. All of them were generally adequate. 4:178

”But you are at an inferior level and are not yet able to perfect comfortable wisdom among them. Therefore, I shall give you an explanation, so that you will be able to enter deeply into one door. 4:179

”Enter one without falseness, and the six sense organs will be simultaneously pure.” 4:179

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Chapter 4

Ananda said to the Buddha, “World Honored One, how do we oppose the flow, enter deeply into one door, and cause the six organs to simultaneously become pure?” 4:180

The Buddha told Ananda, ”You have already obtained the fruition of a Shrotaapanna. You have already extinguished the view-delusions of living beings in the three realms, but you do not yet know that your organs have accumulated habits that are without beginning. It is through cultivation that one severs not simply these habits, but also their numerous subtleties as they pass through arisal, dwelling, change, and extinction. 4:180

”You should now contemplate the six organs further: are they one or six? If you say they are one, Ananda, why can’t the ears see? Why can’t the eyes hear? Why can’t the head walk? Why can’t the feet talk? 4:181

”If the six organs are definitely six, then as I now explain this subtle, wonderful dharma-door for you in this assembly, which of your six organs is receiving it?” 4:184

Ananda said, ”I hear it with my ears.” 4:184

The Buddha said, “Your ears hear by themselves; what, then, does it have to do with your body and mouth? And yet you ask about the principles with your mouth, and your body

displays veneration. 4:184

”Therefore, you should know that if they are not one, then they must be six. And if they are not six, they must be one. But you can’t say that your organs are basically one and six. 4:185

”Ananda, you should know that these organs are neither one nor six. It is from being upside-down and sinking into involvements throughout time without beginning that the theory of one and six has become established. As a Shrotaapanna, you have dissolved the six, but you still have not done away with the one. 4:185

”It is like emptiness fitting into differently shaped vessels. The emptiness is said to be whatever shape the vessel is. But if you get rid of the vessel and look at the emptiness, you will say it is one and the same. 4:188

”But how can that emptiness become alike and different at your convenience? Even less can it be one or not one. Therefore, you should understand that the six receptive functioning organs should be the same way. 4:189

”Seeing occurs because the two appearances of darkness and light, and their like, firmly adhere to quietude in what originally was wonderful perfection. The essence of seeing reflects form and combines with form to become an organ. In its pure state the organ of the eye is the four elements. And yet it takes the name ‘eye-organ’ and is shaped like a grape. Of the superficial sense-organs and the four defiling objects, this one races out after form. 4:191

”Hearing occurs because the two reverberations of movement and stillness, and their like, firmly adhere to quietude in what originally was wonderful perfection. The essence of hearing reflects sound and resounds with sound to become the organ of the ear. In its pure state, the organ of the ear is the four elements. It takes the name ‘ear organ’ and is shaped like a fresh, curled leaf. Of the superficial sense-organs and the four defiling objects, this one is loosed upon sound. 4:192

”Smelling occurs because the two appearances of penetration and obstruction, and their like, firmly adhere to quietude in what originally was wonderful perfection. The essence of smelling reflects scents and takes in scents to become the organ of the nose. In its pure state, the organ of the nose is the four elements. It takes the name ‘nose-organ’ and is shaped like a double hanging claw. Of the superficial sense-organs and the four defiling objects, this one probes out after scents. 4:193

”Tasting occurs because the two blends of blandness and variety, and their like, firmly adhere to quietude in what originally was wonderful perfection. The essence of tasting reflects flavors and becomes entwined with flavors to become the organ of the tongue. In its pure state the organ of the tongue is the four elements. It takes the name ‘tongue-organ’ and is shaped like the crescent moon. Of the superficial sense-organs and the four defiling objects, this one pursues flavors. 4:194

”Sensation occurs because the two frictions of separation and union, and their like, firmly adhere to quietude in what originally was wonderful perfection. The essence of sensation reflects contact and seizes upon contact to become the organ of the body. In its pure state, the organ of the body is the four elements. It takes the name ‘body-organ’ and is shaped like a tabla. Of the superficial sense-organs and the four defiling objects, this one is compelled by contact. 4:194

”Knowing occurs because the two continuities of production and extinction, and their like, firmly adhere to quietude in what originally was wonderful perfection. The essence of knowing reflects dharmas and grasps dharmas to become the organ of the mind. In its pure state, the organ of the mind is the four elements. It takes the name ‘mental cognition’ and resembles seeing in a dark room. Of the superficial sense-organs and their four defiling objects, this one chases after dharmas. 4:195

”Ananda, in this way the six organs occur, because that bright enlightenment has a brightness added to it. Thus they lose their essence and adhere to falseness and create light. 4:196

”Therefore, apart from darkness and light there is no substance to seeing for you now; apart from movement and stillness, there, basically, is no disposition of hearing; without penetration and obstruction, the nature of smelling does not arise; in the absence of variety and blandness, tasting does not occur, lacking separation and union, the sensation of contact is fundamentally non-existent; without extinction and production, knowing is put to rest. 4:197

”You need only not follow the twelve conditioned appearances of movement and stillness, union and separation, blandness and variety, penetration and obstruction, production and extinction, and brightness and darkness. 4:198

”Accordingly, extract one organ from adhesion, free it, and subdue it at its inner core. Once subdued, it will return to inherent truth and radiate its innate brilliance. When that brilliance shines forth, the remaining five adhesions will be freed to accomplish total liberation. 4:198

”Do not follow the knowing and seeing that arise from the objects before you. True brightness does not comply with the sense-organs. Yet, lodged at the organs is the revelation of the brightness that permits the mutual functioning of the six organs. 4:199

”Ananda, don’t you know that now in this assembly there is Aniruddha, who is blind and yet can see; the dragon, Upananda, who is deaf and yet can hear; the spirit of the Ganges River, who has no nose and yet smells fragrance; Gavampati, who has an unusual tongue and yet senses flavor; and the spirit, Shunyata, who has no body and yet is aware of contact? In the light of the Thus Come One, this spirit is illumined temporarily as an ethereal essence without any substance. In the same way, there is also Mahakashyapa in this assembly, dwelling in the samadhi of extinction, having obtained the stillness of a Sound-Hearer. He has long since extinguished the mind-organ, and yet he has a perfectly clear knowledge which is not due to the mental process of thinking. 4:201

”Then, Ananda, after all your organs are completely freed, you will glow with an inner light. All the ephemeral, defiling objects and the material world will thereupon change their appearance like ice which is melted by hot liquid. In response to your mind, they will transform and become the knowledge and awareness which is unsurpassed enlightenment. 4:206

”Ananda, it is like an ordinary person who has confined seeing to his eyes. If you suddenly have him close his eyes, he will see darkness before him. The six organs and his head and feet will be enveloped in total darkness. If the person traces the shape of external things with his hands, then even though he cannot see, he will recognize someone’s head and feet if he feels them. This knowledge and awareness are the same way. 4:207

If light is the condition requisite for seeing, then darkness brings the absence of seeing. But to perceive without light means that no dark manifestation can obscure the seeing. 4:208

”Once the organs and objects are eradicated, how can the enlightened brightness not become perfect and wonderful?” 4:209

Ananda said to the Buddha, “World Honored One, as the Buddha has said, ‘The resolve for enlightenment on the cause-ground which seeks the eternal must be in mutual accord with the ground of fruition.’ 4:211

”World Honored One, the ground of fruition is Bodhi; Nirvana; true suchness; the Buddha-nature; the Amala-Consciousness; the Empty Treasury of the Thus Come One; the great, Perfect Mirror-Wisdom. But although it is called by these seven names, it is pure and perfect, its substance is durable, like royal vajra, everlasting and indestructible. 4:212

If the seeing and hearing are apart from light and darkness, movement and stillness, and penetration and obstruction and are ultimately devoid of substance, they are then like thoughts apart from sense-objects: they do not exist at all. 4:213

”How can what is ultimately destroyed be a cause by which one cultivates in the hope of obtaining the fruition of the Thus Come One’s sevenfold permanent abode? 4:213

”World Honored One, when it is apart from light and darkness, the seeing is ultimately empty, just as when there is no sense-object, the essence of thought is extinguished. 4:213

”I go back and forth in circles, minutely searching, and basically there is no such thing as my mind or its objects. Just what should be used to seek the Unsurpassed Enlightenment? 4:214

”The Thus Come One previously said it was a tranquil essence, perfect and eternal. His present contradiction defies belief and is a resort to idle theorizing. How can the Thus Come One’s words be true and actual? 4:214

”I only hope the Buddha will let fall his great compassion and will instruct us who do not understand and who are holding on tightly.” 4:215

The Buddha told Ananda, “You study and learn much, but you have not yet extinguished outflows. In your mind you know only the causes of being upside down. But when the true inversion manifests, you really cannot recognize it yet. 4:215

”Lest your sincerity and faith remain insufficient, I will try to make use of an ordinary happening to dispel your doubts.” 4:216

Then the Thus Come One instructed Rahula to strike the bell once, and he asked Ananda, “Did you hear that?” 4:216

Ananda and the members of the Great Assembly all said, “We heard it.” 4:216

The bell ceased to sound, and the Buddha again asked, “Do you hear it now?” 4:217

Ananda and the members of the Great Assembly all said, “We do not hear it.” 4:217

Then Rahula struck the bell once again. The Buddha again asked, “Do you hear it now?” 4:217

Ananda and the Great Assembly again said, “We hear it.” 4:217

The Buddha asked Ananda, “What do you hear and what do you not hear?” 4:218

Ananda and the members of the Great Assembly all said to the Buddha, “When the bell is rung, we hear it. Once the sound of the bell ceases, so that even its echo fades away, we do not hear it.” 4:218

The Thus Come One again instructed Rahula to strike the bell, and he asked Ananda, “Is there sound now?” 4:219

Ananda and the members of the Great Assembly all said, “There is a sound.” 4:219

After a short time the sound ceased, and the Buddha again asked, “Is there a sound now?” 4:219

Ananda and the Great Assembly answered, “There is no sound.” 4:219

After a moment, Rahula again struck the bell, and the Buddha again asked, “Is there sound now?” 4:220

Ananda and the Great Assembly said together, “There is sound.” 4:220

The Buddha asked Ananda, “What is meant by ‘sound,’ and what is meant by ‘no sound?’” 4:220

Ananda and the Great Assembly told the Buddha, “When the bell is struck there is sound. Once the sound ceases and even the echo fades away, there is said to be no sound.” 4:220

The Buddha said to Ananda and the Great Assembly, “Why are you inconsistent in what you say?” 4:220

The Great Assembly and Ananda then asked the Buddha, “In what way have we been inconsistent?” 4:221

The Buddha said, “When I asked you if it was your hearing, you said it was your hearing. Then, when I asked you if it was sound, you said it was sound. I cannot ascertain from your answers if it is hearing or if it is sound. How can you not say this is inconsistent? 4:221

”Ananda, when the sound is gone without an echo, you say there is no hearing. If there were really no hearing, the hearing-nature would be extinguished. It would be just like dead wood. If then the bell were sounded again, how would you know? 4:221

”What you know to be there or not there is the defiling object of sound. But could the hearing nature be there or not be there depending on your perception of its being there or not? If the hearing could really not be there, what would perceive that it was not? 4:222

”And so, Ananda, the sounds that you hear are what are subject to production and extinction, not your hearing. The arising and cessation of sounds cause your hearing-nature to be as if there or not there. 4:223

”You are so upside-down that you mistake sound for hearing. No wonder you are so confused that you take what is everlasting for what is annihilated. Ultimately, you cannot say that there is no hearing nature apart from movement and stillness and from obstruction and penetration. 4:223

”Consider a person who falls into a deep sleep while napping on his bed. While he is asleep, someone in his household starts beating clothes or pounding rice. In his dream, the person hears the sound of beating and pounding and takes it for something else, perhaps for the striking of a drum or the ringing of a bell. In the dream he wonders why the bell sounds like stone or wood. 4:224

”Suddenly he awakens and immediately recognizes the sound of pounding. He tells the members of his household, ‘I was just having a dream in which I mistook the sound of pounding for the sound of a drum.’ 4:228

”Ananda, how can this person in the dream-state remember stillness and motion, opening and closing, and penetrability and obstruction? Yet, although he is physically asleep, his hearing-nature is not drowsy. 4:229

”Even when your body is gone and your light and life move on, how could this nature leave you? 4:230

”But because living beings, from time without beginning, have pursued forms and sounds and have followed their thoughts as they turn and flow, they still are not enlightened to the purity, wonder, and permanence of their nature. 4:231

”They do not accord with what is eternal, but chase after things which are subject to production and extinction. Because of this they are born again and again and become mixed with defilement as they flow and turn. 4:232

”But if they reject production and extinction and uphold true permanence, an everlasting light will appear, and with that, the sense-organs, defiling objects, and consciousnesses will disappear. 4:234

”The appearance of thought becomes defilement; the emotions of the consciousness become filth. If you stay far away from these two, then your dharma eye will accordingly become pure and bright. How could you fail to accomplish unsurpassed knowledge and enlightenment?” 4:234

Ananda said to the Buddha, “World Honored One, the Thus Come One has explained the two meanings, yet, as I now contemplate people in the world, I believe that if they try to untie a knot and cannot find its center, they will never get the knot undone. 4:237

”World Honored One, I and all the other Sound Hearers in the Great Assembly who are not beyond learning are the same way. From time without beginning we have been accompanied in birth and death by ignorance. We have obtained these good roots of erudition and are said to have left the home life, yet in fact we act like someone with a recurrent fever. 4:238

”I only hope that you, the Greatly Compassionate One, will take pity on us. We are sinking and drowning so that to this very day we do not know how our bodies and minds are in knots or how to go about untying them. Your explanation will also enable future living beings who are in suffering and difficulty to avoid the turning wheel and not fall into the three realms of existence.” 4:240

After saying this, he and the entire Great Assembly made full prostrations. He wept profusely, and with sincere anticipation awaited the unsurpassed instruction of the Buddha, the Thus Come One. 4:241

Then the World Honored One took pity on Ananda and on those in the assembly with something left to study, as well as on living beings of the future, in order to help them transcend the world and become eyes for the future. 4:242

He rubbed the crown of Ananda’s head with his Jambunada purple-golden bright hand. Instantaneously all the Buddhalands in the ten directions quaked in six ways. 4:243

Thus Come Ones as numerous as fine motes of dust, each dwelling in his respective world, emitted a precious light from the crown of his head. 4:245

At one and the same time their light went from their own countries to the Jeta Grove and anointed the crown of the Thus Come One’s head. All in that Great Assembly obtained what they had never had before. 4:245

Then Ananda and everyone in the Great Assembly heard the Thus Come Ones as numerous as fine motes of dust throughout the ten directions speak to Ananda in unison. 4:247

”Good indeed, Ananda! You wish to recognize your innate ignorance that causes you to turn on the wheel. The origin of the knot of birth and death is simply your six sense-organs and nothing else. 4:248

”You also want to understand unsurpassed Bodhi, so that you can quickly realize bliss, liberation, tranquility, and wonderful eternity. It, too, is your six sense-organs and nothing else.” 4:251

Ananda heard these sounds of Dharma, but he did not yet understand in his mind. Bowing his head, he said to the Buddha, “How can what causes me to revolve in the cycle of birth and death and what enables me to gain bliss and wonderful permanence be the six sense-organs in both cases and nothing else?” 4:253

The Buddha said to Ananda, “The sense-organs and the objects are of the same source. The bonds and the release are not two. The nature of the consciousnesses is empty and false; it is like strange flowers in space. 4:254

”Ananda, sense-awareness arises because of the sense objects: the appearance of objects exists because of the sense-organs. The appearance and the perception, both devoid of a

nature, support each other like intertwining reeds. 4:255

”Therefore, you now base your knowledge on awareness and perception; but that is fundamental ignorance. The absence of a view regarding awareness and perception is Nirvana - the true purity of no outflows. How could there be anything else in the midst of it?” 4:256

Then the World Honored One, wishing to restate this meaning, spoke verses, saying: 4:257

“In the true nature, conditioned things are empty.

They spring from causes, as illusions do.

Things unconditioned neither rise nor cease.

Unreal they are, like flowers in space. 4:257

”To speak of the false is to reveal the true.

But both the false and the true are false themselves.

If there is neither truth nor untruth,

How can there be perceiver and perceived? 4:258

“Between them the two in fact have no nature.

Thus they are likened to entwining reeds.

The knots and their release have a common cause.

The sages. and ordinary people’s paths are not two. 4:259

”Regard the nature of the intertwined.

Emptiness, existence both are naught.

Dark confusion is simply ignorance;

Bringing it to light is liberation. 4:260

”The knots must be untied successively.

When the six are released, even the one ceases to be.

Select an organ preferred for perfect penetration;

Enter the flow and realize proper enlightenment. 4:263

”Extremely subtle, the Adana consciousness

Makes patterns of habit that flow on in torrents.

Fearing you will confuse the truth with what is not,

I rarely tell you of all this. 4:266

”With your own mind, you grasp at your own mind.

What is not illusory turns into illusion.

If you don’t grasp, there is no non-illusion.

If even non-illusion does not arise,

How can illusory dharmas be established?

This is called the Wonderful Lotus Flower,

The Regal Vajra Gem of Enlightenment. 4:267 .

”n this Samapatti that is likened to illusion,

Transcend all study instantly. 4:269

”This Abhidharma, incomparable

Is the single pathway through Nirvana’s gate,

Taken by Bhagavans in all the ten directions.” 4:270

When Ananda and the Great Assembly heard the unsurpassed, compassionate instruction of the Buddha, the Thus Come One, this harmonious and brilliant Geya verse with its clear and

penetrating wonderful principles, their hearts and eyes were opened, and they exclaimed that Dharma such as this had never been before. 4:272

5. The Six Knots

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Chapter 5

Ananda put his palms together, bowed, and said to the Buddha, “Having heard the Buddha’s unbounded, greatly compassionate, pure, everlasting, true and actual expression of dharma, I still have not understood the sequence for releasing the knots such that when the six are untied, the one is gone also. I only hope you will be compassionate, and once again take pity on this assembly and on those of the future, by bestowing the sounds of Dharma on us and wash and rinse away our heavy defilements.” 5:1

Then, upon the lion’s throne, the Thus Come One straightened his “Nirvana robes,” arranged his samghati, took hold of the table made of the seven gems, reached out onto the table with his hand and picked up a flowered cloth given him by the Suyama God. 5:2

Then, as the assembly watched, he tied it into a knot and showed it to Ananda, asking, “What is this called?” 5:3

Ananda and the great assembly answered together, “It’s called a knot.” 5:3

Then the Thus Come One tied another knot in the cloth of layered flowers and asked Ananda again, “What is this called?” 5:3

Ananda and the great assembly once again answered together, “It, too, is called a knot.” 5:3

He continued in this pattern until he had tied six knots in the cloth of layered flowers. As he made each knot, he held it up to Ananda and asked, “What is this called?” 5:3

And each time Ananda and the great assembly answered the Buddha in the same way:”.It is called a knot.” 5:3

The Buddha said to Ananda, “When I first tied the cloth, you called it a knot. Since the cloth of layered flowers is basically a single strip, how can you call the second and third ties knots as well?” 5:4

Ananda said to the Buddha, “World Honored One, this cloth of woven layered flowers is just one piece, but as I consider it, when the Thus Come One makes one tie, it is called a knot. If he were to make a hundred ties, they would be called a hundred knots, how much the more so with this cloth, which has exactly six knots, not seven or five. Why does the Thus Come One allow me to call only the first tie a knot and not the second or third ties?” 5:4

The Buddha told Ananda, “You know that this precious cloth of flowers is basically one strip, but when I made six ties in it, you said it had six knots. As you carefully consider this, you will see that the substance of the cloth is the same; it is the knots that make the difference. 5:5

”What do you think? The first knot I tied was called number one. Continuing until I come to the sixth knot, and as I now tie it, is it also number one?” 5:6

”No, World Honored One. If there are six knots, the sixth knot can never be called number one. In all my lives of learning, with all my understanding, how could I now confuse the names of six knots?” 5:6

The Buddha said, “So it is. The six knots are not the same. Consider their origin. They are created from the one cloth. To confuse their order will not do. 5:7

”Your six sense organs are also like this. In the midst or ultimate sameness, conclusive differences arise.” 5:7

The Buddha said to Ananda, “You certainly dislike these six knots and would like there to be just one cloth. But how can that be done?” 5:8

Ananda said, “As long as these knots remain, there will be grounds for argument about what is and what is not. Their very existence will lead to such distinctions as this knot not being that knot and that knot not being this one. But if on this day, the Thus Come One unties them all, so that no knots remain, then there will be no ‘this’ and no ‘that.’ There will not even be something called ‘one.’ How much the less can there be six?” 5:8

The Buddha said, ”’When the six are untied, the one is gone’ is the same meaning. 5:8

”Because from beginningless time your mind and nature have been made wild and rebellious, you have produced false knowledge and views. This falseness continues to arise without

respite, and the wearisomeness of these views brings about objective ‘dust.’ 5:9

”It is just like strange flowers appearing when your eyes grow weary of staring. They arise at random without any cause within the tranquil, essential brightness. 5:11

”Everything in the world - the mountains, the rivers, and the great earth, as well as birth, death, and Nirvana - is all just a strange weariness: the upside-down appearance of flowers.” 5:11

Ananda said, “This weariness is the same as the knots. How do we untie them?” 5:12

The Thus Come One took hold of the knotted cloth and pulled on its left end and asked Ananda, “Is this the way to untie it?” 5:12

”No, World Honored One.” 5:12

Then with his hand he pulled on the right end and again asked Ananda, “Is this the way to untie it?” 5:12

”No, World Honored One.” 5:12

The Buddha said to Ananda, “Now I have pulled it to the left and right with my hand and still have not been able to undo them. What method do you propose for untying them?” 5:13

Ananda said to the Buddha, “World Honored One, you must untie the knots from their center. Then they will come undone.” 5:13

The Buddha said to Ananda, “So it is, so it is, if you want to get them undone, you have to untie them from the center. 5:14

”Ananda, the Buddhadharma I explain arises from causes and conditions. But that is not to grasp at the mixing and uniting of coarse appearances in the world. The Thus Come One understands all worldly and world-transcending dharmas and knows their fundamental causes and what conditions bring them into being. 5:14

”This is so to the extent that I know how many drops of rain fall in as many worlds away from here as there are dust motes in the Ganges. The same is true for all the things you can see: why the pine is straight, why the brambles are twisted, why the goose is white, why the crow is black - I understand the reasons. 5:15

”Therefore, Ananda, you can select whichever one of the six sense-organs you wish. If the knots of the sense-organs are removed, then the defiling appearances disappear of themselves. All falseness ceases to be. If that is not the true, what do you expect in addition to it? 5:15

”Ananda, I now ask you, can the six knots in the cloth of layered flowers be untied simultaneously and released all at once?” 5:17

”No, World Honored One. The knots were originally made one at a time, now they must be untied one at a time. The substance of the six knots is the same, but they were not made simultaneously, and so now when it is time to release them, how can they be untied simultaneously?” 5:17

The Buddha said, “Releasing the six sense-organs is the same way. When the sense-organ begins to be released, one realizes the emptiness of people first. When the nature of that emptiness is fully understood, then one is released from dharmas. Once one is freed from dharmas, neither kind of emptiness will arise. 5:17

”This is called the Patience with Non-Production attained by the Bodhisattvas by means of samadhi.” 5:18

Upon receiving the Buddha’s instruction, Ananda and the great assembly gained wisdom and awareness that was perfectly penetrating and free of doubt and delusion. 5:19

All at the same time, they placed their palms together, bowed at the Buddha’s feet, and he said to the Buddha, “Today our bodies and minds are illumined, and we are happily free from obstruction. 5:19

”We have understood the meaning of the ending of the six and the one. Still, we have not yet gone through to fundamental, perfect penetration. 5:20

”World Honored One, we who have floated and floundered our way through aeon after aeon, homeless and orphaned, had no idea, we never imagined that we could meet with the Buddha

in such a close relationship. We are like lost infants who have suddenly found their compassionate mother. 5:20

”Because of this, we accomplished the way in this assembly. Yet, the secret words which we received are the same as our basic enlightenment, and so it is the same as if we hadn’t even heard them. 5:21

”We only wish the greatly compassionate one will bestow upon us the profound secret as the Thus Come One’s final instruction.” After saying this he prostrated himself, withdrew, and held himself ready for the secret opportunity as he awaited the Buddha’s hidden transmission. 5:21

Then the World Honored One told all those in the assembly who were great Bodhisattvas and great Arhats, their outflows extinguished – “All of you Bodhisattvas and Arhats who are born from within my dharma and have attained the stage beyond learning, I now ask you: When you first brought forth your resolve and became enlightened to the eighteen realms, which one of these brought perfect penetration? Through which expedient did you enter samadhi?. 5:22

Kaundinya, with the others of the five Bhikshus, arose from his seat, bowed at the Buddha’s feet, and said to the Buddha, “When I was in the Deer Park and the Pheasant Garden, I observed the Thus Come One immediately after his accomplishment of the Way. Upon hearing the Buddha’s voice, I understood the Four Truths. 5:24

”The Buddha asks us Bhikshus to speak. I was the first to understand, and the Thus Come One certified me and named me Ajnata. His wonderful sound was both secret and all-pervasive. It was through sound that I became an Arhat. 5:26

”The Buddha asks about perfect penetration. As I have been certified to it, sound is the superior means.” 5:27

Upanishad arose from his seat, bowed at the Buddha’s feet, and said to the Buddha, “I also saw the Buddha when he first accomplished the way. I learned to contemplate the appearance of impurity until I grew to loathe it and came to understand that the nature of all form is unclean. Bare bones and subtle dust all return to emptiness, and so both emptiness and form are done away with. With this realization, I accomplished the Path Beyond Learning. 5:27

”The Thus Come One certified me and named me Upanishad. The object of form came to an end, and wonderful form was both secret and all-pervasive. Thus, it was through the

appearance of form that I became an Arhat. The Buddha asks about perfect penetration. As I have been certified to it, form is the superior means.” 5:29

The Pure Youth, Adorned with Fragrance, arose from his seat, bowed at the Buddha’s feet, and said to the Buddha, “I heard the Thus Come One teach me to contemplate attentively all conditioned appearances. 5:30

”After I heard the Buddha’s instruction, I sat in repose in the quiet of a pure dwelling. When I saw the bhikshus light sinking incense, the fragrant scent quietly entered my nostrils. I contemplated this fragrance: it did not come from the wood; it did not come from emptiness; it did not come from the smoke, and it did not come from the fire. There was no place it came from and no place it went to. Because of this, my discriminating mind was dispelled, and I attained the absence of outflows. 5:30

”The Thus Come One certified me and called me ‘Adorned with Fragrance.’ Defiling scent suddenly vanished, and wonderful fragrance was both secret and all pervasive. It was through the adornment of fragrance that I became an Arhat. 5:31

”The Buddha asks about perfect penetration. As I have been certified to it, the adornment of fragrance is the superior means.” 5:32

The two Dharma-Princes, Physician King and Superior Physician, and five hundred Brahma gods in the assembly arose from their seats, bowed at the Buddha’s feet, and said to the Buddha, “From beginningless kalpas until now, we have been good doctors for the world. In our mouths we have tasted many herbs, wood, metals, and stones of the Saha world, a hundred and eight thousand flavors. We know in detail the bitter, sour, salty, bland, sweet, and pungent flavors, and the like, in all their combinations and inherent changes. We have a thorough knowledge of whether they be cooling or warming, poisonous or non-poisonous. 5:32

”While serving the Thus Come One we came to know that the nature of flavors is not empty and is not existent, nor is it the body or mind, nor is it apart from body and mind. We became enlightened by discriminating among flavors. 5:34

””The Thus Come One sealed and certified us brothers and named us as Bodhisattvas Physician King and Superior Physician. Now in the assembly we are Dharma Princes who have ascended to the Bodhisattva level because we became enlightened by means of flavors. 5:35

”The Buddha asks about perfect penetration. As we have been certified to it, the cause of flavors is the superior means.” 5:35

Bhadrapala and sixteen awakened lords who were his companions, arose from their seats and bowed at the Buddha’s feet. He said to the Buddha: 5:36

”We first heard the dharma and left the home-life under King of Awesome Sound Buddha. Once, when it was time for the Sangha to bathe, I followed the custom and entered the bathhouse. Suddenly I awakened to the fact that water does not wash away the dust, nor does it cleanse the body. At that point, between the two, I became peaceful, and I attained the state of there being nothing at all. 5:36

”To this day, I have never forgotten that past experience. Having left home with the Buddha, I have gone beyond learning. That Buddha named me Bhadrapala. Wonderful touch was revealed, and I accomplished the position of the Buddha’s disciple. 5:37

”The Buddha asks about perfect penetration. As I have been certified to it, touch is the superior means.” 5:38

Mahakashyapa, Purple-golden Light Bhikshuni, and others arose from their seats, bowed at the Buddha’s feet, and said to the Buddha: 5:38

”In a past kalpa in this region, I drew near to the Buddha named Sun-Moon-Lamp, who was then in the world. I heard dharma from him and cultivated and studied with him. After that Buddha’s extinction, I made offerings to his sharira and lit lamps to continue his light. Purple-Golden Light gilded the Buddha’s image. From that time on, in life after life, my body has always been perfect and has shone with a purple-golden light. The Bhikshuni, Purple-Golden Light, and others make up my retinue, and we all brought forth the resolve for Bodhi at the same time. 5:40

”I contemplated that the world’s six sense-objects change and decay; they are but empty stillness. Based on this, I cultivated extinction. Now my body and mind can pass through hundreds of thousands of kalpas as though they were a finger-snap. 5:41

”Based on the emptiness of Dharmas, I accomplished Arhatship. The World Honored One says that I am foremost in Dhuta practices. Wonderful dharma brought me awakening and understanding, and I extinguished all outflows. The Buddha asks about perfect penetration. As I have been certified to it, dharmas are the superior means.” 5:42

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Chapter 5

Aniruddha arose from his seat, bowed at the Buddha’s feet, and said to the Buddha, “When I first left home, I was fond of sleeping all the time. The Thus Come One scolded me and said I was no better than an animal. When I heard the Buddha’s scolding, I wept and upbraided myself. For seven days I did not sleep, and I lost the sight in both my eyes. 5:44

”The World Honored One taught me the Vajra Samadhi of the Delightful Seeing, which illumines and is bright. Although I had no eyes, I could contemplate the ten directions with true and penetrating clarity, just as if I were looking at a piece of fruit in the palm of my hand. The Thus Come One certified me as having attained Arhatship. 5:45

”The Buddha asks about perfect penetration. As I have been certified to it, returning the seeing back to its source is the foremost method.” 5:45

Kshudrapanthaka arose from his seat, bowed at the Buddha’s feet, and said to the Buddha: 5:46

”I am deficient in the ability to memorize and do not have much innate intelligence. When I first met the Buddha, I heard the dharma and left the home-life. But, when I tried to remember one line of a verse by the Thus Come One, I went through a hundred days remembering the first part and forgetting the last, or remembering the last and forgetting the first. 5:49

”The Buddha took pity on my stupidity and taught me to relax and regulate my breath. I contemplated my breath thoroughly to the subtle point in which arising, dwelling, change, and extinction happen in every kshana. 5:51

”My mind suddenly attained vast non-obstruction, until my outflows were extinguished and I accomplished Arhatship. Beneath the Buddha’s seat I was sealed and certified as being beyond learning. 5:52

”The Buddha asks about perfect penetration. As I have been certified to it, turning the breath back to emptiness is the foremost method.” 5:54

Gavampati arose from his seat, bowed at the Buddha’s feet, and said to the Buddha, “I have mouth-karma created from a past offense. I slighted a Shramana, and in life after life I’ve had this cow-cud sickness. 5:55

”The Thus Come One taught me the mind-ground dharma-door of the purity of a single flavor. My thought was extinguished, I entered samadhi, and contemplated the awareness of flavor as not having a substance and not being a thing. As a result, my mind transcended all worldly outflows. 5:56

”Internally I was freed of body and mind, and externally I abandoned the world. I left the three existences far behind, just like a bird released from its cage. I separated from filth and wiped out defilements, and so my Dharma Eye became pure, and I accomplished Arhatship. The Thus Come One certified me in person as having ascended to the Path Beyond Learning. 5:56

”The Buddha asks about perfect penetration. As I have been certified to it, returning flavor and turning awareness around is the superior method.” 5:57

Pilindavatsa arose from his seat, bowed at the Buddha’s feet, and said to the Buddha: 5:57

”When I first left home to follow the Buddha and enter the way, I often heard the Thus Come One explain that there is nothing in this world that brings happiness. Once, when I was begging in the city, I was reflecting on this Dharma-door and did not notice a poisonous thorn on the road until it had pricked my foot. My entire body experienced physical pain, but my mind also had an awareness: though it was aware of strong pain and recognized the feeling of pain, I knew that in my pure heart, there was neither pain nor awareness of pain. 5:58

”I also thought, ‘Is it possible for one body to have two awarenesses?’ Having reflected on this for a while, my body and mind were suddenly empty. After twenty-one days, my outflows disappeared. I accomplished Arhatship and received certification in person and a confirmation that I had realized the level beyond learning. 5:59

”The Buddha asks about perfect penetration. As I have been certified to it, purifying the awareness and forgetting the body is the superior method.” 5:60

Subhuti arose from his seat, bowed at the Buddha’s feet, and said to the Buddha, “From distant kalpas until now, my mind has been unobstructed. I remember as many of my past lives as there are sands in the Ganges River. From the beginning, in my mother’s womb, I knew emptiness and tranquility, to the extent that the ten directions became empty and I caused living beings to be certified to the nature of emptiness. 5:60

”Having received the Thus Come One’s revelation that the enlightened nature is true emptiness - that the nature of emptiness is perfect and bright - I attained Arhatship and

suddenly entered into the Thus Come One’s sea of magnificent, bright emptiness. With knowledge and views identical with the Buddha, I was certified as being beyond learning. In the liberation of the nature of emptiness, I am unsurpassed. 5:61

”The Buddha asks about perfect penetration. As I have been certified to it, all appearances enter into nothingness; nothingness and what becomes nothingness both disappear. Turning dharmas back to the void is the foremost method.” 5:61

Shariputra arose from his seat, bowed at the Buddha’s feet, and said to the Buddha, “From distant kalpas until the present, my mind and views have been pure. In this way I have undergone as many births as there are grains of sand in the Ganges. As to the various transformations and changes of both the mundane and the transcendental, I am able to understand them at one glance and obtain non-obstruction. 5:63

”Once I met the Kashyapas on the road, and I walked along with the brothers. They spoke about causes and conditions, and I awakened to the boundlessness of my mind. 5:64

”I followed the Buddha and left the home life. My seeing-awareness became bright and perfect, I obtained fearlessness and became an Arhat. As one of the Buddha’s elder disciples, I am born from the Buddha’s mouth, transformationally born from the Dharma. 5:66

”The Buddha asks about perfect penetration. As I have been certified to it, for the mind and the seeing to emit light and for the light to reach throughout knowing and seeing is the foremost method.” 5:66

Universal Worthy Bodhisattva arose from his seat, bowed at the Buddha’s feet, and said to the Buddha, “I have been a Dharma Prince with as many Thus Come Ones as there are sands in the Ganges. The Thus Come Ones of the ten directions tell their disciples who have the roots of a Bodhisattva to cultivate the Universal Worthy conduct, which is named after me. 5:66

”World Honored One, I use my mind to listen and distinguish the knowledge and views of living beings. In other regions as many realms away as there are sands in the Ganges, if there is any living being who discovers the conduct of Universal Worthy, I immediately mount my six-tusked elephant and create hundreds of thousands of reduplicated bodies which go to those places. Although their obstacles may be so heavy that they do not see me, I secretly rub their crowns, protect and comfort them, and help them be successful. 5:68

”The Buddha asks about perfect penetration. The basic cause I speak of in my case is listening with the mind to discover and distinguish at ease. This is the foremost method.” 5:69

Sundarananda arose from his seat, bowed at the Buddha’s feet, and said to the Buddha, “When I first left home and followed the Buddha to enter the Way, I received the complete precepts, but my mind was always too scattered for samadhi, and I could not attain the state of having no outflows. The World Honored One taught Kaushthila and me to contemplate the white spot at the tip of our noses. 5:69

”From the first, I contemplated intently. After three weeks, I saw that the breath in my nostrils looked like smoke when I inhaled and exhaled. My body and mind became bright inside, and I perfectly understood the external world, to the point that everything became empty and pure, like crystal. The smoky appearance gradually disappeared, and the breath in my nostrils became white. 5:70

”My mind opened and my outflows were extinguished. Every inhalation and exhalation of breath was transformed into light which illumined the ten directions, and I attained Arhatship. The World Honored One predicted that in the future I would obtain Bodhi. 5:71

”The Buddha asks about perfect penetration. I did it by means of the disappearance of the breath, until eventually the breath emitted light and the light completely extinguished my outflows. This is the foremost method.” 5:71

Purnamaitreyaniputra arose from his seat, bowed at the Buddha’s feet, and said to the Buddha, “For vast kalpas I have possessed unobstructed eloquence. When I discuss suffering and emptiness I penetrate deeply into the actual appearance, and in the same way, I give subtle, wonderful instruction to the assembly concerning the secret Dharma doors of as many Thus Come Ones as there are sands in the Ganges. I have also obtained fearlessness. 5:72

”The World Honored One knew that I had great eloquence, and so he made use of my voice in turning the wheel of the Dharma. He taught me how to disseminate it. I joined the Buddha to help him turn the wheel. I accomplished Arhatship through the lion’s roar. The World Honored One certified me as being foremost in speaking Dharma. 5:73

”The Buddha asks about perfect penetration. I used the sound of Dharma to subdue demons and adversaries and melt away my outflows. This is the foremost method.” 5:74

Upali arose from his seat, bowed at the Buddha’s feet, and said to the Buddha, “I followed the Buddha in person when he fled the city and left the home-life. I observed the Thus Come One endure six years of diligent asceticism. I watched the Thus Come One subdue all the demons, control adherents of external paths and become liberated from all outflows which were based

on worldly desire and greed. 5:74

”I based myself on the Buddha’s teaching of precepts, encompassing the three thousand awesome deportments and the eighty thousand subtle aspects. Both my direct karma and my contributing karma became pure. My body and mind became tranquil, and I accomplished Arhatship. 5:81

”In the Thus Come One’s assembly, I am a governor of the law. The Buddha himself certified my mind’s upholding of the precepts and my genuine cultivation of them. I am considered a leader of the assembly. 5:87

”The Buddha asks about perfect penetration. I disciplined the body until the body attained ease and comfort. Then I disciplined the mind until the mind attained penetrating clarity. After that, the body and mind experienced keen and thorough absorption. This is the foremost method.” 5:88

Great Maudgalyayana arose from his seat, bowed at the Buddha’s feet, and said to the Buddha, “Once when I was out on the road begging for food, I met the three Kashyapa brothers - Uruvilva, Gaya, and Nadi - who proclaimed for me the Thus Come One’s profound principle of causes and conditions. I immediately brought forth resolve and obtained a great understanding. 5:89

”The Thus Come One accepted me, and the kashaya was on my body and my hair fell out by itself. I roamed in the ten directions, having no impeding obstructions. I discovered my spiritual penetrations, which are esteemed as unsurpassed, and I accomplished Arhatship. 5:90

”Not only the World Honored One, but the Thus Come Ones of the ten directions praise my spiritual powers as perfectly clear and pure, masterful, and fearless. 5:91

”The Buddha asks about perfect penetration. By means of a spiral-like attention to the profound, the light of my mind was revealed, just as muddy water clears. Eventually it became pure and dazzling. This is the foremost method.” 5:91

Ucchushma came before the Buddha, put his palms together, bowed at the Buddha’s feet, and said to the Buddha, “I can still remember how many kalpas ago I was filled with excessive greed and desire. There was a Buddha in the world named King of Emptiness. He said that people with too much desire turn into a raging mass of fire. He taught me to contemplate the

coolness and warmth throughout my entire body. 5:92

”A spiritual light coalesced inside and transformed my thoughts of excessive lust into the fire of wisdom. After that, when any of the Buddhas summoned me, they used the name ‘fire-head.’ 5:94

”From the strength of the fire-light samadhi, I accomplished Arhatship. I made a great vow that when each of the Buddhas accomplishes the way, I will be a powerful knight and in person subdue the demons’ hatred. 5:94

”The Buddha asks about perfect penetration. I used attentive contemplation of the effects of heat in my body and mind, until it became unobstructed and penetrating and all my outflows were consumed. I produced a blazing brilliance and ascended to enlightenment. This is the foremost method.” 5:94

The Bodhisattva, “Maintaining the Ground,” arose from his seat, bowed at the Buddha’s feet, and said to the Buddha, “I remember when Universal Light Thus Come One appeared in the world in the past. I was a Bhikshu who continually worked on making level the major roads, ferry-landings, and the dangerous spots in the ground, where the disrepair might hinder or harm carriages or horses. I did everything from building bridges to hauling sand. 5:95

”I was diligent in this hard labor throughout the appearance of limitless Buddhas in the world. If there were beings at the walls and gates of the cities who needed someone to carry their goods, I would carry them all the way to their destination, set the things down, and leave without taking any recompense. 5:96

”When the Buddha Vipashyin appeared in the world, there was a world-wide famine. I would carry people on my back, and no matter how far the distance, I would only accept one small coin. If there was an ox-cart stuck in the mud, I would use my spiritual strength to push the wheels and get it out of difficulty. 5:96

”Once a king asked the Buddha to accept a vegetarian feast. At that time, I served the Buddha by leveling the road as he went. Vipashyin Thus Come One rubbed my crown and said, .You should level your mind-ground, then everything else in the world would be level.” 5:97

”Immediately my mind opened up and I saw that the particles of earth composing my own body were no different from all the particles of earth that made up the world. The nature of those particles of dust was such that they did not connect with one another nor could they be

touched by the blade of a sword. 5:98

”Within the dharma-nature I awakened to the patience with the non-production of dharmas and accomplished Arhatship. I brought my mind back, to the extent that I have now entered the ranks of the Bodhisattvas. Hearing the Thus Come One proclaim the Wonderful Lotus Flower, the level of the Buddha’s knowledge and vision, I have already been certified as having understood and am a leader in the assembly. 5:98

”The Buddha asks about perfect penetration. Upon attentive contemplation of the body and the environment, I saw that these two dusts are exactly the same - that, fundamentally, everything is the Treasury of the Thus Come One, but that an empty falseness arises and creates the dust. When the dust is eliminated, wisdom is perfected, and one accomplishes the unsurpassed Way. This is the foremost method.” 5:99

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Chapter 5

The Pure Youth Moonlight arose from his seat, bowed at the Buddha’s feet, and said to the Buddha, “I remember that long ago, beyond kalpas as many as there are sands in the Ganges, there was a Buddha in the world named Water-God, who taught all the Bodhisattvas to cultivate the contemplation of water and enter samadhi. 5:100

”I reflected upon how throughout the body the essence of water is not in discord. I started with mucus and saliva and went on through digestive juices, phlegm, semen, blood, to urine and excrement. As it revolved through my body, the nature of water was identical. I saw that the water in my body was not at all different from that in the world outside - even that in royal lands of floating banners with all their seas of fragrant waters. 5:100

”At that time, when I first succeeded in the contemplation of water, I could see only water. I still had not gotten beyond my physical body. 5:101

”I was a Bhikshu then, and once when I was in dhyana repose in my room, a disciple of mine peeked in the window and saw only pure water there, which filled the entire room. He saw nothing else. 5:101

”The lad was young, and not knowing any better, he picked up a tile and tossed it into the water. It hit the water with a ‘plunk.’ He gazed around and then left. When I came out of concentration, I was suddenly aware of a pain in my heart, and I felt like Shariputra must have felt when he met that cruel ghost. 5:102

”I thought to myself, ‘I am already an Arhat and have long since abandoned conditions that bring on illness. Why is it that today I suddenly have a pain in my heart? Am I about to lose the position of non-retreat?’ 5:103

”Just then, the young lad came promptly to me and related what had happened. I quickly said to him, ‘When you see the water again, you may open the door, wade into the water, and remove the tile.’ The child was obedient, so that when I re-entered samadhi, he again saw the water and the tile as well. He opened the door and took it out. When I came out of concentration, my body was as it had been before. 5:103

”I encountered limitless Buddhas and cultivated in this way until the coming of the Thus Come One, King of Masterful Penetrations of Mountains and Seas. Then I finally had no body. My nature and the seas of fragrant waters throughout the ten directions were identical with True Emptiness, without any duality or difference. Now I am with the Thus Come One and am known as a Pure Youth, and I have joined the assembly of Bodhisattvas. 5:104

”The Buddha asks about perfect penetration. By means of the nature of water, I penetrated through to the flow of a single flavor, and I obtained patience with the non-production of dharmas and the perfection of Bodhi. This is the foremost method.” 5:105

The Dharma Prince Vaidurya Light arose from his seat, bowed at the Buddha’s feet, and said to the Buddha, “I can still remember back through aeons as many as the sands in the Ganges to the time of a Buddha named .Limitless Sound,. who instructed the Bodhisattvas that fundamental enlightenment is wonderful and bright. He taught them to contemplate this world and all the beings in it as false conditions propelled by the power of wind. 5:105

”At that time, I contemplated the position of the world, and I regarded the passage of time in the world. I reflected on the movement and stillness in my body. I considered the arising of thoughts in the mind. All these kinds of movement were non-dual; they were equal and the same. 5:106

”I then understood that the nature of movement does not come from anywhere and does not go anywhere. Every single material particle throughout the ten directions and every upside-down living being in it is of the same empty falseness. 5:106

”And so, throughout the three-thousand-great-thousand worlds, the living beings in each of the worlds were like so many mosquitoes confined in a trap and droning monotonously. Caught in those few square inches, their hum built to a maddening crescendo. Not long after I

encountered the Buddha, I attained patience with the non-production of dharmas. 5:107

”My mind then opened, and I could see the country of the Buddha, Unmoving, in the east. I became a Dharma Prince and served the Buddhas of the ten directions. My body and mind emit a light that make them completely clear and translucent. 5:108

”The Buddha asks about perfect penetration. I contemplated the power of wind as lacking anything to rely on, and I awakened to the Bodhi-mind. I entered samadhi and meshed with the single, wonderful mind transmitted by all the Buddhas of the ten directions. This is the foremost method.” 5:108

Treasury of Emptiness Bodhisattva arose from his seat, bowed to the Buddha’s feet, and said to the Buddha, “The Thus Come One and I attained boundless bodies at the place of the Buddha, .Samadhi-Light.” 5:109

”At that time, I held in my hands four huge precious pearls, which shone on Buddhalands as many as the motes of dust in the ten directions and transformed them into emptiness. 5:109

”In my mind there appeared a great, perfect mirror, which emitted from within ten kinds of subtle, wonderful precious light that poured out into the ten directions to the farthest bounds of emptiness. 5:110

”All the royal lands of banners came into the mirror and passed into my body. There was no hindrance to this interaction, because my body was like emptiness. 5:110

”My body could enter with ease as many countries as there are fine motes of dust and could do the Buddha’s work on a wide scale, because it had become completely compliant. 5:110

”I achieved this great spiritual power from contemplating in detail how the four elements lack anything to return to; how the production and extinction of false thoughts is no different from emptiness; how all the Buddhalands are basically the same. Once I realized this identity, I obtained patience with the non-production of Dharmas. 5:111

”The Buddha asks about perfect penetration. I used the contemplation of the boundlessness of emptiness to enter samadhi and attain wonderful power and perfect clarity. This is the foremost method.” 5:112

Maitreya Bodhisattva arose from his seat, bowed at the Buddha’s feet, and said to the Buddha, “I remember when, as many kalpas ago as there are fine motes of dust, a Buddha named Light of Sun, Moon, and Lamp appeared in the world. Under that Buddha I left the home life; yet I was deeply committed to worldly fame and liked to fraternize with people of good family. 5:112

”Then the World Honored One taught me to cultivate consciousness-only concentration, and I entered that samadhi. For many aeons I have made use of that samadhi as I performed deeds for as many Buddhas as there are sands in the Ganges. My seeking for worldly name and fame ceased completely and never recurred. 5:117

”When Burning Lamp Buddha appeared in the world, I finally accomplished the unsurpassed, wonderfully perfect Samadhi of Consciousness. 5:118

”I went on until, to the ends of emptiness, all the lands of the Thus Come One, whether pure or defiled, existent or non-existent, were transformations appearing from within my own mind. 5:118

”World Honored One, because I understand consciousness only thus, the nature of consciousness reveals limitless Thus Come Ones. Now I have received the prediction that I will be the next to take the Buddha’s place. 5:118

”The Buddha asks about perfect penetration. I was intent upon the contemplation that the ten directions come only from consciousness. When the conscious mind is perfect and bright, one enters the perfection of the real. One leaves behind reliance on others and attachment to incessant calculating and attains the patience with the non-production of dharmas. This is the foremost method.” 5:119

Dharma Prince, Great Strength, together with fifty-two Bodhisattvas of similar rank, arose from his seat, bowed at the Buddha’s feet, and said to the Buddha: 5:120

”I remember when, as many aeons ago as there are sands in the Ganges, a Buddha called Limitless Light appeared in the world. In that same aeon there were twelve successive Thus Come Ones; the last was called Light Surpassing the Sun and Moon. That Buddha taught me the Buddha-recitation Samadhi. 5:121

”Suppose there were a person who always remembers someone else, but the someone else he remembers has entirely forgotten about him. If two such people were to meet, even if they

were to see each other, they would not take notice. They would not recognize each other. 5:122

”If two people remember each other until the memory of each is deep, then in life after life they will be together like a form and its shadow, and they will never be at odds. 5:125

”Out of pity for living beings, the Thus Come Ones of the ten directions are mindful of them as a mother remembers her child. If the child runs away, of what use is the mother’s regard? But if the child remembers his mother in the same way that the mother remembers the child, then in life after life the mother and child will not be far apart. 5:125

”If living beings remember the Buddha and are mindful of the Buddha, certainly they will see the Buddha now or in the future. 5:126

”They will never be far from the Buddha, and their minds will awaken by themselves, without the aid of expedients. 5:126

”A person who has been near incense will carry a fragrance on his person; it is the same in this case. It is called an adornment of fragrant light. 5:126

”On the causal ground I used mindfulness of the Buddha to enter into patience with the non-production of dharmas. Now in this world I gather in all those who are mindful of the Buddha and bring them back to the Pure Land. 5:127

”The Buddha asks about perfect penetration. I would select none other than gathering in the six organs through continuous pure mindfulness to obtain samadhi. This is the foremost method.” 5:127

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Chapter 5

Then Guan Shi Yin Bodhisattva arose from his seat, bowed at the Buddha’s feet and said to the Buddha: 5:129

”World Honored One, I remember when, as many kalpas ago as there are sands in the Ganges, there was a Buddha in the world named Contemplating the World’s Sounds. It was under that Buddha that I brought forth the Bodhi-resolve. That Buddha taught me to enter samadhi through a process of hearing and reflecting. 5:134

”Initially, I entered the flow through hearing and forgot objective states. Since the sense-objects and sense-organs were quiet, the two characteristics of movement and stillness crystallized and did not arise. After that, gradually advancing, the hearing and what was heard both disappeared. Once the hearing was ended, there was nothing to rely on, and awareness and the objects of awareness became empty. When the emptiness of awareness reached an ultimate perfection, emptiness and what was being emptied then also ceased to be. Since production and extinction were gone, still extinction was revealed. 5:134

”Suddenly I transcended the mundane and transcendental worlds, and throughout the ten directions a perfect brightness prevailed. I obtained two supreme states. 5:137

”First, I was united above with the fundamental, wonderfully enlightened mind of all the Buddhas of the ten directions, and I gained a strength of compassion equal to that of all the Buddhas, the Thus Come Ones. 5:137

”Second, I was united below with all living beings in the six paths, and I gained a kind regard for all living beings equally. 5:137

”World Honored One, because I served and made offerings to the Thus Come One, Guan Yin, I received from that Thus Come One a transmission of the Vajra Samadhi of all being like an illusion, as one becomes permeated with hearing and cultivates hearing. Because I gained a power of compassion identical with that of all Buddhas, the Thus Come Ones, I became accomplished in thirty-two response-bodies and entered all lands. 5:138

”World Honored One, if there are Bodhisattvas who enter samadhi and vigorously cultivate the extinction of outflows, who have superior understanding and manifest perfected penetration, I will appear in the body of a Buddha and speak dharma for them, causing them to attain liberation. 5:139

”If there are those who are studying, who are tranquil and have wonderful clarity, who are superior and miraculous and manifest perfection, I will appear before them in the body of a Solitarily Enlightened One and speak Dharma for them, causing them to attain liberation. 5:140

”If there are those who are studying, who have severed the twelve links of conditioned causation, and, having severed the conditions, reveal a supreme nature, and who are superior and wonderful and manifest perfection, I will appear before them in the body of one enlightened to conditions and speak dharma for them, causing them to attain liberation. 5:141

”If there are those who are studying, who have attained the emptiness of the Four Truths, and cultivating the Way, have entered extinction, and have a superior nature and manifest perfection, I will appear before them in the body of a Sound-Hearer and speak Dharma for them, causing them to attain liberation. 5:143

”If there are living beings who wish to have their minds be clear and awakened, who do not engage in mundane desires and wish to purify their bodies, I will appear before them in the body of a Brahma King and speak Dharma for them, causing them to attain liberation. 5:144

”If there are living beings who wish to be the Heavenly Lord, leader of heavenly beings, I will appear before them in the body of Shakra and speak Dharma for them, enabling them to accomplish their wish. 5:144

”If living beings wish to attain physical self-mastery and to roam throughout the ten directions, I will appear before them in the body of a god from the heaven of self-mastery and speak dharma for them, enabling them to accomplish their wish. 5:145

”If there are living beings who wish to attain physical self-mastery and fly through space, I will appear before them in the body of a god from the heaven of great self-mastery and speak dharma for them, enabling them to accomplish their wish. 5:146

”If there are living beings who are fond of ruling over ghosts and spirits in order to rescue and protect their country, I will appear before them in the body of a great heavenly general and speak Dharma for them, enabling them to accomplish their wish. 5:146

”If there are living beings who like to govern the world in order to protect living beings, I will appear before them in the body of one of the Four Heavenly Kings and speak Dharma for them, enabling them to accomplish their wish. 5:147

”If there are living beings who enjoy being born in the heavenly palaces and to command ghosts and spirits, I will appear before them in the body of a prince from the kingdoms of the Four Heavenly Kings and speak Dharma for them, enabling them to accomplish their wish. 5:147

”If there are living beings who would like to be kings of people, I will appear before them in the body of a human king and speak Dharma for them, enabling them to accomplish their wish. 5:148

”If there are living beings who enjoy being heads of households, whom those of the world venerate and yield to, I will appear before them in the body of an elder and speak Dharma for them, enabling them to accomplish their wish. 5:148

”If there are living beings who delight in discussing the classics and who keep themselves lofty and pure, I will appear before them in the body of an upasaka and speak Dharma for them, enabling them to accomplish their wish. 5:149

”If there are living beings who enjoy governing the country and who can handle matters of state decisively, I will appear before them in the body of an official and speak Dharma for them, enabling them to accomplish their wish. 5:150

”If there are living beings who like reckoning and incantation and who wish to guard and protect themselves, I will appear before them in the body of a Brahman and speak Dharma for them, enabling them to accomplish their wish. 5:150

”If there are men who want to leave the home-life and uphold the precepts and rules, I will appear before them in the body of a Bhikshu and speak Dharma for them, enabling them to accomplish their wish. 5:151

”If there are women who would like to leave the home-life and hold the pure precepts, I will appear before them in the body of a Bhikshuni and speak Dharma for them, enabling them to accomplish their wish. 5:153

”If there are men who want to uphold the five precepts, I will appear before them in the body of an upasaka and speak dharma for them, enabling them to accomplish their wish. If there are women who wish to base themselves in the five precepts, I will appear before them in the body of an upasika and speak Dharma for them, enabling them to accomplish their wish. 5:154

”If there are women who govern internal affairs of household or country, I will appear before them in the body of a queen, first lady, or noblewoman and speak Dharma for them, enabling them to accomplish their wish. 5:154

”If there are virgin lads I will appear before them in the body of a pure youth and speak Dharma for them, enabling them to accomplish their wish. 5:155

”If there are maidens who want to remain virgins and do not wish to marry, I will appear before them in the body of a gracious lady and speak Dharma for them, enabling them to accomplish their wish. 5:155

”If there are heavenly beings who wish to escape their heavenly destiny, I will appear in the body of a god and speak Dharma for them, enabling them to accomplish their wish. 5:156

”If there are dragons who want to quit their lot of being dragons, I will appear before them in the body of a dragon and speak Dharma for them, enabling them to accomplish their wish. 5:156

”If there are yakshas who want to get out of their present fate, I will appear before them in the body of a yaksha and speak Dharma for them, enabling them to accomplish their wish. 5:157

”If there are gandharvas who wish to be freed from their destiny, I will appear before them in the body of a gandharva and speak Dharma for them, enabling them to accomplish their wish. 5:158

”If there are asuras who wish to be liberated from their destiny, I will appear before them in the body of an asura and speak Dharma for them, enabling them to accomplish their wish. 5:158

”If there are kinnaras who wish to transcend their fate, I will appear before them in the body of a kinnara and speak Dharma for them, enabling them to accomplish their wish. 5:160

”If there are mahoragas who wish to be freed from their destiny, I will appear before them in the body of a mahoraga and speak Dharma for them, enabling them to accomplish their wish. 5:160

”If there are living beings who like being people and want to continue to be people, I will appear in the body of a person and speak Dharma for them, enabling them to accomplish their wish. 5:160

”If there are non-humans, whether with form or without form, whether with thought or without thought, who long to be freed from their destiny, I will appear before them in a body like theirs and speak Dharma for them, enabling them to accomplish their wish. 5:161

”This is called the wonderful purity of the thirty-two response-bodies, by which one enters into all lands and accomplishes self-mastery by means of the Samadhi of Becoming Permeated with Hearing and Cultivating Hearing and by means of the miraculous strength of effortlessness. 5:162

”Also, World Honored One, using this Vajra Samadhi of Becoming Permeated with Hearing and Cultivating Hearing, and using the miraculous strength of effortlessness, because I have a kind regard equally for all living beings in the six paths, I go throughout the ten directions and the three periods of time and cause all living beings who encounter bodies of mine to receive the meritorious virtue of fourteen kinds of fearlessness. 5:162

”First: because I do not contemplate sounds for my own sake, but rather listen to the sounds of those whom I contemplate, I can enable living beings throughout the ten directions who are suffering and in distress to attain liberation by contemplating their sounds. 5:163

”Second: since my knowledge and views have turned around and come back, I can make it so that if living beings are caught in a raging fire, the fire will not burn them. 5:164

”Third: since contemplation and listening have turned around and come back, I can make it so that if living beings are floundering in deep water, the water cannot drown them. 5:164

”Fourth: since false thinking is cut off, and my mind is without thoughts of killing or harming, I can make it so that if living beings enter the territory of ghosts, the ghosts cannot harm them. 5:165

”Fifth: since I am permeated with hearing and have brought hearing to accomplishment, so that the six sense-organs have dissolved and returned to become identical with hearing, I can make it so that if living beings are about to be wounded, the knives will break into pieces. I can cause swords of war to have no more effect than if they were to slice into water, or if one were to blow upon light. 5:165

”Sixth: when the hearing permeates and the essence is bright, light pervades the Dharma-realm, so that absolutely no darkness remains. I am then able to make it so that, though yakshas, rakshasas, kumbhandas, pishachas, and putanas may draw near to living beings, the ghosts will not be able to see them. 5:166

”Seventh: when the nature of sound completely melts away and contemplation and hearing return and enter, so that I am separate from false and defiling sense-objects, I am able to

make it so that if living beings are confined by cangues and fetters, the locks will not hold them. 5:167

”Eighth: when sound is gone and the hearing is perfected, an all-pervasive power of compassion arises, and I can make it so that if living beings are travelling a dangerous road, thieves will not rob them. 5:168

”Ninth: when one is permeated with hearing, one separates from worldly objects, and forms cannot rob one. Then I can make it so that living beings with a great deal of desire can leave greed and desire far behind. 5:168

”Tenth: when sound is so pure that there is no defiling object, the sense-organ and the external state are perfectly fused, without any complement and without anything complemented. Then I can make it so that living beings who are full of rage and hate will leave all hatred. 5:171

”Eleventh: when the dust has gone and has turned to light, the Dharma realm and the body and mind are like crystal, transparent and unobstructed. Then I can make it so that all dark and dullwitted beings whose natures are obstructed - all atyantikas - are forever free from stupidity and darkness. 5:172

”Twelfth: when matter dissipates and returns to the hearing, then unmoving in the Bodhimanda I can travel through worlds without destroying the appearance of those worlds. I can make offerings to as many Buddhas, Thus Come Ones, as there are fine motes of dust throughout the ten directions. At the side of each Buddha I become a Dharma Prince, and I can make it so that childless living beings throughout the Dharma Realm who wish to have sons, are blessed with meritorious, virtuous, and wise sons. 5:175

”Thirteenth: with perfect penetration of the six sense-organs, the light and what is illumined are not two. Encompassing the ten directions, a great perfect mirror stands in the Empty Treasury of the Thus Come One. I inherit the secret dharma-doors of as many Thus Come Ones as there are fine motes of dust throughout the ten directions. Receiving them without loss, I am able to make it so that childless living beings throughout the Dharma Realm who seek daughters are blessed with lovely daughters who are upright, virtuous, and compliant and whom everyone cherishes and respects. 5:176

”Fourteenth: in this three-thousand-great-thousand world system with its billions of suns and moons, as many Dharma Princes as there are grains of sand in sixty-two Ganges Rivers appear in the world and cultivate the dharma. They act as models in order to teach and

transform living beings. They comply with living beings by means of expedients and wisdom, in different ways for each. 5:177

”However, because I have obtained the perfect penetration of the sense-organ and have discovered the wonder of the ear-entrance, after which my body and mind subtly and miraculously included all of the Dharma Realm, I am able to make it so that living beings who uphold my name obtain as much merit and virtue as would be obtained by a person who upheld the names of all those Dharma Princes who are as many as the grains of sand in sixty-two Ganges Rivers. 5:177

”World Honored One, there is no difference between the merit of my one name and the merit of those many other names, because from my cultivation I obtained true and perfect penetration. 5:178

”These are called the fourteen powers of bestowing fearlessness; with them I bless living beings. 5:178

”Moreover, World Honored One, because I obtained perfect penetration and cultivated to certification of the unsurpassed path, I also became endowed with four inconceivable and effortless wonderful virtues. 5:179

”First: as soon as I obtained the miraculous wonder of hearing the mind, the mind became essential and the hearing was forgotten, therefore, there was no distinction between seeing, hearing, sensation, and knowing. I achieved a single, perfect fusion - pure and precious enlightenment. For this reason, I am able to manifest many wonderful appearances and can proclaim boundless secret spiritual mantras. 5:179

”For example, I may make appear one head, three heads, five heads, seven heads, nine heads, eleven heads, and so forth, until there may be a hundred and eight heads, a thousand heads, ten thousand heads, or eighty-four thousand vajra heads; 5:180

”Two arms, four arms, six arms, eight arms, ten arms, twelve arms, fourteen, sixteen, eighteen arms, or twenty arms, twenty-four arms, and so forth until there may be a hundred and eight arms, a thousand arms, ten thousand arms, or eighty-four thousand mudra arms; 5:180

”Two eyes, three eyes, four eyes, nine eyes, and so forth until there may be a hundred and eight eyes, a thousand eyes, ten thousand eyes, or eighty-four thousand pure and precious

eyes, sometimes compassionate, sometimes awesome, sometimes in samadhi, sometimes displaying wisdom to rescue and protect living beings so that they may attain great self-mastery. 5:181

”Second: because of hearing and consideration, I escaped the six defiling objects, just as a sound leaps over a wall without hindrance. And so I have the wonderful ability to manifest shape after shape and to recite mantra upon mantra. These shapes and these mantras dispel the fears of living beings. Therefore, throughout the ten directions, in as many lands as there are fine motes of dust, I am known as one who bestows fearlessness. 5:181

”Third: because I cultivated fundamental, wonderful, perfect penetration and purified the sense-organ, everywhere I go in any world I can make it so that living beings renounce their physical and material valuables to seek my sympathy. 5:182

”Fourth: I obtained the Buddhas’ mind and was certified as having attained the ultimate end, and so I can make offerings of rare treasures to the Thus Come Ones of the ten directions and to living beings in the six paths throughout the Dharma Realm. 5:183

”If they seek a spouse, they obtain a spouse. If they seek children, they can have children. Seeking samadhi, they obtain samadhi; seeking long life, they obtain long life, and so forth to the extent that if they seek the great Nirvana, they obtain great Nirvana. 5:183

”The Buddha asks about perfect penetration. From the gateway of the ear, I obtained a perfect and illumining samadhi. The conditioned mind was at ease, and therefore I entered the appearance of the flow, and obtaining samadhi, I accomplished Bodhi. This is the foremost method. 5:184

”World Honored One, that Buddha, the Thus Come One, praised me as having obtained well the dharma-door of perfect penetration. In the great assembly he bestowed a prediction upon me and the name, Guan Shi Yin. 5:184

”Because my contemplation and listening is perfectly clear throughout the ten directions, the name Guan Shi Yin pervades all the realms of the ten directions.” 5:185

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Chapter 5

Then the World Honored One upon the Lion’s Throne emitted simultaneously from his five extremities a precious light which shone far throughout the ten directions to anoint the crowns

of as many Thus Come Ones and Dharma-Prince Bodhisattvas as there are motes of dust. 5:185

All those Thus Come Ones also emitted from their five extremities precious lights which were as numerous as motes of dust and which came from the various directions to anoint the crown of the Buddha as well as the crowns of all the great Bodhisattvas and Arhats in the assembly. 5:186

Groves, trees, pools, and ponds all proclaimed the sound of Dharma. The lights blended and criss-crossed like a jeweled silken net. It was an unprecedented event for everyone in the great assembly, and they all attained the Vajra Samadhi. 5:186

Then the heavens rained down hundreds of precious lotus flowers of variegated combinations of green, yellow, red, and white. All the space in the ten directions turned the colors of the seven gems. 5:187

This Saha world with its mountains, rivers, and great earth disappeared totally, and all that could be seen were lands as numerous as motes of dust coming together as one realm. Pure praises in songs and chants spontaneously pervaded in celebration. 5:187

Then the Thus Come One said to Dharma-Prince Manjushri, “You should now contemplate these twenty-five great Bodhisattvas and Arhats who are beyond learning. 5:189 .

”Each has explained the initial expedient in his accomplishment of the Way. All say they have cultivated to true and actual perfect penetration. Their cultivation is equal without distinctions of superior and inferior or earlier and later. 5:189

”I now wish to cause Ananda to become enlightened, and so I ask which of these twenty-five practices is appropriate to his faculties, and which will be, after my extinction, the easiest expedient door for living beings of this realm to enter in order to accomplish the Bodhisattva vehicle and seek the unsurpassed Way.” 5:190

Dharma Prince, Manjushri, receiving the Buddha’s compassionate instruction, arose from his seat, bowed at the Buddha’s feet, and, basing himself on the Buddha’s awesome spirit, spoke verses to the Buddha. 5:191

“The sea of enlightenment in nature is perfect and clear.

Complete, distinct Bodhi is a miraculous source.

But when basic brightness shone so that objects appeared,

With objects’ existence, the nature’s brilliance ceased. 5:192

”Confusion and falseness bring about emptiness.

Relying on emptiness, time and space take form.

Thoughts settle, making countries and lands.

What knows and feels becomes living beings. 5:192

”The emptiness created within Great Enlightenment,

Is like a single bubble in all the sea.

Lands like fine dust motes, subject to outflows,

All come forth out of empty space.

Just as the bubble bursts, space is no longer there.

How much the less the three states of being! 5:193

“Returning to the source, the nature is not two.

Many are the entrances through expedients;

None of them does the sagely nature fail to go through.

Compliant or adverse, all is expedient.

First resolve and entering samadhi,

Come slow or fast as there are different norms. 5:194

”Form and thought combined become the ‘dust.’

Their essence is not discernible.

How can one use what lacks clarity,

And expect to gain perfect penetration? 5:196

”In sounds, language is intermingled.

But the meaning in a word, a name, a phrase,

Is such that no single one can include them all.

How can this bring perfect penetration? 5:196

”Awareness of smells comes through contact with them.

Apart from them, one does not know that they exist.

Since sensation of them is not constant,

How can one reach perfect penetration? 5:197

”Flavors are not to us fundamental.

They only exist when there is something to taste.

Since this sensation is not perpetual,

How can one derive perfect penetration? 5:197

”Touch becomes clear only when something is touched.

Without an object there can be no contact.

With fluctuation between contact and separation,

How can one gain perfect penetration? 5:198

”Dharmas are known as ‘internal dust.’

Reckoned as ‘dust,’ they are certainly sense objects.

Involvement of subject and object cannot be pervasive;

How then can they lead to perfect penetration? 5:198

“Although seeing itself is clear and penetrating,

Making bright what is before one, it cannot shine behind.

Ever reaching only half the four directions,

How can it manifest perfect penetration? 5:199

“The nose’s breath penetrates in and out.

But in the rests between there is no air.

These interruptions render it inconsistent.

How can one use it for perfect penetration? 5:199

”The tongue is not an organ apart from cause;

Flavors form the source of its sensation.

When flavors cease, it knows nothing at all.

How can it attain perfect penetration? 5:200

”It is the same for the body as for objects of touch.

Neither can be regarded as a perfect awareness.

With defined and limited invisible divisions,

How can it be used for perfect penetration? 5:200

”The mind’s knowledge is a mass of deliberations.

What it perceives is never profound insight.

Unable to get beyond reflection and thought,

How can it reveal perfect penetration? 5:200

”The seeing-consciousness combines three aspects.

Probe its origin: it has no appearance.

Since its very substance is variable,

How can it bring perfect penetration? 5:201

”The heart of hearing penetrates the ten directions.

When borne on the strength of great causes,

Those of initial resolve cannot enter this way.

How can one expect to gain perfect penetration? 5:201

”Reflecting on the nose is a provisional method.

It only serves to gather in and settle the mind.

Once settled, the mind is simply still.

How can that be perfect penetration? 5:202

”Speaking Dharma through the medium of language,

Is enlightened to by those of former accomplishment.

But words and phrases are not free of outflows.

How can this make perfect penetration? 5:202

”Refraining from transgressions only controls the body.

Lacking a body, there is nothing to restrain.

Since its source is not all-pervasive,

How can it bring perfect penetration? 5:203

”Spiritual penetrations are based on past causes.

What connection have they with distinguishing dharmas?

Conditioned thought is not apart from things.

How can one attain perfect penetration? 5:203

”One may contemplate the nature of earth,

But it is firm and solid, not penetrable.

What is conditioned is not the sagely nature.

How can one use it for perfect penetration? 5:204

”One may contemplate the nature of water,

But such mental reflection is not the true and real.

This state of suchness is not an enlightened view.

How can it give perfect penetration? 5:204

”One may contemplate the nature of fire,

But admitting dislike is not true renunciation.

This expedient cannot be one for beginners.

How can one use it for perfect penetration? 5:205

”One may contemplate the nature of wind,

But movement and stillness are not non-dual.

Duality cannot bring highest enlightenment.

How can one expect perfect penetration? 5:205

”One may contemplate the nature of emptiness.

But, its aspect is murky and dull; it lacks awareness.

What is unaware is different from Bodhi.

How can it bring perfect penetration? 5:206

”One may contemplate the nature of consciousness;

But one is regarding a consciousness that is not eternal.

Even the thought of it is empty and false.

How can one get perfect penetration? 5:206

”All activities are impermanent.

So, too, mindfulness has its origin in rising and ceasing.

Since cause and effect go beyond cause and effect,

How can we use it for perfect penetration? 5:207

“I now say this, World Honored One,

Buddha, who has revealed the Saha world:

In this land the true substance of teaching

Resides in hearing the sounds purely.

If one wants to attain samadhi,

hearing is the best way to enter. 5:207

”Apart from suffering, liberation is found.

How excellent is he who contemplates

the world’s sounds! 5:208

”Throughout kalpas as numerous as Ganges’ sands,

He enters Buddhalands as many as fine dust motes.

Obtaining great power of self-mastery,

He bestows fearlessness on living beings. 5:209

”Wonderful is the sound of Guan Shi Yin,

A pure sound, like the ocean’s roar.

He saves the world and brings peace to all within it.

He has transcended the world,

and his attainment is eternal. 5:209

”I now make this report, 0 Thus Come One,

Regarding what Guan Yin has just explained:

It is like someone in a quiet place

When drums are rolled throughout the ten directions,

Hearing at once the sounds from all ten places.

This, then, is the actual true perfection. 5:210

”The eyes cannot see through solid forms.

Mouth and nose are much the same.

The body registers awareness only through contact.

Tangled in thoughts, the mind lacks clear connections. 5:210

”Sounds can be heard even through solid walls.

One can listen to things both near and far.

None of the other five organs can match this.

It, then, is penetration true and real. 5:211

”The nature of sounds is based in movement and stillness.

One hears according to whether there is sound.

With no sound, there is said to be no hearing.

But this does not mean that the hearing has no nature. 5:212

”In the absence of sound, the nature is not gone.

Nor does it arise in the presence of sound.

Entirely beyond production and extinction.

It is, then, truly everlasting. 5:212

”Ever-present, even in dream-thinking,

It does not disappear when conditions and thought are gone.

Enlightened, this contemplation transcends cognition,

Reaching beyond both the body and the mind. 5:213

”Now, in the Saha world, the theory of sounds

Has been proclaimed and understood. 5:213

”Living beings are confused about the source of hearing.

They follow sounds and so they turn and flow.

Ananda’s power to remember was exceptional;

Nonetheless, he fell prey to a deviant plot.

Was it not from heeding sounds that he was nearly lost?

By turning back the flow, one will make no such mistake. 5:213

”Ananda, you should listen attentively:

I rely upon the Buddha’s awesome power,

In describing to you the Vajra King,

A samadhi inconceivable of likeness to illusions.

It is the true mother of all Buddhas. 5:215

”You may hear the secret Dharma-doors

Of Buddhas as numerous as motes of dust,

But without first renouncing desire and outflows,

You may amass learning, but you will still make mistakes. 5:216

”You concentrate on learning to uphold the Buddha’s Dharma.

Why don’t you listen to your own hearing? 5:218

“Hearing does not spontaneously arise;

Because of sound it gets its name.

But when hearing returns and is free of sound,

What does one call that which is set free? 5:218

”As soon as one sense-organ returns to the source,

The entire six are liberated. 5:220

”Sight and hearing are like an illusory covering.

The Triple Realm, a vision of flowers in space.

When hearing reverts, the cataract is gone.

The ‘dust’ gives way to pure and perfect insight. 5:220

”When purity is ultimate, the light is penetrating.

A stillness shines and includes within it all of emptiness.

Looking at the world from this point of view,

Everything that happens is just like a dream.

Matangi’s daughter, too, is part of the dream.

Who was able, then, to physically detain you? 5:221

”It is like a puppeteer who plays with shadows

And works the dolls to seem as real as people.

Although one sees them move about freely,

They are really governed by a set of strings.

Cease operating the controls and they return to stillness.

The entire illusion is without a nature. 5:222

”The six sense-organs are also thus.

At first there was one essential brightness.

Which split into a six-fold combination.

If but one part ceases and returns,

All six functions will stop as well.

In response to a thought, defiling objects vanish,

Becoming pure and wonderful perfect brightness. 5:223

”If there is residual defilement, one must still study.

When the brightness is ultimate, that is the Tathagata. 5:224

”Ananda, and everyone in the great assembly,

Turn yourselves around and revert the hearing.

Return the hearing and listen to the self nature

Till the nature reaches the supreme way.

That is what perfect penetration really means. 5:224

”It is the gateway entered by Buddhas as many as dust motes.

It is the one path to Nirvana.

Thus Come Ones of the past perfected this method.

Bodhisattvas now merge with this total brightness.

People of the future who study and practice

Will also rely on this Dharma.

Through this method I, too, have been certified.

Guan Shi Yin Bodhisattva was not alone in using it. 5:225

”As the Buddha, the World Honored One, requested,

I choose sincerely a skill-in-means,

One to save those in the final aeon

Who seek to escape the mundane world,

And perfect the heart of Nirvana:

The best way is to contemplate the sounds of the world. 5:226

”All the other kinds of expedients

Require the awesome spirit of the Buddha.

In some cases they bring immediate transcendence,

But they are not the customary means of practice,

Spoken for those of shallow and deep roots alike. 5:227

”I bow to the Ones Come Thus and the Tripitaka,

And to those inconceivable ones with no outflows,

Trusting they will aid those in the future,

So that no one will doubt this dharma-door.

It is an expedient easy to master;

An appropriate teaching for Ananda

And for those immersed in the final age.

They should cultivate this organ of hearing,

A perfect penetration that surpasses all others.

It is the way to the true mind.” 5:228

Thereupon, Ananda and all in the great assembly experienced a clarity of body and mind. Having attained such profound instruction, they contemplated the Buddha’s Bodhi and Parinirvana like someone who, having traveled far on business, knows that he is on the road home, though he has not returned completely. 5:229

Throughout the entire assembly, the gods, dragons, and all the eightfold division, those of the two vehicles who were not yet beyond learning, as well as all the Bodhisattvas of initial resolve, as numerous as the sands in ten Ganges Rivers, found their fundamental mind and, far removed from dust and defilement, attained the purity of the Dharma Eye. 5:230

The Bhikshuni named “Nature” attained Arhatship after hearing this verse. 5:230

And limitless beings brought forth a matchless, unequalled resolve for Annuttarasamyaksambodhi. 5:231

6. The Three Non-Outflow Studies

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Chapter 6

The Three Non-Outflow Studies

Ananda straightened his robes and then bowed in the midst of the assembly and placed his palms together. The tracks of his mind were perfectly clear, and he felt a mixture of joy and sorrow. His intent was to benefit beings in the future as he made obeisance and said to the Buddha, “Greatly Compassionate World Honored One, I have already awakened and attained this Dharma-door for becoming a Buddha, and I can cultivate it without the slightest doubt. I have often heard the Thus Come One say, ‘Save others first then save yourself. That is the aspiration of a Bodhisattva. Once your own enlightenment is perfected, then you can enlighten others. That is the way the Thus Come One responds to the world.’ Although I am not yet saved, I vow to save all living beings in the Dharma-ending Age. 6:1

”World Honored One, those living beings will gradually drift away from the Buddha, and there will be as many deviant teachers propounding their methods as there are sands in the Ganges. I want to enable those beings to collect their thoughts and enter samadhi. How can I cause them to reside peacefully in a bodhimanda, far from the exploits of demons, and be irreversible in their resolve for Bodhi?” 6:3

At that time, the World Honored One praised Ananda in front of the whole assembly, saying, “Good indeed! How good it is that you have asked how to establish a Bodhimanda and to rescue and protect living beings who are sunk in the morass of the final age. Listen well, now, and I will tell you.” 6:5

Ananda and the great assembly agreed to uphold the teaching. 6:5

The Buddha told Ananda, “You constantly hear me explain in the Vinaya that there are three unalterable aspects to cultivation. That is, collecting one’s thoughts constitutes the precepts; from the precepts comes samadhi; and out of samadhi arises wisdom. Samadhi arises from precepts, and wisdom is revealed out of samadhi. These are called the Three Non-Outflow Studies.” 6:7

”Ananda, why do I call collecting one’s thoughts the precepts? If living beings in the six paths of any mundane world had no thoughts of lust, they would not have to follow a continual succession of births and deaths. 6:10

”Your basic purpose in cultivating is to transcend the wearisome defilements. But if you don’t renounce your lustful thoughts, you will not be able to get out of the dust. 6:11

”Even though one may have some wisdom and the manifestation of Chan samadhi, one is certain to enter demonic paths if one does not cut off lust. At best, one will be a demon king; on the average, one will be in the retinue of demons; at the lowest level, one will be a female demon. 6:11

”These demons have their groups of disciples. Each says of himself that he has accomplished the Unsurpassed Way. 6:12

”After my extinction, in the Dharma-ending Age, these hordes of demons will abound, spreading like wildfire as they openly practice greed and lust. Claiming to be good knowing advisors, they will cause living beings to fall into the pit of love and views and lose the way to Bodhi. 6:13

”When you teach people in the world to cultivate samadhi, they must first of all sever the mind of lust. This is the first clear and unalterable instruction on purity given by the Thus Come Ones and the Buddhas of the past, World Honored Ones. 6:14

”Therefore, Ananda, if cultivators of Chan samadhi do not cut off lust, they will be like someone who cooks sand in the hope of getting rice. After hundreds of thousands of aeons, it will still be just hot sand. Why? It wasn’t rice to begin with; it was only sand. 6:15

”If you seek the Buddha’s wonderful fruition and still have physical lust, then even if you attain a wonderful awakening, it will be based in lust. With lust at the source, you will revolve in the three paths and not be able to get out. Which road will you take to cultivate and be certified to the Thus Come One’s Nirvana? 6:17

”You must cut off the lust which is intrinsic in both body and mind. Then get rid of even the aspect of cutting it off. At that point you have some hope of attaining the Buddha’s Bodhi. 6:18

”What I have said here is the Buddha’s teaching. Any explanation counter to it is the teaching of Papiyan. 6:18

”Further, Ananda, if living beings in the six paths of any mundane world had no thoughts of killing, they would not have to follow a continual succession of births and deaths. 6:20

”Your basic purpose in cultivating samadhi is to transcend the wearisome defilements. But if you do not renounce your thoughts of killing, you will not be able to get out of the dust. 6:20

”Even though one may have some wisdom and the manifestation of Chan samadhi, one is certain to enter the path of spirits if one does not cease killing. At best, a person will become a mighty ghost; on the average, one will become a flying yaksha, a ghost leader, or the like; at the lowest level, one will become an earth-bound rakshasa. 6:21

”These ghosts and spirits have their groups of disciples. Each says of himself that he has accomplished the Unsurpassed Way. 6:22

”After my extinction, in the Dharma-ending Age, these hordes of ghosts and spirits will abound, spreading like wildfire as they argue that eating meat will bring one to the Bodhi Way. 6:22

”Ananda, I permit the Bhikshus to eat five kinds of pure meat. This meat is actually a transformation brought into being by my spiritual powers. It basically has no life-force. You Brahmans live in a climate so hot and humid, and on such sandy and rocky land, that vegetables will not grow; therefore, I have had to assist you with spiritual powers and compassion. Because of the magnitude of this kindness and compassion, what you eat that tastes like meat is merely said to be meat; in fact, however, it is not. After my extinction, how can those who eat the flesh of living beings be called the disciples of Shakya? 6:23

”You should know that these people who eat meat may gain some awareness and may seem to be in samadhi, but they are all great rakshasas. When their retribution ends, they are bound to sink into the bitter sea of birth and death. They are not disciples of the Buddha. Such people as these kill and eat one another in a never-ending cycle. How can such people transcend the Triple Realm? 6:24

”When you teach people in the world to cultivate samadhi, they must also cut off killing. This is the second clear and unalterable instruction on purity given by the Thus Come Ones and the Buddhas of the past, World Honored Ones. 6:25

”Therefore, Ananda, if cultivators of Chan samadhi do not cut off killing, they are like one who stops up his ears and calls out in a loud voice, expecting no one to hear him. It is to wish to hide what is completely evident. 6:26

”Bodhisattvas and bhikshus who practice purity will not even step on grass in the pathway; even less will they pull it up with their hand. How can one with great compassion pick up the flesh and blood of living beings and proceed to eat his fill? 6:26

”Bhikshus who do not wear silk, leather boots, furs, or down from this country or consume milk, cream, or butter can truly transcend this world. When they have paid back their past debts, they will not have to re-enter the Triple Realm. 6:27

”Why? It is because when one wears something taken from a living creature, one creates conditions with it, just as when people eat the hundred grains, their feet cannot leave the earth. Both physically and mentally one must avoid the bodies and the by-products of living beings, by neither wearing them nor eating them. I say that such people have true liberation. 6:28

”What I have said here is the Buddha’s teaching. Any explanation counter to it is the teaching of Papiyan. 6:29

”Further, Ananda, if living beings in the six paths of any mundane world had no thoughts of stealing, they would not have to follow a continuous succession of births and deaths. 6:31

”Your basic purpose in cultivating samadhi is to transcend the wearisome defilements. But if you do not renounce your thoughts of stealing, you will not be able to get out of the dust. 6:32

Even though one may have some wisdom and the manifestation of Chan samadhi, one is certain to enter a devious path if one does not cease stealing. At best, one will be an apparition; on the average, one will become a phantom; at the lowest level, one will be a devious person who is possessed by a mei ghost. 6:32

”These devious hordes have their groups of disciples. Each says of himself that he has accomplished the Unsurpassed Way. 6:34

”After my extinction, in the Dharma-ending Age, these phantoms and apparitions will abound, spreading like wildfire as they surreptitiously cheat others. Calling themselves good knowing advisors, they will each say that they have attained the superhuman dharmas. Enticing and deceiving the ignorant, or frightening them out of their wits, they disrupt and lay waste to households wherever they go. 6:35

”I teach the bhikshus to beg for their food in an assigned place, in order to help them renounce greed and accomplish the Bodhi Way. The bhikshus do not prepare their own food, so that, at the end of this life of transitory existence in the triple realm, they can show themselves to be once-returners who go and do not come back. 6:39

”How can thieves put on my robes and sell the Thus Come One, saying that all manner of karma one creates is just the Buddhadharma? They slander those who have left the home-life and regard bhikshus who have taken complete precepts as belonging to the path of the Small Vehicle. Because of such doubts and misjudgments, limitless living beings fall into the Unintermittent Hell. 6:41

”I say that bhikshus who after my extinction have decisive resolve to cultivate samadhi, and who before the images of Thus Come Ones can burn a candle on their bodies, or burn off a finger, or burn even one incense stick on their bodies, will, in that moment, repay their debts from beginningless time past. They can depart from the world and forever be free of outflows. Though they may not have instantly understood the Unsurpassed Enlightenment, they will already have firmly set their mind on it. 6:42

”If one does not practice any of these token renunciations of the body on the causal level, then even if one realizes the unconditioned, one will still have to come back as a person to repay one’s past debts exactly as I had to undergo the retribution of having to eat the grain meant for horses. 6:43

”When you teach people in the world to cultivate samadhi, they must also cease stealing. This is the third clear and unalterable instruction on purity given by the Thus Come One and the Buddhas of the past, World Honored Ones. 6:45

”Therefore, Ananda, if cultivators of Chan samadhi do not cease stealing, they are like someone who pours water into a leaking cup and hopes to fill it. He may continue for as many aeons as there are fine motes of dust, but it still will not be full in the end. 6:45

”If bhikshus do not store away anything but their robes and bowls; if they give what is left over from their food-offerings to hungry living beings; if they put their palms together and make obeisance to the entire great assembly; if when people scold them they can treat it as praise: if they can sacrifice their very bodies and minds, giving their flesh, bones, and blood to living creatures; and if they do not repeat the non-ultimate teachings of the Thus Come One as though they were their own explanations, misrepresenting them to those who have just begun to study, then the Buddha gives them his seal as having attained true samadhi. 6:46

”What I have said here is the Buddhas’ teaching. Any explanation counter to it is the teaching of Papiyan. 6:47

”Ananda, though living beings in the six paths of any mundane world may not kill, steal, or lust either physically or mentally, these three aspects of their conduct thus being perfect. Yet if they tell lies, the samadhi they attain will not be pure. They will become demons of love and views and will lose the seed of the Thus Come One. 6:48

”They say that they have attained what they have not attained, and that they have been certified when they have not been certified. Perhaps they seek to be foremost in the world, the most venerated and superior person. To their audiences they say that they have attained the fruition of a Shrotaapanna, the fruition of a Sakridagamin, the fruition of an Anagamin, the fruition of Arhatship, the Pratyekabuddha vehicle, or the various levels of Bodhisattvahood up to and including the Ten Grounds. In order to be revered by others and because they are greedy for offerings. 6:49

”These icchantikas destroy the seeds of Buddhahood just as surely as a tala tree is destroyed if it is chopped down. The Buddha predicts that such people sever their good roots forever and lose their knowledge and vision. Immersed in the sea of the Three Sufferings, they cannot attain samadhi. 6:51

”I command the Bodhisattvas and Arhats to appear after my extinction in response-bodies in the Dharma-ending Age, and to take various forms in order to rescue those in the cycle of rebirth. 6:52

”They should either become Shramanas, white-robed laypeople, kings, ministers or officials, virgin youths or maidens, and so forth, even prostitutes, widows, profligates, thieves, butchers, or dealers in contraband, doing the same things as these kinds of people while they praise the Buddha vehicle and cause them to enter samadhi in body and mind. 6:53

”But they should never say of themselves, ‘I am truly a Bodhisattva’; or ‘I am truly an Arhat,’ or let the Buddha’s secret cause leak out by speaking casually to those who have not yet studied. 6:58

”How can people who make such claims, other than at the end of their lives and then only to those who inherit the teaching, be doing anything but deluding and confusing living beings and indulging in a gross false claim? 6:59

”When you teach people in the world to cultivate samadhi, they must also cease all lying. This is the fourth clear and unalterable instruction on purity given by the Thus Come Ones and the Buddhas of the past, World Honored Ones. 6:61

”Therefore, Ananda, one who does not cut off lying is like a person who carves a piece of human excrement to look like chandana, hoping to make it fragrant. He is attempting the impossible. 6:62

”I teach the bhikshus that the straight mind is the Bodhimanda and that they should practice the four awesome deportments in all their activities. Since they should be devoid of all falseness, how can they claim to have themselves attained the Dharmas of a superior person? 6:62

”That would be like a poor person falsely calling himself an emperor; for that, he would be taken and executed. Much less should one attempt to usurp the title of Dharma King. When the cause-ground is not true, the effects will be distorted. One who seeks the Buddha’s Bodhi in this way is like a person who tries to bite his own navel. Who could possibly succeed? 6:63

”If bhikshus’ minds are as straight as lute strings, true and real in everything they do, then they can enter samadhi and never be involved in the deeds of demons. I certify that such people will accomplish the Bodhisattvas’ Unsurpassed Knowledge and Enlightenment. 6:64

”What I have said here is the Buddha’s teaching. Any explanation counter to it is the teaching of Papiyan. 6:65

”Ananda, you asked about collecting one’s thoughts; I have now begun to explain the wonderful method of cultivation for entrance into samadhi. Those who seek the Bodhisattva Way must first be as pure as glistening frost in keeping these four rules of deportment. If one is able to never give rise to anything superfluous, then the three evils of the mind and the four of the mouth will have no cause to come forth. 6:65

”Ananda, if one does not neglect these four matters, and, further, if one does not pursue forms, fragrances, tastes, or objects of touch, then how can any demonic deeds arise? 6:66

en

Chapter 6

"If there are people who cannot put an end to their habits from the past, you should teach them to single-mindedly recite my ‘light atop the Buddha’s summit’ unsurpassed spiritual

mantra, mwo he sa dan dwo bwo da la. 6:67

”It is the invisible appearance atop the summit of the Thus Come One. It is the spiritual mantra proclaimed by the Buddha of the unconditioned mind who comes forth from the summit in a blaze of light and sits upon a jeweled lotus flower. 6:68

”What is more, your past lives with Matangi’s daughter created accumulated kalpas of causes and conditions. Your habits of fondness and emotional love go back not just one life, nor even just one kalpa. Yet, as soon as I proclaimed it, she was freed forever from the love in her heart and accomplished Arhatship. 6:69

”That prostitute, who had no intention of cultivating, was imperceptibly aided by that spiritual power and was swiftly certified to the position beyond learning; then what about you Sound-Hearers in the assembly, who seek the most supreme vehicle and are resolved to accomplish Buddhahood? For you it should be as easy as tossing dust into a favorable wind. What, then, is the problem? 6:70

”Those in the final age who wish to sit in a Bodhimanda must first hold the pure precepts of a bhikshu. To do so, they must find as their teacher a foremost Shramana who is pure in the precepts. If they do not encounter a member of the Sangha who is truly pure, then it is absolutely certain that their deportment in precepts and rules cannot be accomplished. 6:71

”After accomplishing the precepts, they should put on fresh, clean clothes, light incense in a place where they are alone, and recite the spiritual mantra spoken by the Buddha of the Mind one hundred and eight times. After that, they should secure the boundaries and establish the Bodhimanda. 6:71

”In the countries within them, they should seek for the unsurpassed Thus Come Ones throughout the ten directions to emit a light of great compassion and anoint the crowns of their heads. 6:72

”Ananda, when any such pure bhikshus, bhikshunis, or white-robed donors in the Dharma-ending Age who can rid their minds of greed and lust hold the Buddha’s pure precepts, and in a bodhimanda make the vows of a Bodhisattva and can bathe upon entering each time, and day and night for three weeks without sleep continue this practice of the Way, I will appear before these people in a physical form and rub the crowns of their heads to comfort them and enable them to become enlightened.” 6:73

Ananda said to the Buddha, “World Honored One, enveloped in the Thus Come One’s unsurpassed, compassionate instruction, my mind has already become enlightened, and I know how to cultivate and be certified to the Path Beyond Learning. But for those who cultivate in the final age and want to establish a bodhimanda: how do they secure the boundaries in accord with the rules of purity of the Buddha, the World Honored One?” 6:75

The Buddha said to Ananda, “If there are people in the Dharma-ending Age who wish to establish a bodhimanda, they should first find a powerful white ox in snowy mountains, one which eats the lush and fertile sweet-smelling grasses of the mountain. Since such an ox also drinks only the pure water of the snowy mountains, its excrement will be very fine. They can take that excrement, mix it with chandana, and plaster the ground with it. 6:76

”If it is not in the snowy mountains, the ox’s excrement will stink and cannot be used to smear on the ground. In that case, select a level place, dig down five feet or so, and use that yellow earth. 6:76

Mix it with chandana incense, sinking-in water incense, jasmine incense, continuously permeating incense, burnished gold incense, white paste incense, green wood incense, fragrant mound incense, sweet pine incense, and chicken-tongue incense. Grind these ten ingredients to a fine powder, make a paste, and smear it on the ground of the platform. The area should be sixteen feet wide and octagonal in shape. 6:77

”In the center of the platform, place a lotus flower made of gold, silver, copper, or wood. In the middle of the flower set a bowl in which dew that has collected in the eighth lunar month has been poured. Let an abundance of flower petals float on the water. Arrange eight circular mirrors in each direction around the flower and the bowl. Outside the mirrors place sixteen lotus flowers and sixteen censers, so that the incense-burners are adorned and arranged between the flowers. Burn only sinking-in-water incense, and do not let the fire be ‘seen.’ 6:77

”Place the milk of a white ox in sixteen vessels, along with cakes made with the milk, rock-candy, oil-cakes, porridge, turushka, honeyed ginger, clarified butter, and filtered honey. These sixteen are set around the outside of the sixteen flowers as an offering to the Buddhas and great Bodhisattvas. 6:78

”At every mealtime and at midnight, prepare a half-pint of honey and three tenths of a pint of clarified butter. Set up a small incense burner in front of the platform. Decoct the fragrant liquid from the turushka incense and use it to cleanse the coals. Light them so that a blaze bursts forth, and toss the clarified butter and honey into the flaming censer. Let it burn until the smoke disappears, and present it to the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. 6:79

”About the four outside walls one should suspend flags and flowers, and within the room where the platform is located, one should arrange on the four walls images of the Thus Come Ones and Bodhisattvas of the ten directions. 6:80

”In the most prominent place, display images of Vairocana Buddha, Shakyamuni Buddha, Maitreya Bodhisattva, Akshobhya Buddha, Amitabha Buddha, and all the magnificent transformations of Guan Yin Bodhisattva. To the left and right, place the Vajra-Treasury Bodhisattvas. Beside them display the lords Shakra and Brahma, Ucchushma, and the Blue Dirgha, as well as Kundalin and Bhrukuti and all Four Heavenly Kings, with Vinayaka to the left and right of the door. 6:80

”Then suspend eight mirrors in the space around the platform so that they are exactly opposite the mirrors on the platform. This will allow the reflections in them to interpenetrate ad infinitum. 6:82

”During the first seven days, bow sincerely to the Thus Come Ones of the ten directions, to the great Bodhisattvas, and to the names of the Arhats. Throughout the six periods of the day and night, continually recite the mantra as you circumambulate the platform. Practice the way with a sincere mind, reciting the mantra one hundred and eight times at a stretch. 6:82

”During the second week, direct your intent by making the vows of a Bodhisattva. The mind should never be cut off from them. In my vinaya, I have already taught about vows. 6:83

”During the third week, one holds the Buddha’s mantra, Bwo Da La, for twelve hours at a time, with a single intent; and on the seventh day, the Thus Come Ones of the ten directions will appear simultaneously. Their light will be mutually reflected in the mirrors and will illumine the entire place; and they will rub one on the crown of one’s head. 6:83

”If one cultivates this samadhi in the Bodhimanda, then even in the Dharma-ending Age one can study and practice until one’s body and mind are as pure and clear as Vaidurya. 6:84

”Ananda, if any one of the bhikshu’s precept transmitting masters or any one of the other bhikshus practicing with him is not pure, the Bodhimanda as described will not be successful. 6:84

”After three weeks, one sits upright and still for a hundred days. Those with sharp faculties will not arise from their seats and will become Shrotaapannas. Although their bodies and minds

have not attained the ultimate fruition of sagehood, they know for certain, beyond exaggeration, that they will eventually accomplish Buddhahood. 6:85

”You have asked how the Bodhimanda is established. This is the way it is done.” 6:86

en

Chapter 6

Ananda bowed at the Buddha’s feet and said, “After I left the home-life, I relied on the Buddha’s affectionate regard. Because I sought erudition, I still have not been certified to the unconditioned. 6:87

”When I encountered that Brahma Heaven Mantra, I was captured by the deviant spell; though my mind was aware, I had no power to free myself. I had to rely on Manjushri Bodhisattva to liberate me. Although I was blessed by the Thus Come One’s spiritual mantra of the Buddha’s summit and imperceptibly received its strength, I still have not heard it myself. 6:88

”I only hope that the greatly compassionate one will proclaim it again to kindly rescue all the cultivators in this assembly and those of the future who undergo the turning wheel, so that they may become liberated in body and mind by relying on the Buddha’s secret sounds.” 6:90

At that moment, everyone in the great assembly bowed as one and stood waiting to hear the Thus Come One’s secret divisions and phrases. 6:91

At that time, a hundred brilliant rays sprang from the mound of the flesh on the crown of the World Honored One’s head. A thousand-petalled precious lotus arose from amidst those rays. Upon the precious flower sat the Thus Come One’s transformation. 6:91

From the crown of its head, in turn, he emitted ten beams, each composed of a hundred rays of precious light. Every one of those glowing rays shone on lands as many as the sands of ten Ganges Rivers, while throughout empty space there were Vajra Secret- Traces Spirits, each holding aloft a mountain and wielding a pestle. 6:92

The great assembly, gazing upward, felt fearful admiration and sought the Buddha’s kind protection. Single-mindedly they listened as the Thus Come One in the light at the invisible appearance on the crown of the Buddha’s head proclaimed the spiritual mantra: 6:93

1. 6:97

na mwo sa dan two

su chye dwo ye

e la he di

san myau san pu two sye

na mwo sa dan two

fwo two jyu jr shai ni shan

na mwo sa pe

bwo two bwo di

sa dwo pi bi

na mwo sa dwo nan

san myau san pu two

jyu jr nan

swo she la pe jya

seng chye nan

na mwo lu ji e lwo han dwo nan

na mwo su lu dwo bwo nwo nan

na mwo swo jye li two chye mi nan

na mwo lu ji san myau chye dwo nan

san myau chye be la

di bwo dwo nwo nan

na mwo ti pe li shai nan

na mwo syi two ye

pi di ye

two la li shai nan

she pwo nu

jye la he

swo he swo la mwo two nan

na mwo ba la he mwo ni

na mwo yin two la ye

na mwo pe chye pe di

lu two la ye

wu mwo bwo di

swo syi ye ye

na mwo pe chye pe di

nwo la ye

na ye

pan je mwo he san mwo two la

na mwo syi jye li dwo ye

na mwo pe chye pe di

mwo he jya la ye

di li bwo la na

chye la pi two la

bwo na jya la ye

e di mu di

shr mwo she nwo ni

pe syi ni

mwo dan li chye na

na mwo syi jye li dwo ye

na mwo pe chye pe di

dwo two chye dwo jyu la ye

na mwo be tou mwo jyu la ye

na mwo ba she la jyu la ye

na mwo mwo ni jyu la ye

na mwo chye she jyu la ye

na mwo pe chye pe di

di li cha

shu la syi na

bwo la he la na la she ye

dwo two chye dwo ye

na mwo pe chye pe di

na mwo e mi dwo pe ye

dwo two chye dwo ye

e la he di

san myau san pu two ye

na mwo pe chye pe di

e chu pi ye

dwo two chye dwo ye

e la he di

san myau san pu two ye

na mwo pe chye pe di

bi sha she ye

jyu lu fei ju li ye

bwo la pe la she ye

dwo two chye dwo ye

na mwo pe chye pe di

san bu shr bi dwo

sa lyan nai la la she ye

dwo two chye dwo ye

e la he di

san myau san pu two ye

na mwo pe chye pe di

she ji ye mu nwo ye

dwo two chye dwo ye

e la he di

san myau san pu two ye

na mwo pe chye pe di

la dan na ji du la she ye

dwo two chye dwo ye

e la he di

san myau san pu two ye

di pyau

na mwo sa jye li dwo

yi tan pe chye pe dwo

sa dan two chye du shai ni shan

sa dan dwo bwo da lan

na mwo e pe la shr dan

bwo la di

yang chi la

sa la pe

bwo dwo jye la he

ni jye la he

jye jya la he ni

ba la bi di ye

chr two ni

e jya la

mi li ju

bwo li dan la ye

ning jye li

sa la pe

pan two nwo

mu cha ni

sa la pe

tu shai ja

tu syi fa

bwo na ni

fa la ni

je du la

shr di nan

jye la he

swo he sa la rau she

pi dwo beng swo na jye li

e shai ja bing she di nan

na cha cha dan la rau she

bwo la sa two na jye li

e shai ja nan

mwo he jye la he rau she

pi dwo beng sa na jye li

sa pe she du lu

ni pe la rau she

hu lan tu syi fa

nan je na she ni

bi sha she

syi dan la

e ji ni

wu two jya la rau she

e bwo la shr dwo jyu la

mwo he bwo la jan chr

mwo he dye dwo

mwo he di she

mwo he shwei dwo she pe la

mwo he ba la pan two la

pe syi ni

e li ye dwo la

pi li jyu jr

shr pe pi she ye

ba she la mwo li di

pi she lu dwo

bwo teng wang jya

ba she la jr he nwo e je

mwo la jr pe

bwo la jr dwo

ba she la shan chr

pi she la je

shan dwo she

pi ti pe

bu shr dwo

su mwo lu bwo

mwo he shwei dwo

e li ye dwo la

mwo he pe la e bwo la

ba she la shang jye la jr pe

ba she la jyu mwo li

jyu lan two li

ba she la he sa dwo je

pi di ye

chyan je nwo

mwo li jya

ku su mu

pe jye la dwo nwo

pi lu je na

jyu li ye

ye la tu

shai ni shan

pi je lan pe mwo ni je

ba she la jya na jya bwo la pe

lu she na

ba she la dwun jr je

shwei dwo je

jya mwo la

cha che shr

bwo la pe

yi di yi di

mu two la

jye na

swo pi la chan

jywe fan du

yin tu na mwo mwo sye

II.

wu syin

li shai jye na

bwo la she syi dwo

sa dan two

chye du shai ni shan

hu syin du lu yung

jan pe na

hu syin du lu yung

syi dan pe na

hu syin du lu yung

bwo la shai di ye

san bwo cha

na jye la

hu syin du lu yung

sa pe yau cha

he la cha swo

jye la he rau she

pi teng beng sa na jye la

hu syin du lu yung

je du la

shr di nan

jye la he

swo he sa la nan

pi teng beng sa na la

hu syin du lu yung

la cha

pe chye fan

sa dan two

chye du shai ni shan

bwo la dyan

she ji li

mwo he swo he sa la

bwo shu swo he sa la

shr li sha

jyu jr swo he sa ni

di li e bi ti shr pe li dwo

ja ja ying jya

mwo he ba she lu two la

di li pu pe na

man cha la

wu syin

swo syi di

bwo pe du

mwo mwo

yin tu na mwo mwo sye

III.

la she pe ye

ju la ba ye

e chi ni pe ye

wu two jya pe ye

pi sha pe ye

she sa dwo la pe ye

pe la jau jye la pe ye

tu shai cha pe ye

e she ni pe ye

e jya la

mi li ju pe ye

two la ni bu mi jyan

bwo chye bwo two pe ye

wu la jya pe dwo pe ye

la she tan cha pe ye

nwo chye pe ye

pi tyau dan pe ye

su bwo la na pe ye

yau cha jye la he

la cha sz jye la he

bi li dwo jye la he

pi she je jye la he

bu dwo jye la he

jyou pan cha jye la he

bu dan na jye la he

jya ja bu dan na jye la he

syi chyan du jye la he

e bwo syi mwo la jye la he

wu tan mwo two jye la he

che ye jye la he

syi li pe di jye la he

she dwo he li nan

jye pe he li nan

lu di la he li nan

mang swo he li nan

mi two he li nan

mwo she he li nan

she dwo he li nyu

shr bi dwo he li nan

pi dwo he li nan

pe dwo he li nan

e shu je he li nyu

jr dwo he li nyu

di shan sa pi shan

sa pe jye la he nan

pi two ye she

chen two ye mi

ji la ye mi

bwo li ba la je jya

chi li dan

pi two ye she

chen two ye mi

ji la ye mi

cha yan ni

chi li dan

pi two ye she

chen two ye mi

ji la ye mi

mwo he bwo su bwo dan ye

lu two la

chi li dan

pi two ye she

chen two ye mi

ji la ye mi

nwo la ye na

chi li dan

pi two ye she

chen two ye mi

ji la ye mi

dan two chye lu cha syi

chi li dan

pi two ye she

chen two ye mi

ji la ye mi

mwo he jya la

mwo dan li chye na

chi li dan

pi two ye she

chen two ye mi

ji la ye mi

jya bwo li jya

chi li dan

pi two ye she

chen two ye mi

ji la ye mi

she ye jye la

mwo du jye la

sa pe la two swo da na

chi li dan

pi two ye she

chen two ye mi

ji la ye mi

je du la

pe chi ni

chi li dan

pi two ye she

chen two ye mi

ji la ye mi

pi li yang chi li jr

nan two ji sha la

chye na bwo di

swo syi ye

chi li dan

pi two ye she

chen two ye mi

ji la ye mi

na jye na she la pe na

chi li dan

pi two ye she

chen two ye mi

ji la ye mi

e lwo han

chi li dan

pi two ye she

chen two ye mi

ji la ye mi

pi dwo la chye

chi li dan

pi two ye she

chen two ye mi

ji la ye mi

ba she la bwo ni

jyu syi ye jyu syi ye

jya di bwo di

chi li dan

pi two ye she

chen two ye mi

ji la ye mi

la cha wang

pe chye fan

yin tu na mwo mwo sye

IV.

pe chye fan

sa dan dwo bwo da la

na mwo tswei du di

e syi dwo na la la jya

bwo la pe

syi pu ja

pi jya sa dan dwo be di li

shr fwo la shr fwo la

two la two la

pin two la pin two la

chen two chen two

hu syin hu syin

pan ja pan ja pan ja pan ja pan ja

swo he

syi syi pan

e mu jya ye pan

e bwo la ti he dwo pan

pe la bwo la two pan

e su la

pi two la

bwo jya pan

sa pe ti pi bi pan

sa pe na chye bi pan

sa pe yau cha bi pan

sa pe chyan ta pe bi pan

sa pe bu dan na bi pan

jya ja bu dan na bi pan

sa pe tu lang jr di bi pan

sa pe tu sz bi li

chi shai di bi pan

sa pe shr pe li bi pan

sa pe e bwo syi mwo li bi pan

sa pe she la pe na bi pan

sa pe di di ji bi pan

sa pe dan mwo two ji bi pan

sa pe pi two ye

la shr je li bi pan

she ye jye la

mwo du jye la

sa pe la two swo two ji bi pan

pi di ye

je li bi pan

je du la

fu chi ni bi pan

ba she la

jyu mwo li

pi two ye

la shr bi pan

mwo he bwo la ding yang

yi chi li bi pan

ba she la shang jye la ye

bwo la jang chi la she ye pan

mwo he jya la ye

mwo he mwo dan li jya na

na mwo swo jye li dwo ye pan

bi shai na bei ye pan

bwo la he mwo ni ye pan

e chi ni ye pan

mwo he jye li ye pan

jye la tan chr ye pan

mye dan li ye pan

lau dan li ye pan

je wen cha ye pan

jye lwo la dan li ye pan

jya bwo li ye pan

e di mu jr dwo

jya shr mwo she nwo

pe sz ni ye pan

yan ji jr

sa two pe sye

mwo mwo yin tu na mwo mwo sye

V.

tu shai ja jr dwo

e mwo dan li jr dwo

wu she he la

chye pe he la

lu di la he la

pe swo he la

mwo she he la

she dwo he la

shr bi dwo he la

ba lyau ye he la

chyan two he la

bu shr bwo he la

pwo la he la

pe sye he la

be bwo jr dwo

tu shai ja jr dwo

lau two la jr dwo

yau cha jye la he

la cha swo jye la he

bi li dwo jye la he

pi she je jye la he

bu dwo jye la he

jyou pan cha jye la he

syi chyan two jye la he

wu dan mwo two jye la he

che ye jye la he

e bwo sa mwo la jye la he

jai chywe ge

cha chi ni jye la he

li fwo di jye la he

she mi jya jye la he

she jyu ni jye la he

mu two la

na di jya jye la he

e lan pe jye la he

chyan du bwo ni jye la he

shr fwo la

yin jya syi jya

jwei di yau jya

dan li di yau jya

je tu two jya

ni ti shr fa la

bi shan mwo shr fa la

bwo di jya

bi di jya

shr li shai mi jya

swo ni bwo di jya

sa pe shr fa la

shr lu ji di

mwo two pi da lu jr jyan

e chi lu chyan

mu chywe lu chyan

jye li tu lu chyan

jye la he

jye lan jye na shu lan

dan dwo shu lan

chi li ye shu lan

mwo mwo shu lan

ba li shr pe shu lan

bi li shai ja shu lan

wu two la shu lan

jye jr shu lan

ba syi di shu lan

wu lu shu lan

chang chye shu lan

he syi dwo shu lan

ba two shu lan

swo fang ang chye

bwo la jang chye shu lan

bu dwo bi dwo cha

cha chi ni

shr pe la

two tu lu jya

jyan du lu ji jr

pe lu dwo pi

sa bwo lu

he ling chye

shu sha dan la

swo na jye la

pi sha yu jya

e chi ni

wu two jya

mwo la pi la

jyan dwo la

e jya la

mi li du

da lyan bu jya

di li la ja

bi li shai jr jya

sa pe na jyu la

sz yin chye bi

jye la li yau cha

dan la chu

mwo la shr

fei di shan

swo pi shan

syi dan dwo bwo da la

mwo he ba she lu

shai ni shan

mwo he bwo lai jang chi lan

ye bwo tu two

she yu she nwo

byan da li na

pi two ye

pan tan jya lu mi

di shu

pan tan jya lu mi

bwo la pi two

pan tan jya lu mi

da jr two

nan

e na li

pi she ti

pi la

ba she la

two li

pan two pan two ni

ba she la bang ni pan

hu syin du lu yung pan

swo pe he.

en

Chapter 6

"Ananda, this cluster of light atop the crown of the Buddha’s head, the secret gatha, Syi Dan Dwo Bwo Da La, with its subtle, wonderful divisions and phrases, gives birth to all the Buddhas of the ten directions. Because the Thus Come Ones of the ten directions use this mantra-heart, they realize unsurpassed, proper, and all-pervading knowledge and enlightenment. 6:115

”Because the Thus Come Ones of the ten directions take up this mantra-heart, they subdue all demons and control all adherents of outside ways. 6:116

”Because the Thus Come Ones of the ten directions avail themselves of this mantra-heart, they sit upon jeweled lotus-flowers and respond throughout countries as numerous as motes of dust. 6:117

”Because the Thus Come Ones of the ten directions embody this mantra-heart, they turn the great dharma wheel in lands as numerous as fine motes of dust. 6:117

”Because the Thus Come Ones of the ten directions hold this mantra-heart, they are able to go throughout the ten directions to rub beings on the crowns of their heads and bestow predictions upon them. Also, anyone in the ten directions who has not yet realized the fruition, can receive a Buddha’s prediction. 6:117

”Because the Thus Come Ones of the ten directions are based in this mantra-heart, they can go throughout the ten directions to rescue beings from such sufferings as being in the hells, being hungry ghosts, being animals, or being blind, deaf, or mute, as well as from the suffering of being together with those one hates, from the suffering of being apart from those one loves, from the suffering of not obtaining what one seeks, and from the raging blaze of the five skandhas. They liberate beings from both large and small accidents. In response to their recitation, difficulty with thieves, difficulty with armies, difficulty with the law, difficulty with

imprisonment, difficulty with wind, fire, and water, and difficulty with hunger, thirst, and impoverishment are all eradicated. 6:118

”Because the Thus Come Ones of the ten directions are in accord with this mantra-heart, they can serve good and wise advisors throughout the ten directions. In the four aspects of awesome deportment, they make wish-fulfilling offerings. In the assemblies of as many Thus Come Ones as there are sands in the Ganges, they are considered to be great Dharma Princes. 6:120

”Because the Thus Come Ones of the ten directions practice this mantra-heart, they can gather in and teach their relatives in the ten directions. Causing those of the Small Vehicle not to be frightened when they hear the secret treasury. 6:120

”Because the Thus Come Ones of the ten directions recite this mantra-heart, they realize unsurpassed enlightenment while sitting beneath the Bodhi tree, and they enter Parinirvana. 6:121

”Because the Thus Come Ones of the ten directions transmit this mantra-heart, those to whom they have bequeathed the Buddhadharma can, after their Nirvana, dwell in it completely and uphold it. Being strict and pure about the precepts and rules, they can all obtain purity. 6:121

”If I were to explain this mantra, Bwo Da La, of the cluster of light atop the crown of the Buddha’s head from morning till night in an unceasing sound, without ever repeating any syllable or phrase, I could go on for as many kalpas as there are sands in the Ganges and still never finish. 6:122

”I also will tell you that this mantra is called ‘The crown of the Thus Come One.’ 6:123

”All of you with something left to study who have not yet put an end to the cycle of rebirth and yet have brought forth sincere resolve to become Arhats, will find it impossible to sit in a Bodhimanda and be far removed in body and mind from all demonic deeds if you do not hold this Mantra. 6:123

”Ananda, let any living being of any country in any world copy out this mantra in writing on materials native to his region, such as birch bark, pattra, plain paper, or white cotton cloth, and store it in a pouch containing incense. If that person wears the pouch on his body, or if he keeps a copy in his home, then you should know that even if he understands so little that he cannot recite it from memory, he will not be harmed by any poison during his entire life. 6:124

”Ananda, I will now tell you more about how this mantra can rescue and protect the world, help people obtain great fearlessness, and bring to accomplishment living beings’ transcendental wisdom. 6:125

”You should know that, after my extinction, if there are beings in the Dharma-ending Age who can recite the mantra themselves or teach others to recite it, such people who recite and uphold it cannot be burned by fire, cannot be drowned by water, and cannot be harmed by mild or potent poisons. 6:125

”And so it is in every other case, such that they cannot be possessed by any evil mantra or any heavenly dragon, ghost, or spirit, or by any essence, weird creature, or demonic ghost. These people’s minds will attain proper reception, so that any spell, any paralyzing sorcery, any poison or poisoning gold, any poisoning silver, any plant, tree, insect, or snake, and any of a myriad kinds of poisonous vapors will turn into sweet dew when it enters their mouths. 6:126

”No evil stars, and no ghost or spirit that harbors malice in its heart and that poisons people can work its evil on these people. Vinayaka as well as all the evil ghost kings and their retinues will be led by deep kindness to always guard and protect them. 6:128

”Ananda, you should know that eighty-four thousand nayutas of Ganges’ sands of kotis of Vajra Treasury-King Bodhisattvas and their descendants, each with vajra multitudes as retinue, are ever in attendance, day and night, upon this mantra. 6:129

”If living beings whose minds are scattered and who have no samadhi remember and recite the mantra, the vajra kings will always surround them. Therefore, good men, that is even more true for those who are decisively resolved upon Bodhi. All the Vajra Treasury-King Bodhisattvas will regard them attentively and secretly hasten the opening of their spiritual consciousness. 6:130

”When that response occurs, those people will be able to remember the events of as many kalpas as there are grains of sand in eighty-four thousand Ganges Rivers, knowing them all beyond any doubt. 6:131

”From that kalpa onward, through every life until the time they take their last body, they will not be born where there are yakshas, rakshasas, putanas, kataputanas, kumbhandas, pishachas and so forth; where there is any kind of hungry ghost, whether with form or lacking form, or with thought or lacking thought, or in any such evil place. 6:131

”If these good men read, recite, copy, or write out the mantra, if they carry it or treasure it, if they make offerings to it, then through kalpa after kalpa they will not be poor or lowly, nor will they be born in unpleasant places. 6:133

”If these living beings have never accumulated any blessings, the Thus Come Ones of the ten directions will bestow their own merit and virtue upon these people. 6:134

”Because of that, throughout asamkhyeyas of ineffable, unspeakable numbers of kalpas, as many as the Ganges’ sands, they are always together with the Buddhas. They are born in the same place, due to their limitless merit and virtue, and, like the amala fruit-cluster, they stay in the same place, become permeated with cultivation, and are never parted. 6:135

”Therefore, it can enable those who have broken the precepts to regain the purity of the precept-source. It can enable those who have not received the precepts to receive them. It can cause those who are not vigorous to become vigorous. It can enable those who lack wisdom to gain wisdom. It can cause those who are not pure to quickly be come pure. It can cause those who do not hold to vegetarianism to become vegetarians naturally. 6:136

”Ananda, if good men who uphold this mantra violated the pure precepts before they received the mantra, their multitude of offenses incurred by violating the precepts, whether major or minor, can simultaneously be eradicated after they begin to uphold the mantra. 6:138

”Even if they drank intoxicants or ate the five pungent plants and various other impure things in the past, the Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, vajras, gods, immortals, ghosts, and spirits will not hold it against them. 6:139

”If they are unclean and wear tattered, old clothes to carry out the single practice and single dwelling, they can be equally pure. Even if they do not set up the platform, do not enter the Bodhimanda, and do not practice the Way, but recite and uphold this mantra, their merit and virtue will be identical with that derived from entering the platform and practicing the Way. 6:139

”If they have committed the five rebellious acts, grave offenses warranting unintermittent retribution, or if they are bhikshus or bhikshunis who have violated the four parajikas or the eight parajikas, such heavy karma as this will disperse after they recite this mantra, like a sand dune that is scattered in a gale, so that not a particle remains. 6:140

”Ananda, if living beings who have never repented and reformed any of the obstructive offenses, either heavy or light, that they have committed throughout countless kalpas past, up to and including those of this very life, can nevertheless read, recite, copy, or write out this mantra or wear it on their bodies or place it in their homes or in their garden houses, then all that accumulated karma will melt away like snow in hot water. Before long they will obtain awakening to patience with the non-production of dharmas. 6:143

”Moreover, Ananda, if women who do not have children and want to conceive can sincerely memorize and recite this mantra or carry the mantra, Syi Dan Dwo Bwo Da La, on their bodies, they can give birth to sons or daughters endowed with blessings, virtue, and wisdom. 6:144

”Those who seek long life will obtain long life. Those who seek to quickly perfect their reward will quickly gain perfection. The same is true for those who seek something regarding their bodies, their lives, their appearance, or their strength. 6:145

”At the end of their lives, they will gain the rebirth they hope for in whichever of the countries of the ten directions they wish. They certainly will not be born in poorly endowed places, or as inferior people; even less will they be reborn in some odd form. 6:146

”Ananda, if there is famine or plague in a country, province, or village, or if perhaps there are armed troops, brigands, invasions, war, or any other kind of local threat or danger, one can write out this spiritual mantra and place it on the four city gates, or on a chaitya or on a dhvaja, and instruct all the people of the country to gaze upon the mantra, to make obeisance to it, to revere it, and to single-mindedly make offerings to it; one can instruct all the citizens to wear it on their bodies or to place it in their homes; and then all such disasters and calamities will completely disappear. 6:146

”Ananda, in each and every country where the people accord with this mantra, the heavenly dragons are delighted, the winds and rains are seasonal, the crops are abundant, and the people are peaceful and happy. 6:148

”It can also suppress all evil stars which may appear in any of the directions and transform themselves in uncanny ways. Calamities and obstructions will not arise. People will not die accidentally or unexpectedly, nor will they be bound by fetters, cangues, or locks. Day and night they will be at peace, and no evil dreams will disturb their sleep. 6:149

”Ananda, this Saha World has eighty-four thousand changeable and disastrous evil stars. Twenty-eight great evil stars are the leaders, and of these, eight great evil stars are the rulers. They take various shapes, and when they appear in the world they bring disaster and weird

happenings upon living beings. 6:150

”But they will all be eradicated wherever there is the mantra. The boundaries will be secured for twelve yojanas around, and no evil calamity or misfortune will ever enter in. 6:152

”Therefore, the Thus Come One proclaims this mantra as one which will protect those of the future who have just begun to study, as well as all cultivators, so that they can enter samadhi, be peaceful in body and mind, and attain great tranquility. 6:152

”Even less will any demon, ghost, or spirit, or any enemy, calamity, or misfortune due from former lives that reach back to beginningless time, or any old karma or past debts come to vex and harm them. 6:153

”As to you and everyone in the assembly who is still studying, and as to cultivators of the future who rely on my platform, hold the precepts in accord with the dharma, receive the precepts from pure members of the Sangha, and hold this mantra-heart without giving rise to doubts: should such good men as these not obtain mind-penetration in that very body born of their parents, then the Thus Come Ones of the ten directions have lied!. 6:154

When he finished this explanation, measureless hundreds of thousands of vajra power-knights in the assembly came before the Buddha, placed their palms together, bowed, and said, “With sincere hearts we will protect those who cultivate Bodhi in this way, according to what the Buddha has said.” 6:155

Then the Brahma King, the God Shakra, and the four great heavenly kings all came before the Buddha, made obeisance together, and said to the Buddha, “If indeed there be good men who cultivate and study in this way, we will do all we can to earnestly protect them and cause everything to be as they would wish throughout their entire lives.” 6:155

Moreover measureless great yaksha generals, rakshasa kings, putana kings, kumbhanda kings, pishacha kings, vinayaka, the great ghost kings, and all the ghost commanders came before the Buddha, put their palms together, and made obeisance. “We also have vowed to protect these people and cause their resolve for Bodhi to be quickly perfected.” 6:156

Further, measureless numbers of gods of the sun and moon, lords of the rain, lords of the clouds, lords of thunder, lords of lightning who patrol throughout the year, and all the retinues of stars which were also in the assembly bowed at the Buddha’s feet and said to the Buddha, “We also protect all cultivators, so that their Bodhimandas are peaceful and they attain

fearlessness.” 6:156

Moreover, measureless numbers of mountain spirits, sea-spirits, and all those of the earth - the myriad creatures and essences of water, land, and the air - as well as the king of wind spirits and the gods of the Formless Heavens, came before the Thus Come One, bowed their heads, and said to the Buddha, “We also will protect these cultivators until they attain Bodhi and will never let any demons have their way with them.” 6:157

Then Vajra-Treasury-King Bodhisattvas in the great assembly, numbering as many as eighty-four thousand nayutas of kotis’ worth of sands in the Ganges, arose from their seats, bowed at the Buddha’s feet, and said to the Buddha, “World Honored One, the nature of our deeds in cultivation is such that, although we have long since accomplished Bodhi, we do not grasp at Nirvana, but always accompany those who hold this mantra, rescuing and protecting those in the final age who cultivate samadhi properly. 6:158

”World Honored One, such people as this, who cultivate their minds and seek proper concentration, whether in the bodhimanda or walking about, and even such people who with scattered minds roam and play in the villages, will be accompanied and protected by us and our retinue of followers. 6:158

”Although the demon kings and the god of great comfort will seek to get at them, they will never be able to do so. The smaller ghosts will have to stay ten yojanas’ distance from these good people, except for those beings who have decided they want to cultivate dhyana. 6:159

”World Honored One, if such evil demons or their retinues want to harm or disturb these good people, we will smash their heads to smithereens with our vajra pestles. We will always help these people to accomplish what they want.” 6:160

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Chapter 6

Then Ananda arose from his seat, bowed at the Buddha’s feet, and said to the Buddha, “Now that we who are stupid and slow, who are fond of erudition but have not sought to cease the outflows of our minds, have received the Buddha’s compassionate instructions and have attained the proper means to become infused with cultivation, we experience joy in body and mind and obtain tremendous benefit. 6:162

”World Honored One, for one who cultivates in this way and is certified as having attained the Buddha’s samadhi, but who has not yet reached Nirvana, what is meant by the level of ‘dry wisdom’? What are the ‘forty-four minds’? What is the sequence in which one cultivates till

one reaches one’s goal? What place must one reach to be said to have ‘entered the grounds’? And what is meant by a Bodhisattva of ‘equal enlightenment’?” 6:163

Having said this, he made a full prostration, and then the great assembly single-mindedly awaited the sound of the Buddha’s compassionate voice as they gazed up unblinking with respectful admiration. 6:163

At that time the World Honored One praised Ananda, saying, “Good indeed, good indeed, that you can for the sake of the entire great assembly and those beings in the final age who cultivate samadhi and seek the great vehicle, ask to have explained and revealed the unsurpassed proper path of cultivation that takes one from the level of an ordinary person to final Parinirvana. Listen attentively, and I will speak about it for you.” Ananda and everyone in the assembly placed their palms together, cleansed their minds, and silently waited to receive the teaching. 6:164

The Buddha said, “Ananda, you should know that the wonderful nature is perfect and bright, apart from all names and appearances. Basically there is no world, nor are there any living beings. 6:166

”Because of falseness, there is production. Because of production, there is extinction. The names ‘production’ and ‘extinction’ are false. 6:166

”When the false is extinguished, there is truth, which is called the Thus Come One’s Unsurpassed Bodhi and Great Nirvana: those are names for two kinds of turning around. 6:167

”Ananda, you now wish to cultivate true samadhi and arrive directly at the Thus Come One’s parinirvana. First, you should recognize the two upside-down causes of living beings and the world. If this upside-down state is not produced, then there is the Thus Come One’s true samadhi. 6:167

”Ananda, what is meant by the upside-down state of living beings? Ananda, the reason that the nature of the mind is bright is that the nature itself is the perfection of brightness. By adding brightness, another nature arises, and from that false nature, views are produced, so that from absolute nothingness comes ultimate existence. 6:168

”All that exists comes from this; every cause in fact has no cause. Subjective reliance on objective appearances is basically groundless. Thus, upon what is fundamentally unreliable, one sets up the world and living beings. 6:169

”Confusion about one’s basic, perfect understanding results in the arising of falseness. The nature of falseness is devoid of substance; it is not something which can be relied upon. 6:170

”One may wish to return to the truth, but that wish for the truth is already a falseness. The real nature of true suchness is not a truth that one can seek to return to. By doing so one misses the mark. 6:171

”What basically is not produced, what basically does not dwell, what basically is not the mind, and what basically are not dharmas arise through interaction. As they arise more and more strongly, they form the propensity to create karma. Similar karma sets up a mutual stimulus. Because of the karma thus generated, there is mutual production and mutual extinction. That is the reason for the upside-down state of living beings. 6:172

”Ananda, what is meant by the upside-down state of the world? All that exists comes from this; the world is set up because of the false arising of sections and shares. Every cause in fact has no cause; everything that is dependent has nothing on which it is dependent, and so it shifts and slides and is unreliable. Because of this, the world of the three periods of time and four directions comes into being. Their union and interaction bring about changes which result in the twelve categories of living beings. 6:173

”That is why, in this world, movement brings about sounds, sounds bring about forms, forms bring about smells, smells bring about contact, contact brings about tastes, and tastes bring about awareness of dharmas. The random false thinking resulting from these six creates karma, and this continuous revolving becomes the cause of twelve different categories. 6:175

”And so, in the world, sounds, smells, tastes, contact, and the like, are each transformed throughout the twelve categories to make one complete cycle. 6:175

”The appearance of being upside down is based on this continuous process. Therefore, in the world there are those born from eggs, those born from wombs, those born from moisture, those born by transformation, those with form, those without form, those with thought, those without thought, those not totally endowed with form, those not totally lacking form, those not totally endowed with thought, and those not totally lacking thought. 6:177

“Ananda, through a continuous process of falseness, the upside-down state of movement occurs in this world. It unites with energy to become eighty four thousand kinds of random thoughts that either fly or sink. From this there come into being the egg kalalas which multiply throughout the lands in the form of fish, birds, amphibians, and reptiles, so that their kinds

abound. 6:179

”Through a continuous process of defilement, the upside-down state of desire occurs in this world. It unites with stimulation to become eighty four thousand kinds of random thoughts that are either upright or perverse. From this there come into being the womb arbudas, which multiply throughout the world in the form of humans, animals, dragons, and immortals until their kinds abound. 6:180

”Through a continuous process of attachment, the upside-down state of inclination occurs in this world. It unites with warmth to become eighty-four thousand kinds of random thoughts that are vacillating and inverted. From this there come into being through moisture the appearance of peshis, which multiply throughout the lands in the form of insects and crawling invertebrates, until their kinds abound. 6:181

”Through a continuous process of change, the upside-down state of borrowing occurs in this world. It unites with contact to become eighty-four thousand kinds of random thoughts of new and old. From this there come into being through transformation the appearance of ghanas, which multiply throughout the lands in the form of metamorphic flying and crawling creatures, until their kinds abound. 6:182

”Through a continuous process of restraint, the upside-down state of obstruction occurs in this world. It unites with attachment to become eighty-four thousand kinds of random thoughts of refinement and brilliance. From this there come into being the ghanas of appearance that possess form, which multiply throughout the lands in the form of auspicious and inauspicious essences, until their kinds abound. 6:183

”Through a continuous process of annihilation and dispersion, the upside-down state of delusion occurs in this world. It unites with darkness to become eighty-four thousand kinds of random thoughts of obscurity and hiding. From this there come into being the ghanas of formless beings, which multiply throughout the lands as those that are empty, dispersed, annihilated, and submerged until their kinds abound. 6:184

”Through a continuous process of illusory imaginings, the upside-down state of shadows occurs in this world. It unites with memory to become eighty-four thousand kinds of random thoughts that are hidden and bound up. From this there come into being the ghanas of those with thought, which multiply throughout the lands in the form of spirits, ghosts, and weird essences, until their kinds abound. 6:185

”Through a continuous process of dullness and slowness, the upside-down state of stupidity occurs in this world. It unites with obstinacy to become eighty-four thousand kinds of random thoughts that are dry and attenuated. From this there come into being the ghanas of those without thought, which multiply throughout the lands as their essence and spirit change into earth, wood, metal, or stone, until their kinds abound. 6:186

”Through a continuous process of parasitic interaction, the upside-down state of simulation occurs in this world. It unites with defilement to become eighty-four thousand kinds of random thoughts of according and relying. From this there come into being those not totally endowed with form, who become ghanas of form which multiply throughout the lands until their kinds abound, in such ways as jellyfish that use shrimp for eyes. 6:187

”Through a continuous process of mutual enticement, an upside-down state of the nature occurs in this world. It unites with mantras to become eighty-four thousand kinds of random thoughts of beckoning and summoning. From this there come into being those not totally lacking form, who take ghanas which are formless and multiply through out the lands, until their kinds abound, as the hidden beings of mantras and incantations. 6:188

”Through a continuous process of false unity, the upside-down state of transgression occurs in this world. It unites with unlike formations to become eighty-four thousand kinds of random thoughts of reciprocal interchange. From this there come into being those not totally endowed with thought, which become ghanas possessing thought and which multiply throughout the lands until their kinds abound in such forms as the varata, which turns a different creature into its own species. 6:189

”Through a continuous process of enmity and harm the upside-down state of killing occurs in this world. It unites with monstrosities to become eighty-four thousand kinds of random thoughts of devouring one’s father and mother. From this there come into being those not totally lacking thought, who take ghanas with no thought and multiply through out the lands, until their kinds abound in such forms as the dirt owl, which hatches its young from clods of dirt, and the Pou Jing bird, which incubates a poisonous fruit to create its young. In each case, the young thereupon eat the parents. 6:190

”These are the twelve categories of living beings.” 6:191

7. The Three Gradual Stages

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Chapter 7

"Ananda, each of these categories of beings is replete with all twelve kinds of upside-down states, just as pressing on one’s eye produces a variety of flower-like images. 7:1

”With the inversion of wonderful perfection, the truly pure, bright mind becomes glutted with false and random thoughts. 7:2

”Now, as you cultivate towards certification to the samadhi of the Buddha, you will go through three gradual stages in order to get rid of the basic cause of these random thoughts. 7:2

”They work in just the way that poisonous honey is removed from a pure vessel that is washed with hot water mixed with the ashes of incense. Afterwards it can be used to store sweet dew. 7:2

”What are the three gradual stages? The first is to correct one’s habits by getting rid of the aiding causes; the second is to truly cultivate to cut out the very essence of karmic offenses; the third is to increase one’s vigor to prevent the manifestation of karma. 7:3

”What are aiding causes? Ananda, the twelve categories of living beings in this world are not complete in themselves, but depend on four kinds of eating; that is, eating by portions, eating by contact, eating by thought, and eating by consciousness. Therefore, the Buddha said that all living beings must eat to live. 7:4

”Ananda, all living beings can live if they eat what is sweet, and they will die if they take poison. Beings who seek samadhi should refrain from eating five pungent plants of this world. 7:5

”If these five are eaten cooked, they increase one’s sexual desire; if they are eaten raw, they increase one’s anger. 7:5

”Therefore, even if people in this world who eat pungent plants can expound the twelve divisions of the sutra canon, the gods and immortals of the ten directions will stay far away from them because they smell so bad. However, after they eat these things the hungry ghosts will hover around and kiss their lips. Being always in the presence of ghosts, their blessings and virtue dissolve as the days go by, and they experience no lasting benefit. 7:6

”People who eat pungent plants and also cultivate samadhi will not be protected by the Bodhisattvas, gods, immortals, or good spirits of the ten directions; therefore, the tremendously powerful demon kings, able to do as they please, will appear in the body of a

Buddha and speak dharma for them, denouncing the prohibitive precepts and praising lust, rage, and delusion. 7:8

”When their lives end, these people will join the retinue of demon kings. When they use up their blessings as demons, they will fall into the Unintermittent Hell. 7:11

”Ananda, those who cultivate for Bodhi should never eat the five pungent plants. This is the first of the gradual stages of cultivation. 7:13

”What is the essence of karmic offenses? Ananda, beings who want to enter samadhi must first firmly uphold the pure precepts. 7:14

”They must sever thoughts of lust, not partake of wine or meat, and eat cooked rather than raw foods. Ananda, if cultivators do not sever lust and killing, it will be impossible for them to transcend the triple realm. 7:15

”You should look upon lustful desire as upon a poisonous snake or a resentful bandit. First hold to the Sound-Hearer’s four or eight parajikas in order to control your physical activity; then cultivate the Bodhisattva’s pure regulations in order to control your mental activity. 7:16

”When the prohibitive precepts are successfully upheld, one will not create karma that leads to trading places in rebirth and to killing one another in this world. If one does not steal, one will not be indebted, and one will not have to pay back past debts in this world. 7:17

”If people who are pure in this way cultivate samadhi, they will naturally be able to contemplate the extent of the worlds of the ten directions with the physical body given them by their parents; without need of the heavenly eye, they will see the Buddhas speaking dharma and receive in person the sagely instruction. Obtaining spiritual penetrations, they will roam through the ten directions, gain clarity regarding past lives, and will not encounter difficulties and dangers. 7:19

”This is the second of the gradual stages of cultivation. 7:20

”What is the manifestation of karma? Ananda, such people as these, who are pure and who uphold the prohibitive precepts, do not have thoughts of greed and lust, and so they do not become dissipated in the pursuit of the six external defiling sense-objects. 7:21

”Because they do not pursue them, they turn around to their own source. Without the conditions of the defiling objects, there is nothing for the sense-organs to match themselves with, and so they reverse their flow, become one unit, and no longer function in six ways. 7:21

”All the lands of the ten directions are as brilliantly clear and pure as moonlight reflected in crystal. 7:22

”Their bodies and minds are blissful as they experience the equality of wonderful perfection, and they attain great peace. 7:22

”The secret perfection and pure wonder of all the Thus Come Ones appear before them. 7:23

”These people then obtain patience with the non-production of dharmas. They thereupon gradually cultivate according to their practices, until they reside securely in the sagely positions. 7:23

”This is the third of the gradual stages of cultivation. 7:24

”Ananda, these good people’s emotional love and desire are withered and dry, the sense-organs and sense objects no longer match, and so the residual habits do not continue to arise. 7:25

”By means of their complete wisdom, they understand that attachments of the mind are false. The bright perfection of their wisdom-nature shines throughout the ten directions, and this initial wisdom is called the ‘stage of dry wisdom.’ 7:25

”Although the habits of desire are initially dried up, they still have not merged with the Thus Come One’s flow of Dharma-water. 7:27

”Then, with this mind centered on the middle, they enter the flow where wonderful perfection reveals itself. From the truth of that wonderful perfection there repeatedly arise wonders of truth. They always dwell in the wonder of faith, until all false thinking is completely eliminated and the middle way is totally true. This is called the Mind that Resides in Faith. 7:28

”When true faith is clearly understood, then perfect penetration is total, and the three aspects of skandhas, places, and realms are no longer obstructions. Then all their habits throughout innumerable kalpas of past and future, during which they abandon bodies and receive bodies,

appear to them now in the present moment. These good people can remember everything and forget nothing. This is called the Mind that Resides in Mindfulness. 7:30

”When the wonderful perfection is completely true, that essential truth brings about a transformation. They go beyond the beginningless habits to reach the one essential brightness. Relying solely on this essential brightness, they progress toward true purity. This is called the Mind of Vigor. 7:31

”The essence of the mind reveals itself as total wisdom; this is called the Mind that Resides in Wisdom. 7:32

”As the wisdom and brightness are held steadfast, a profound stillness pervades. The stage at which the majesty of this stillness becomes constant and solid is called the Mind that Resides in Samadhi. 7:32

”The light of samadhi emits brightness. When the essence of the brightness enters deeply within, they only advance and never retreat. This is called the Mind of Irreversibility. 7:35

”When the progress of their minds is secure, and they hold their minds and protect them without loss, they connect with the life-breath of the Thus Come Ones of the ten directions. This is called the Mind that Protects the Dharma. 7:36

”Protecting their light of enlightenment, they can use this wonderful force to return to the Buddha’s light of compassion and to come back to stand firm with the Buddha. It is like two mirrors that are set facing one another, so that between them the exquisite images interreflect and enter into one another layer upon layer. This is called the Mind of Transference. 7:36

”With this secret interplay of light, they obtain the Buddha’s eternal solidity and unsurpassed wonderful purity. Dwelling in the unconditioned, they know no loss or dissipation. This is called the Mind that Resides in Precepts. 7:37

”Abiding in the precepts with self-mastery, they can roam throughout the ten directions, going anywhere they wish. This is called the Mind that Resides in Vows. 7:38

”Ananda, these good people use honest expedients to bring forth those ten minds. When the essence of these minds becomes dazzling, and the ten functions interconnect, then a single mind is perfectly accomplished. This is called the Dwellings of Bringing Forth the Resolve. 7:39

”From within this mind light comes forth like pure crystal, which reveals pure gold inside. Treading upon the previous wonderful mind as a ground is called the Dwelling of the Ground of Regulation. 7:40

”When the mind-ground connects with wisdom, both become bright and comprehensive. Traversing the ten directions then without obstruction is called the Dwelling of Cultivation. 7:40

”When their conduct is the same as the Buddhas’ and they take on the demeanor of a Buddha, then, like the intermediate skandha body searching for a father and mother, they penetrate the darkness with a hidden trust and enter the lineage of the Thus Come One. This is called the Dwelling of Noble Birth. 7:41

”Since they ride in the womb of the Way and will themselves become enlightened heirs, their human features are in no way deficient. This is called the Dwelling of Endowment with Skill-in-Means. 7:43

”With a physical appearance like that of a Buddha and a mind that is the same as well, they are said to be Dwelling in the Rectification of the Mind. 7:43

”United in body and mind, they easily grow and mature day by day. This is called the Dwelling of Irreversibility. 7:43

”With the efficacious appearance of ten bodies, which are simultaneously perfected, they are said to be at the Dwelling of a Pure Youth. 7:44

”Completely developed, they leave the womb and become sons of the Buddha. This is called the Dwelling of a Dharma Prince. 7:44

”Reaching the fullness of adulthood, they are like the chosen prince to whom the great king of a country turns over the affairs of state. When this Kshatriya king’s eldest son is ceremoniously anointed on the crown of the head, he has reached what is called the Dwelling of Anointing the Crown of the Head. 7:45

”Ananda, after these good men have become sons of the Buddha, they are replete with the limitlessly many wonderful virtues of the Thus Come Ones, and they comply and accord with

beings throughout the ten directions. This is called the Conduct of Happiness. 7:46

”Being well able to accommodate all living beings is called the Conduct of Benefiting. 7:48

”Enlightening oneself and enlightening others without putting forth any resistance is called the Conduct of Non-Opposition. 7:49

”To undergo birth in various forms continuously to the bounds of the future, equally throughout the three periods of time and pervading the ten directions, is called the Conduct of Endlessness. 7:51

”When everything is equally in accord, one never makes mistakes among the various Dharma doors. This is called the Conduct of Freedom from Deluded Confusion. 7:51

”Then within what is identical, myriad differences appear; the characteristics of every difference are seen, one and all, in identity. This is called the Conduct of Wholesome Manifestation. 7:52

”This continues until it includes all the dust motes that fill up empty space throughout the ten directions. In each and every mote of dust there appear the worlds of the ten directions. And yet the appearance of dust motes and the appearance of worlds do not interfere with one another. This is called the Conduct of Non-Attachment. 7:52

”Everything that appears before one is the foremost paramita. This is called the Conduct of Veneration. 7:53

”With such perfect fusion, one can model one-self after all the Buddhas of the ten directions. This is called the Conduct of Wholesome Dharma. 7:54

”To then be pure and without outflows in each and every way is the primary truth, which is unconditioned, the essence of the nature. This is called the Conduct of True Actuality. 7:54

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Chapter 7

"Ananda, when these good men replete with spiritual penetrations, have done the Buddhas’ work, are totally pure and absolutely true, and remain distant from obstacles and calamities, then they take living beings across while casting aside the appearance of taking them across.

They transform the unconditioned mind and go toward the path of Nirvana. This is called the Transference of Saving and Protecting Living Beings, while apart from the Appearance of Living Beings. 7:55

”To destroy what should be destroyed and to remain far removed from what should be left behind is called the Transference of Indestructibility. 7:57

”Fundamental enlightenment is profound indeed, an enlightenment equal to the Buddhas’ enlightenment. This is called the Transference of Sameness with All Buddhas. 7:58

”When absolute truth is discovered, one’s level is the same as the level of all Buddhas. This is called the Transference of Reaching All Places. 7:58

”Worlds and Thus Come Ones include one another without any obstruction. This is called the Transference of a Treasury of Inexhaustible Merit and Virtue. 7:58

”Since they are identical with the Buddha-ground, they create causes which are pure at each and every level. Brilliance emanates from them as they rely on these causes, and they go straight down the path to Nirvana. This is called the Transference of Following in Accord with the Identity of All Good Roots. 7:60

”When the true roots are set down, then all living beings in the ten directions are my own nature. Not a single being is lost, as this nature is successfully perfected. This is called the Transference or Contemplating All Living Beings Equally. 7:61

”All dharmas are themselves apart from all appearances, and yet there is no attachment either to their existence or to separation from them. This is called the Transference of the Appearance of True Suchness. 7:62

”That which is thus is truly obtained, and there is no obstruction throughout the ten directions. This is called the Transference of Unfettered Liberation. 7:63

”When the virtue of the nature is perfectly accomplished, the boundaries of the dharma realm are destroyed. This is called the Transference of the Limitlessness of the Dharma Realm. 7:63

”Ananda, when these good men have completely purified these forty-one minds, they further accomplish four kinds of wonderfully perfect additional practices. 7:64

”When the enlightenment of a Buddha is just about to become a function of his own mind, it is on the verge of emerging but has not yet emerged, and so it can be compared to the point just before wood ignites when it is drilled to produce fire. Therefore it is called the Level of Heat. 7:65

”He continues on with his mind, treading where the Buddhas tread, as if relying and yet not. It is as if he were climbing a lofty mountain, to the point where his body is in space but there remains a slight obstruction beneath him. Therefore it is called the Level of the Summit. 7:65

”When the mind and the Buddha are two and yet the same, he has well obtained the Middle Way. He is like someone who endures something when it seems impossible to either hold it in or let it out. Therefore it is called the Level of Patience. 7:66

”When numbers are destroyed, there are no such designations as the Middle Way or as confusion and enlightenment; this is called the Level of Being First in the World. 7:67

”Ananda, these good men have successfully penetrated through to Great Bodhi. Their enlightenment is entirely like the Thus Come One’s. They have fathomed the state of Buddhahood. This is called the Ground of Happiness. 7:68

”The differences enter into identity; the identity is destroyed. This is called the Ground of Leaving Filth. 7:69

”At the point of ultimate purity, brightness comes forth. This is called the Ground of Emitting Light. 7:70

”When the brightness becomes ultimate, enlightenment is full. This is called the Ground of Blazing Wisdom. 7:70

”No identity or difference can be attained. This is called the Ground of Invincibility. 7:70

”With unconditioned True Suchness, the nature is spotless, and brightness is revealed. This is called the Ground of Manifestation. 7:71

”Coming to the farthest limits of True Suchness is called the Ground of Traveling Far. 7:72

”The single mind of True Suchness is called the Ground of Immovability. 7:72

”Bringing forth the function of True Suchness is called the Ground of Good Wisdom. 7:73

”Ananda, all Bodhisattvas at this point and beyond have reached the effortless way in their cultivation. Their merit and virtue are perfected, and so all the previous positions are also called the Level of Cultivation. 7:73

”Then with a wonderful cloud of compassionate protection one covers the Sea of Nirvana. This is called the Ground of the Dharma Cloud. 7:74

”The Thus Come Ones counter the flow as the Bodhisattvas thus reach this point through compliance with practice. Their enlightenments intermingle; it is therefore called Equal Enlightenment. 7:75

”Ananda, the enlightenment which encompasses the mind of dry wisdom through to the culmination of Equal Enlightenment is the initial attainment of the Vajra Mind. This constitutes the level of Initial Dry Wisdom. 7:76

”Thus there are totals of twelve single and grouped levels. At last they reach Wonderful Enlightenment and accomplish the Unsurpassed Way. 7:77

”At all these levels they use vajra contemplation of the ten profound analogies for the ways in which things are like an illusion. In Shamatha they use the Thus Come Ones’ Vipashyana to cultivate them purely, to be certified to them, and to gradually enter them more and more deeply. 7:78

”Ananda, because they put to use the three means of advancement throughout all of them, they are well able to accomplish the fifty-five stages of the True Bodhi Path. 7:80

”This manner of contemplation is called ‘proper contemplation.’ Contemplation other than this is called ‘deviant contemplation.’” 7:80

Then Dharma Prince Manjushri arose from his seat, and in the midst of the assembly he bowed at the Buddha’s feet and said to the Buddha, “What is the name of this sutra and how should we and all living beings uphold it?” 7:82

The Buddha told Manjushri, “This sutra is called ‘The Summit, Syi Dan Dwo Bwo Da La, and Unsurpassed Precious Seal of the Seal of the Great Buddha, and the Pure, Clear, Ocean-Like Eye of the Thus Comes Ones of the Ten Directions.” 7:83

”It is also called ‘The Cause for Saving a Relative’: to rescue Ananda and the Bhikshuni Nature, who is now in this assembly, so that they obtain the Bodhi mind and enter the sea of pervasive knowledge. 7:83

”It is also called ‘The Tathagata’s Secret Cause of Cultivation, His Certification to the Complete Meaning.’ 7:84

”It is also called ‘The Great Pervasive Method, the Wonderful Lotus Flower King, the Dharani Mantra which is the Mother Of All Buddhas Of the Ten Directions.’ 7:84

”It is also called ‘The Foremost Shurangama, Sections and Phrases for Anointing the Crown of the Head, and All Bodhisattvas’ Myriad Practices.’ 7:85

”Thus should you respectfully uphold it.” 7:86

After this was said, Ananda and all in the great assembly immediately received the Thus Come One’s instruction in the secret seal, the meaning of Bwo Da La, and heard these names for the complete meaning of this sutra. 7:86

They were suddenly enlightened to dhyana, advanced in their cultivation to the sagely position, and increased their understanding of the wonderful principle. Their minds were focused and serene. 7:87

Ananda cut off and cast aside six sections of subtle afflictions in his cultivation of the mind in the Triple Realm. 7:87

He arose from his seat, bowed at the Buddha’s feet, placed his palms together respectfully, and said to the Buddha, “The Great, Awesome and Virtuous World Honored One, whose compassionate sound knows no limit, has well instructed living beings as to their extremely subtle submersion in delusion and has caused me on this day to become blissful in body and mind and to obtain enormous benefit. 7:88

”World Honored One, if the wonderful brightness, of this truly pure and wonderful mind is basically all-pervading, then everything on the great earth, including the grasses and trees, the wriggling worms and tiny forms of life are originally True Suchness and are themselves the Thus Come One - the Buddha’s true body. 7:89

”Since the Buddha’s body is true and real, how can there also be hells, hungry ghosts, animals, asuras, humans, gods, and other paths of rebirth? World Honored One, do these paths exist naturally of themselves, or are they created by living beings’ falseness and habits? 7:90

”World Honored One, the bhikshuni Precious Lotus Fragrance, for example, received the Bodhisattva Precepts and then indulged in lustful desire, saying that sexual acts did not involve killing or stealing and that they carried no karmic retribution. But after saying this, her female organs caught fire, and then the raging blaze spread throughout all her joints as she fell into the Unintermittent Hell alive. 7:90

”And there were the Mighty King Crystal and the Bhikshu Good Stars. Crystal exterminated the Gautama clan and Good Stars lied and said that all dharmas are empty. They both sank into the Unintermittent Hell alive. 7:93

”Are these hells fixed places, or do they arise spontaneously? Is it that each individual undergoes whatever kind of karma he or she creates? I only hope the Buddha will be compassionate and instruct those of us who do not understand this. May he cause all beings who uphold the precepts to positively and respectfully receive this determination upon hearing it and be careful and clear, free from any violations.” 7:96

The Buddha said to Ananda, “What a good question! You want to keep all living beings from entering into deviant views. You should listen attentively now and I will explain this matter for you. 7:97

”Actually, Ananda, all living beings are fundamentally true and pure, but because of their false views they give rise to the falseness of habits, which are divided into an internal aspect and an external aspect. 7:97

”Ananda, the internal aspect refers to what occurs inside living beings. Because of love and defilement, they produce the falseness of emotions. When these emotions accumulate without cease, they can create the fluids of love. 7:98

”That is why living beings’ mouths water when they think about delicious food. When they think about a deceased person, either with fondness or with anger, tears will flow from their eyes. When they are greedy for wealth and jewels, a current of lust will course through their hearts. When confronted with a smooth and supple body, their minds become attached to lustful conduct and from both male and female organs will come spontaneous secretions. 7:98

”Ananda, although the kinds of love differ, their flow and oppression is the same. With this moisture, one cannot ascend, but will naturally fall. This is called the ‘internal aspect.’ 7:99

”Ananda, the external aspect refers to what happens outside living beings. Because of longing and yearning, they invent the fallacy of discursive thought. When this reasoning accumulates without cease, it can create ascending vapors. 7:100

”That is why when living beings uphold the prohibitive precepts in their minds, their bodies will be buoyant and feel light and clear. When they uphold mantra seals in their minds, they will command a heroic and resolute perspective. When they have the desire in their minds to be born in the heavens, in their dreams they will have thoughts of flying and ascending. When they cherish the Buddhalands in their minds, then the sagely realms will appear in a shimmering vision, and they will serve the good and wise advisors with little thought for their own lives. 7:100

”Ananda, although the thought varies, the lightness and uplifting is the same. With flight and ascension, one will not sink, but will naturally become transcendent. This is called the ‘external aspect.’ 7:102

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Chapter 7

"Ananda, all beings in the world are caught up in the continuity of birth and death. Birth happens because of their habitual tendencies; death comes through flow and change. When they are on the verge of dying, but when the final warmth has not left their bodies, all the good and evil they have done in that life suddenly and simultaneously manifests. They experience the intermingling of two habits: an abhorrence of death and an attraction to life. 7:102

”Endowed solely with thought, they will fly and can certainly be reborn in the heavens above. If they fly from the heart, and if they have blessings and wisdom, as well as pure vows, then their hearts will spontaneously open and they will see the Buddhas of the ten directions and all their pure lands and they will be reborn in whichever one they wish. 7:104

”When they have more thought than emotion, they are not quite as ethereal and so they become flying immortals, great mighty ghost kings, space traveling-yakshas, or earth-traveling rakshasas who roam the form heavens, going where they please without obstruction. 7:107

”Among them may be some with good vows and good hearts who protect and uphold my Dharma. Perhaps they protect the pure precepts by following and supporting those who hold precepts. Perhaps they protect spiritual mantras by following and supporting those who hold mantras. Perhaps they protect Chan samadhi by guarding and comforting those who are patient with dharmas. These beings are close at hand beneath the Thus Come One’s seat. 7:109

”When their thought and emotion are of equal proportions, they cannot fly and they do not fall, but are born in the human realm. If their thought is bright, their wits are keen. If their emotion is dark, their wits are dull. 7:110

”When they have more emotion than thought, they enter the animal realm. With heavier emotion, they become fur-bearing beasts; with lighter emotion, they become winged creatures. 7:112

”When they have seventy percent emotion and thirty percent thought, they fall beneath the wheel of water into the regions of fire, where they come into contact with steam which is itself like a terrible blaze. In the bodies of hungry ghosts, they are constantly burned by that fire. Even water harms them, and they have nothing to eat or drink for hundreds of thousands of kalpas. 7:112

”When they have ninety percent emotion and ten percent thought, they fall through the wheel of fire until their bodies enter wind and fire, in a region where the two interact. With lighter emotion they are born in the intermittent hell; with heavier emotion they are born in the Unintermittent Hell. 7:114

”When they are possessed entirely of emotion, they sink into the Avichi Hell. If the emotion has gone into their hearts so that they slander the Great Vehicle, defame the Buddha’s pure precepts, speak crazy and false dharma, are greedy for offerings from the faithful, recklessly accept the respect of others, commit the five rebellious acts and the ten major offenses, then they are further reborn in Avichi Hells throughout the ten directions. 7:114

”Although one receives one’s due according to the evil karma one has created, a group can undergo an identical lot, and there are definite places where it occurs. 7:117

”Ananda, it all comes from the karmic responses which living beings themselves invoke. They create ten habitual causes and undergo six interacting retributions. 7:118

”What are the ten causes? Ananda, the first consists of habits of lust and reciprocal interactions which give rise to mutual rubbing. When this rubbing continues without cease, it produces a tremendous raging fire within which movement occurs, just as warmth arises between a person’s hands when he rubs them together. 7:118

”Because these two habits set each other ablaze, there come into being the iron bed, the copper pillar, and other such experiences. 7:119

”Therefore the Thus Come Ones of the ten directions look upon the practice of lust and name it the ‘fire of desire.’ Bodhisattvas avoid desire as they would a fiery pit. 7:119

”The second consists of habits of greed and intermingled scheming which give rise to a suction. When this suction becomes dominant and incessant, it produces intense cold and solid ice where freezing occurs, just as a sensation of cold is experienced when a person draws in a blast of wind through his mouth. 7:120

”Because these two habits clash together, there come into being chattering, whimpering and shuddering; blue, red, and white lotuses; cold and ice; and other such experiences. 7:120

”Therefore the Thus Come Ones of the ten directions look upon excessive seeking and name it ‘the water of greed’. Bodhisattvas avoid greed as they would a sea of pestilence. 7:120

”The third consists of habits of arrogance and resulting friction which give rise to mutual intimidation. When it accelerates without cease, it produces torrents and rapids which create restless waves of water, just as water is produced when a person continuously works his tongue in an effort to taste flavors. 7:121

”Because these two habits incite one another, there come into being the River of Blood, the River of Ashes, the Burning Sand, the Poisonous Sea, the Molten Copper which is poured over one or which must be swallowed, and other such experiences. 7:121

”Therefore, the Thus Come Ones of the ten directions look upon self-satisfaction and name it ‘drinking the water of stupidity.’ Bodhisattvas avoid arrogance as they would a huge deluge.

7:122

”The fourth consists of habits of hatred which give rise to mutual defiance. When this defiance binds one without cease, one’s heart becomes so hot that it catches fire, and the molten vapor turns into metal. 7:122

”From it is produced the Mountain of Knives, the Iron Cudgel, the Tree of Swords, the Wheel of Swords, Axes and Halberds, and Spears and Saws. It is like the intent to kill surging forth when a person meets a mortal enemy, so that he is roused to action. 7:122

”Because these two habits clash with one another, there come into being castration and hacking, beheading and mutilation, filing and sticking, flogging and beating, and other such experiences. 7:123

”Therefore, the Thus Come Ones of the ten directions look upon hatred and name it ‘sharp knives and swords.’ Bodhisattvas avoid hatred as they would their own execution. 7:123 .

”The fifth consists of habits of deception and misleading involvements which give rise to mutual guile. When such maneuvering continues without cease, it produces the ropes and wood of a gallows for hanging, like the grass and trees that grow when water saturates a field. 7:124

”Because the two habits perpetuate one another, there come into being handcuffs and fetters, cangues and locks, whips and clubs, sticks and cudgels, and other such experiences. 7:124

”Therefore, the Thus Come Ones of the ten directions look upon deception and name it a ‘treacherous crook.’ Bodhisattvas fear deception as they would a savage wolf. 7:125

”The sixth consists of habits of lying and combined fraudulence which give rise to mutual cheating. When false accusations continue without cease, one becomes adept at corruption. 7:125

”From this there come into being Dust and Dirt, Excrement and Urine, filth, stench, and impurities. It is like the obscuring of everyone’s vision when the dust is stirred up by the wind. 7:125

”Because these two habits augment one another, there come into being Sinking and Drowning, Tossing and Pitching, Flying and Falling, Floating and Submerging, and other such experiences. 7:126

”Therefore, the Thus Come Ones of the ten directions look upon lying and name it ‘robbery and murder.’ Bodhisattvas regard lying as they would treading on a venomous snake. 7:126

”The seventh consists of habits of animosity and interconnected enmity which give rise to grievances. From this there come into being Flying Rocks, Thrown Stones, Caskets and Closets, Cages on Wheels, Jars and Containers, and Bags and Rods. It is like someone harming others secretly - he harbors, cherishes, and nurtures evil. 7:127

”Because these two habits swallow one another up, there come into being Tossing and Pitching, Seizing and Apprehending, Striking and Shooting, Casting Away and Pinching, and other such experiences. 7:127

”Therefore, the Thus Come Ones of the ten directions look upon animosity and name it a ‘disobedient and harmful ghost.’[Bodhisattvas regard animosity as they would drinking poisonous wine. 7:128

”The eighth consists of habits of views and the admixture of understandings, such as satkayadrishti, views, moral prohibitions, grasping, and deviant insight into various kinds of karma, which bring about opposition and produce mutual antagonism. From them there come into being court officials, deputies, certifiers, and registrars. They are like people traveling on a road, who meet each other coming and going. 7:128

”Because these two habits influence one another, there come into being official inquiries, baited questions, examinations, interrogations, public investigations, exposure, the youths who record good and evil, carrying the record books of the offenders’ arguments and rationalizations, and other such experiences. 7:130

”Therefore, the Thus Come Ones of the ten directions look upon evil views and name them the ‘pit of views.’ Bodhisattvas regard having false and one-sided views as they would standing on the edge of a steep ravine full of poison. 7:131

”The ninth consists of the habits of injustice and their interconnected support of one another; they result in instigating false charges and libeling. From them are produced crushing between mountains, crushing between rocks, stone rollers, stone grinders, plowing, and

pulverizing. It is like a slanderous villain who engages in persecuting good people unjustly. 7:131

”Because these two habits join ranks, there come into being pressing and pushing, bludgeons and compulsion, squeezing and straining, weighing and measuring, and other such experiences. 7:132

”Therefore, the Thus Come Ones of the ten directions look upon harmful accusations and name them ‘a treacherous tiger.’ Bodhisattvas regard injustice as they would a bolt of lightning. 7:133

”The tenth consists of the habits of litigation and the mutual disputations which give rise to covering. From them there are produced a look in the mirror and illumination by the lamp. It is like being in direct sunlight: there is no way one can hide one’s shadow. 7:133

”Because these two habits bicker back and forth, there come into being evil companions, the mirror of karma, the fiery pearl, exposure of past karma, inquests, and other such experiences. 7:134

”Therefore, all the Thus Come Ones of the ten directions look upon covering and name it a ‘yin villain.’ Bodhisattvas regard covering as they would having to carry a mountain atop their heads while walking upon the sea. 7:135

”What are the six retributions? Ananda, living beings create karma with their six consciousnesses. The evil retributions they call down upon themselves come from the six sense organs. 7:135

”What are the evil retributions that arise from the six sense organs? The first is the retribution of seeing, which beckons one and leads one to evil ends. The karma of seeing intermingles, so that at the time of death one first sees a raging conflagration which fills the ten directions. The deceased one’s spiritual consciousness takes flight, but then falls. Riding on a wisp of smoke, it enters the Unintermittent Hell. 7:136

”There, it is aware of two appearances. One is a perception of brightness in which can be seen all sorts of evil things, and it gives rise to boundless fear. The other is a perception of darkness in which there is total stillness and no sight, and it experiences boundless terror. 7:139

”When the fire that comes from seeing burns the sense of hearing, it becomes cauldrons of boiling water and molten copper. When it burns the breath, it becomes black smoke and purple fumes. When it burns the sense of taste, it becomes scorching hot pellets and molten iron gruel. When it burns the sense of touch, it becomes white-hot embers and glowing coals. When it burns the mind, it becomes stars of fire that shower everywhere and whip up and inflame the entire realm of space. 7:140

”The second is the retribution of hearing, which beckons one and leads one to evil ends. The karma of hearing intermingles, and thus at the time of death one first sees gigantic waves that drown heaven and earth. The deceased one’s spiritual consciousness falls into the water and rides the current into the Unintermittent Hell. 7:141

”There, it is aware of two sensations. One is open hearing, in which it hears all sorts of noise and its essential spirit becomes confused. The other is closed hearing, in which there is total stillness and no hearing, and its soul sinks into oblivion. 7:142

”When the waves from hearing flow into the hearing, they become scolding and interrogation. When they flow into the seeing, they become thunder and roaring and evil poisonous vapors. When they flow into the breath, they become rain and fog that is permeated with poisonous organisms that entirely fill up the body. When they flow into the sense of taste, they become pus and blood and every kind of filth. When they flow into the sense of touch, they become animals and ghosts, and excrement and urine. When they flow into the mind, they become lightning and hail which ravage the heart and soul. 7:143

”The third is the retribution of smelling, which beckons one and leads one to evil ends. The karma of smelling intermingles, and thus at the time of death one first sees a poisonous smoke that permeates the atmosphere near and far. The deceased one’s spiritual consciousness wells up out of the earth and enters the Unintermittent Hell. 7:144

”There, it is aware of two sensations. One is unobstructed smelling, in which it is thoroughly infused with the evil vapors and its mind becomes distressed. The other is obstructed smelling, in which its breath is cut off and there is no passage, and it lies stifled and suffocating on the ground. 7:145

”When the vapor of smelling invades the breath, it becomes cross-examination and bearing witness. When it invades the seeing, it becomes fire and torches. When it invades the hearing, it becomes sinking and drowning, oceans, and bubbling cauldrons. When it invades the sense of taste, it becomes putrid or rancid foods. When it invades the sense of touch, it becomes ripping apart and beating to a pulp. It also becomes a huge mountain of flesh which has a

hundred thousand eyes and which is sucked and fed upon by numberless worms. When it invades the mind, it becomes ashes, pestilent airs, and flying sand and gravel which cut the body to ribbons. 7:146

”The fourth is the retribution of tasting, which beckons one and leads one to evil ends. This karma of tasting intermingles, and thus at the time of death one first sees an iron net ablaze with a raging fire that covers over the entire world. The deceased one’s spiritual consciousness passes down through this hanging net, and suspended upside down it enters the Unintermittent Hell. 7:147

”There, it is aware of two sensations. One is a sucking air which congeals into ice so that it freezes the flesh of his body. The other is a spitting blast of air which spews out a raging fire that roasts his bones and marrow to a pulp. 7:148

”When the tasting of flavors passes through the sense of taste, it becomes what must be acknowledged and what must be endured. When it passes through the seeing, it becomes burning metal and stones. When it passes through the hearing, it becomes sharp weapons and knives. When it passes through the sense of smell, it becomes a vast iron cage that encloses the entire land. When it passes through the sense of touch, it becomes bows and arrows, crossbows, and darts. When it passes through the mind, it becomes flying pieces of molten iron that rain down from out of space. 7:149

”The fifth is the retribution of touching, which beckons one and leads one to evil ends. The karma of touching intermingles, and thus at the time of death one first sees huge mountains closing in on one from four sides, leaving no path of escape. The deceased one’s spiritual consciousness then sees a vast iron city. Fiery snakes and fiery dogs, wolves, lions, ox-headed jail keepers, and horse-headed rakshasas brandishing spears and lances drive it into the iron city toward the Unintermittent Hell. 7:150

”There, it is aware of two sensations. One is touch that involves coming together, in which mountains come together to squeeze its body until its flesh, bones, and blood are totally dispersed. The other is touch that involves separation, in which knives and swords attack the body, ripping the heart and liver to shreds. 7:151

”When this touching passes through the sensation of touch, it becomes striking, binding, stabbing, and piercing. When it passes through the seeing, it becomes burning and scorching. When it passes through the hearing, it becomes questioning, investigating, court examinations, and interrogation. When it passes through the sense of smell, it becomes enclosures, bags, beating, and binding up. When it passes through the sense of taste, it

becomes plowing, pinching, chopping, and severing. When it passes through the mind, it becomes falling, flying, frying, and broiling. 7:151

”The sixth is the retribution of thinking, which beckons one and leads one to evil ends. The karma of thinking intermingles, and thus at the time of death one first sees a foul wind which devastates the land. The deceased one’s spiritual consciousness is blown up into space, and then, spiraling downward, it rides that wind straight into the Unintermittent Hell. 7:153

”There, it is aware of two sensations. One is extreme confusion, which causes it to be frantic and to race about ceaselessly. The other is not confusion, but rather an acute awareness which causes it to suffer from endless roasting and burning, the extreme pain of which is difficult to bear. 7:154

”When this deviant thought combines with thinking, it becomes locations and places. When it combines with seeing, it becomes inspection and testimonies. When it combines with hearing, it becomes huge crushing rocks, ice and frost, dirt and fog. When it combines with smelling, it becomes a great fiery car, a fiery boat, and a fiery jail. When it combines with tasting, it becomes loud calling, wailing, and regretful crying. When it combines with touch, it becomes sensations of large and small, where ten thousand births and ten thousands deaths are endured every day, and of lying with one’s face to the ground. 7:154

”Ananda, these are called the ten causes and six retributions of the hells, which are all created by the confusion and falseness of living beings. 7:156

”If living beings create this evil karma simultaneously, they enter the Avichi Hell and endure limitless suffering, passing through limitless kalpas. 7:157

”If each of the six sense organs creates them and if what is done includes each state and each sense organ, then the person will enter the Eight Unintermittent Hells. 7:157

”If the three karmas of body, mouth, and mind commit acts of killing, stealing, and lust, the person will enter the eighteen hells. 7:158

”If the three karmas are not all involved, and there is perhaps just one act of killing and/or of stealing, then the person must enter the Thirty-six Hells. 7:159

”If the sense organ of sight alone commits just one karmic offense, then the person must enter the one hundred and eight hells. 7:159

”Because of this, living beings who do certain things create certain karma, and so in the world they enter collective hells, which arise from false thinking and which originally are not there at all. 7:160

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"And then, Ananda, after the living beings who have slandered and destroyed rules and deportment, violated the Bodhisattva precepts, slandered the Buddha’s Nirvana, and created various other kinds of karma, pass through many kalpas of being burned in the inferno, they finally finish paying for their offenses and are reborn as ghosts. 7:161

”If greed for material objects was the original cause that made the person commit offenses, then, after he has finished paying for his crimes, he takes shape when he encounters material objects, and he is called a strange ghost. 7:162

”If it was greed for lust that made the person commit offenses, then, after he has finished paying for his crimes, he takes shape when he encounters the wind, and he is called a drought-ghost. 7:163

”If it was greed to lie that made the person commit offenses, then, after he has finished paying for his crimes, he takes shape when he encounters an animal, and he is called a mei ghost. 7:164

”If it was greed for hatred that made the person commit offenses, then, after he has finished paying for his crimes, he takes shape when he encounters worms, and he is called a ku poison ghost. 7:165

”If it was greed for animosity that made the person commit offenses, then, after he has finished paying for his crimes, he takes shape when he encounters degeneration, and he is called a pestilence ghost. 7:166

”If it was greed to be arrogant that made the person commit offenses, then after he has finished paying for his crimes, he takes shape when he encounters gases, and he is called a hungry ghost. 7:166

”If it was greed to be unjust to others that made the person commit offenses, then after he has finished paying for his crimes, he takes shape when he encounters darkness, and he is

called a paralysis ghost. 7:168

”If it was greed for views that made the person commit offenses, then, after he has finished paying for his crimes, he takes shape when he encounters essential energy, and he is called a wang-liang ghost. 7:168

”If it was greed for deception that made the person commit offenses, then, after he has finished paying for his crimes, he takes shape when he encounters brightness, and he is called a servant ghost. 7:170

”If it was greed to be litigious that made the person commit offenses, then, after he has finished paying for his crimes, he takes shape when he encounters people, and he is called a messenger ghost. 7:171

”Ananda, such a person’s fall is due to his totally emotional level of functioning. When his karmic fire has burned out, he will rise up to be reborn as a ghost. This is occasioned by his own karma of false thinking. If he awakens to Bodhi, then in the wonderful perfect brightness there isn’t anything at all. 7:173

”Moreover, Ananda, when his karma as a ghost is ended, the problem of emotion as opposed to discursive thought is resolved. At that point he must pay back in kind what he borrowed from others to resolve those grievances. He is born into the body of an animal to repay his debts from past lives. 7:175

”The retribution of the strange ghost of material objects is finished when the object is destroyed and it is reborn in the world, usually as a species of owl. 7:176

”The retribution of the drought ghost of the wind is finished when the wind subsides, and it is reborn in the world, usually as a species of weird creature which gives inauspicious prognostications. 7:176

”The retribution of the mei ghost of an animal is finished when the animal dies, and it is reborn in the world, usually as a species of fox. 7:177

”The retribution of the ku ghost in the form of worms is finished when the ku is exhausted, and it is reborn in the world, usually as a species of venomous creature. 7:177

”The retribution of a pestilence ghost found in degeneration is finished when the degeneration is complete, and it is reborn in the world, usually as a species of tapeworm. 7:178

”The retribution of the ghost which takes shape in gases is finished when the gases are gone, and it is then reborn in the world, usually as a species of eating animal. 7:181

”The retribution of the ghost of prolonged darkness is finished when the darkness ends, and it is then reborn in the world, usually as a species of animal used for clothing or service. 7:181

”The retribution of the ghost which unites with energy is finished when the union dissolves, and it is then reborn in the world, usually as a species of migratory creature. 7:182

”The retribution of the ghost of brightness and intellect is finished when the brightness disappears, and it is then reborn in the world, usually as a species of auspicious creature. 7:182

”The retribution of the ghost that relies on a person is finished when the person dies, and it is then reborn in the world, usually as a species of domestic animal. 7:183

”Ananda, all this is due to the burning out of his karmic fire in payment for his debts from past lives. The rebirth as an animal is also occasioned by his own false and empty karma. If he awakens to Bodhi, then fundamentally none of these false conditions will exist at all. 7:183

”You mentioned Precious Lotus Fragrance, King Crystal, and Bhikshu Good Stars. Evil karma such as theirs was created by them alone. It did not fall down out of the heavens or well up from the earth, nor was it imposed upon them by some person. Their own falseness brought it into being, and so they themselves have to undergo it. In the Bodhi mind, it is empty and false - a cohesion of false thoughts. 7:183

”Moreover, Ananda, if while repaying his past debts by undergoing rebirth as an animal, such a living being pays back more than he owed, he will then be reborn as a human to rectify the excess. 7:185

”If he is a person with strength, blessings, and virtue, then once he is in the human realm, he will not have to lose his human rebirth after what is owed him is restored. But if he lacks blessings, then he will return to the animal realm to continue repaying his debts. 7:185

”Ananda, you should know that once the debt is paid, whether with money, material goods, or manual labor, the process of repayment naturally comes to an end. 7:186

”But if in the process he took the lives of other beings or ate their flesh, then he continues in the same way, passing through kalpas as many as motes of fine dust, taking turns devouring and being slaughtered in a cycle that sends him up and down endlessly. 7:186

”There is no way to put a stop to it, except through Shamatha or through a Buddha’s coming to the world. 7:187

”You should know that when owls and their kind have paid back their debts, they regain their original form and are born as people, but among those who are corrupt and obstinate. 7:187

”When creatures that are inauspicious have paid back their debts, they regain their original form and are born as people, but among those who are abnormal. 7:188

”When foxes have paid back their debts, they regain their original forms and are born as people, but among those who are simpletons. 7:189

”When creatures of the venomous category have paid back their debts, they regain their original form and are born as people, but among those who are hateful. 7:189

”When tapeworms and their like have paid back their debts, they regain their original form and are born as people, but among those who are lowly. 7:190

”When the edible types of creatures have paid back their debts, they regain their original form and are reborn as people, but among those who are weak. 7:190

”When creatures that are used for clothing or service have paid back their debts, they regain their original form and are reborn as people, but among those who do hard labor. 7:191

”When creatures that migrate have paid back their debts, they regain their original form and are reborn as people among those who are literate. 7:191

”When auspicious creatures have paid back their debts, they regain their original form and are reborn as people among those who are intelligent. 7:192

”When domestic animals have paid back their debts, they regain their original form and are reborn as people among those who are well-informed. 7:192

”Ananda, these are all beings that have finished paying back former debts and are born again in the human realm. They are involved in a beginningless scheme of karma and being upside-down in which their lives are spent killing one another and being killed by one another. They do not get to meet the Thus Come One or hear the Proper Dharma. They just abide in the wearisome dust, passing through a repetitive cycle. Such people can truly be called pitiful. 7:192

”Furthermore, Ananda, there are people who do not rely on proper enlightenment to cultivate samadhi, but cultivate in some special way that is based on their false thinking. Holding to the idea of perpetuating their physical bodies, they roam in the mountains and forests in places people do not go and become ten kinds of immortals. 7:194

”Ananda, some living beings with unflagging resolution make themselves strong with doses of medicine. When they have perfected this method of ingestion, they are known as earth-traveling immortals. 7:195

”Some of these beings with unflagging resolution make themselves strong through the use of grasses and herbs. When they have perfected this method of taking herbs, they are known as flying immortals. 7:196

”Some of these beings with unflagging resolution make themselves strong through the use of metal and stone. When they have perfected this method of transformation, they are known as roaming immortals. 7:196

”Some of these beings with unflagging resolution make themselves strong through movement and cessation. When they have perfected their breath and essence, they are known as space-traveling immortals. 7:197

”Some beings with unflagging resolution make themselves strong by using the flow of saliva. When they have perfected the virtues of this moisture, they are known as heaven-traveling immortals. 7:198

”Some beings with unflagging resolution make themselves strong with the essence of sun and moon. When they have perfected the inhalation of this purity, they are known as immortals of

penetrating conduct. 7:199

”Some beings with unflagging resolution make themselves strong through mantras and prohibitions. When they have perfected these spells and dharmas, they are known as immortals with Way-conduct. 7:201

”Some beings with unflagging resolution make themselves strong through the use of thought-processes. When they have perfected thought and memory, they are known as immortals with illumining conduct. 7:201

”Some beings with unflagging resolution make themselves strong through intercourse. When they have perfected the response, they are known as immortals with essential conduct. 7:202

”Some beings with unflagging resolution make themselves strong through transformations and changes. When they have perfected their awakening, they are known as immortals of absolute conduct. 7:203

”Ananda, these are all people who smelt their minds but do not cultivate proper enlightenment. They obtain some special principle of life and can live for thousands or tens of thousands of years. They retire deep into the mountains or onto islands in the sea and cut themselves off from the human realm. However, they are still part of the turning wheel, because they flow and turn according to their false thinking and do not cultivate samadhi. When their reward is finished, they must still return and enter the various destinies. 7:204

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"Ananda, there are many people in the world who do not seek what is eternal and who cannot yet renounce the kindness and love they feel for their wives. 7:206

”But they have no interest in deviant sexual activity and so develop a purity and produce light. When their life ends, they draw near the sun and moon and are among those born in the Heaven of the Four Kings. 7:206

”Those whose sexual love for their wives is slight, but who have not yet obtained the entire flavor of dwelling in purity, transcend the light of sun and moon at the end of their lives, and reside at the summit of the human realm. They are among those born in the Trayastrimsha Heaven. 7:208

”Those who become temporarily involved when they meet with desire but who forget about it when it is finished, and who, while in the human realm, are active less and quiet more, abide at the end of their lives in light and emptiness where the illumination of sun and moon does not reach. These beings have their own light, and they are among those born in the Suyama Heaven. 7:210

”Those who are quiet all the time, but who are not yet able to resist when stimulated by contact, ascend at the end of their lives to a subtle and ethereal place; they will not be drawn into the lower realms. The destruction of the realms of humans and gods and the obliteration of kalpas by the three disasters will not reach them, for they are among those born in the Tushita Heaven. 7:211

”Those who are devoid of desire, but who will engage in it for the sake of their partner, even though the flavor of doing so is like the flavor of chewing wax, are born at the end of their lives in a place of transcending transformations. They are among those born in the Heaven of Bliss by Transformation. 7:212

”Those who have no kind of worldly thoughts while doing what worldly people do, who are lucid and beyond such activity while involved in it, are capable at the end of their lives of entirely transcending states where transformations may be present and may be lacking. They are among those born in the Heaven of the Comfort from Others’ Transformations. 7:213

”Ananda, thus it is that although they have transcended the physical in these six heavens, the traces of their minds still become involved. For that they will have to pay in person. These are called the Six Desire Heavens. 7:215

”Ananda, all those in the world who cultivate their minds but do not avail themselves of dhyana and so have no wisdom, can only control their bodies so as to not engage in sexual desire. Whether walking or sitting, or in their thoughts, they are totally devoid of it. Since they do not give rise to defiling love, they do not remain in the realm of desire. These people can, in response to their thought, take on the bodies of Brahma beings. They are among those in the Heaven of the Multitudes of Brahma. 7:216

”In those whose hearts of desire have already been cast aside, the mind apart from desire manifests. They have a fond regard for the rules of discipline and delight in being in accord with them. These people can practice the Brahma virtue at all times, and they are among those in the Heaven of the Ministers of Brahma. 7:217

”Those whose bodies and minds are wonderfully perfect, and whose awesome deportment is not in the least deficient, are pure in the prohibitive precepts and have a thorough understanding of them as well. At all times these people can govern the Brahma multitudes as great Brahma lords, and they are among those in the Great Brahma Heaven. 7:217

”Ananda, those who flow to these three superior levels will not be oppressed by any suffering or affliction. Although they have not developed proper samadhi, their minds are pure to the point that they are not moved by outflows. This is called the First Dhyana. 7:218

”Ananda, those beyond the Brahma heavens gather in and govern the Brahma beings, for their Brahma conduct is perfect and fulfilled. Unmoving and with settled minds, they produce light in profound stillness, and they are among those in the Heaven of Lesser Light. 7:219

”Those whose lights illumine each other in an endless dazzling blaze shine throughout the realms of the ten directions so that everything becomes like crystal. They are among those in the Heaven of Limitless Light. 7:220

”Those who take in and hold the light to perfection accomplish the substance of the teaching. Creating and transforming the purity into endless responses and functions, they are among those in the Light-Sound Heaven. 7:220

”Ananda, those who flow to these three superior levels will not be oppressed by worries or vexations. Although they have not developed proper samadhi, their minds are pure to the point that they have subdued their coarser outflows. This is called the Second Dhyana. 7:221

”Ananda, heavenly beings for whom the perfection of light has become sound and who further open out the sound to disclose its wonder discover a subtler level of practice. They penetrate to the bliss of still extinction and are among those in the Heaven of Lesser Purity. 7:222

”Those in whom the emptiness of purity manifests are led to discover its boundlessness. Their bodies and minds experience light ease, and they accomplish the bliss of still extinction. They are among those in the Heaven of Limitless Purity. 7:223

”Those for whom the world, the body, and the mind are all perfectly pure have accomplished the virtue of purity, and a superior level emerges. They return to the bliss of still extinction, and they are among those in the Heaven of Pervasive Purity. 7:225

”Ananda, those who flow to these three superior levels will be replete with great compliance. Their bodies and minds are at peace, and they obtain limitless bliss. Although they have not obtained proper samadhi, the joy within the tranquility of their minds is total. This is called the Third Dhyana. 7:226

”Moreover, Ananda, heavenly beings whose bodies and minds are not oppressed put an end to the cause of suffering and realize that bliss is not permanent - that sooner or later it will come to an end. Suddenly they simultaneously renounce both thoughts of suffering and thoughts of bliss. Their coarse and heavy thoughts are extinguished, and they give rise to the nature of purity and blessings. They are among those in the heaven of the birth of blessings. 7:228

”Those whose renunciation of these thoughts is in perfect fusion gain a purity of superior understanding. Within these unimpeded blessings they obtain a wonderful compliance that extends to the bounds of the future. They are among those in the Blessed Love Heaven. 7:229

”Ananda, from that heaven there are two ways to go. Those who extend the previous thought into limitless pure light, and who perfect and clarify their blessings and virtue, cultivate and are certified to one of these dwellings. They are among those in the Abundant Fruit Heaven. 7:230

”Those who extend the previous thought into a dislike of both suffering and bliss, so that the intensity of their thought to renounce them continues without cease, will end up by totally renouncing the way. Their bodies and minds will become extinct; their thoughts will become like dead ashes. For five hundred aeons these beings will perpetuate the cause for production and extinction, being unable to discover the nature which is neither produced nor extinguished. During the first half of these aeons they will undergo extinction; during the second half they will experience production. They are among those in the Heaven of No Thought. 7:230

”Ananda, those who flow to these four superior levels will not be moved by any suffering or bliss in any world. Although this is not the unconditioned or the true ground of non-moving, because they still have the thought of obtaining something, their functioning is nonetheless quite advanced. This is called the Fourth Dhyana. 7:232

”Beyond these, Ananda, are the five heavens of no return. For those who have completely cut off the nine categories of habits in the lower realms, neither suffering nor bliss exist, and there is no regression to the lower levels. All whose minds have achieved this renunciation dwell in these heavens together. 7:233

”Ananda, those who have put an end to suffering and bliss and who do not get involved in the contention between such thoughts are among those in the Heaven of No Affliction. 7:233

”Those who isolate their practice, whether in movement or in restraint, investigating the baselessness of that involvement, are among those in the Heaven of No Heat. 7:234

”Those whose vision is wonderfully perfect and clear, view the realms of the ten directions as free of defiling appearances and devoid of all dirt and filth. They are among those in the Heaven of Good View. 7:234

”Those whose subtle vision manifests as all their obstructions are refined away are among those in the Heaven of Good Manifestation. 7:235

”Those who reach the ultimately subtle level come to the end of the nature of form and emptiness and enter into a boundless realm. They are among those in the Heaven of Ultimate Form. 7:235

”Ananda, those in the Four Dhyanas, and even the rulers of the gods at those four levels, can only pay their respects through having heard of the beings in the Heavens of No Return; they cannot know them or see them, just as the coarse people of the world cannot see the places where the Arhats abide in holy Way-places deep in the wild and mountainous areas. 7:236

”Ananda, in these eighteen heavens are those who practice only non-involvement, and have not yet gotten rid of their shapes, as well as those who have reached the level of no return. This is called the Form Realm. 7:237

”Furthermore, Ananda, from this summit of the form realm there are also two roads. Those who are intent upon renunciation discover wisdom. The light of their wisdom becomes perfect and penetrating, so that they can transcend the defiling realms, accomplish Arhatship, and enter the Bodhisattva Vehicle. They are among those called Great Arhats who have turned their minds around. 7:237

”Those who dwell in the thought of renunciation and who succeed in renunciation and rejection, realize that their bodies are an obstacle. If they thereupon obliterate the obstacle and enter into emptiness, they are among those at the Station of Emptiness. 7:238

”For those who have eradicated all obstacles, there is neither obstruction nor extinction. Then there remains only the alaya consciousness and half of the subtle functions of the manas.

These beings are among those at the Station of Boundless Consciousness. 7:239

”Those who have already done away with emptiness and form eradicate the conscious mind as well. In the extensive tranquility of the ten directions there is nowhere at all to go. These beings are among those at the Station of Nothing Whatsoever. 7:240

”When the nature of their consciousness does not move, within extinction they exhaustively investigate, within the endless they discern the end of the nature. It is as if it were there and yet not there, as if it were ended and yet not ended. They are among those at the Station of Neither Thought nor Non-Thought. 7:241

”These beings who delve exhaustively into emptiness, but never fathom the principle of emptiness, go from the heaven of no return down this road which is a dead end to sagehood. They are among those known as dull Arhats who do not turn their minds around. Just like those in the heaven of no thought and the heavens of externalists who become engrossed in emptiness and do not want to come back, these beings are confused, prone to outflows, and ignorant. They will accordingly enter the cycle of rebirth again. 7:243

”Ananda, each and every being in all these heavens is ordinary. They are still answerable for their karmic retribution. When they have answered for their debts, they must once again enter rebirth. The lords of these heavens, how ever, are all Bodhisattvas who roam in samadhi. They gradually progress in their practice and make transferences to the way cultivated by all sages. 7:244

”Ananda, these are the Four Heavens of Emptiness, where the bodies and minds of the inhabitants are extinguished. The nature of concentration emerges, and they are free of the karmic retribution of form. This final group is called the Formless Realm. 7:245

”The beings in all of them have not understood the wonderful enlightenment of the bright mind. Their accumulation of falseness brings into being false existence in the Three Realms. Within them they falsely follow along and become submerged in the seven destinies. As pudgalas, they gather together with their own species or kind. 7:246

”Furthermore, Ananda, there are four categories of asuras in the Triple Realm. 7:248

”Those in the path of ghosts who use their strength to protect the Dharma and who can ride their spiritual penetrations to enter into emptiness are asuras born from eggs; they belong to the destiny of ghosts. 7:248

”Those who have fallen in virtue and have been dismissed from the heavens dwell in places near the sun and moon. They are asuras born from wombs and belong to the destiny of humans. 7:249

”There are asura kings who uphold the world with a penetrating power and fearlessness. They fight for position with the Brahma Lord, the God Shakra, and the Four Heavenly Kings. These asuras come into being by transformation and belong to the destiny of gods. 7:249

”Ananda, there is another, baser category of asuras. They have thoughts of the great seas and live submerged in underwater caves. During the day they roam in emptiness; at night they return to their watery realm. These asuras come into being because of moisture and belong to the destiny of animals. 7:251

”Ananda, so it is that when the seven destinies of hell-dwellers, hungry ghosts, animals, people, spiritual immortals, gods, and asuras are investigated in detail, they are all found to be murky and embroiled in conditioned existence. Their births come from false thoughts. Their subsequent karma comes from false thoughts. Within the wonderful perfection of the fundamental mind that is without any doing, they are like strange flowers in space, for there is basically nothing to be attached to; they are entirely vain and false, and they have no source or beginning. 7:252

”Ananda, these living beings, who do not recognize the fundamental mind, all undergo rebirth for limitless kalpas. They do not attain true purity, because they keep getting involved in killing, stealing, and lust, or because they counter them and are born according to their not killing, not stealing, and lack of lust. If these three karmas are present in them, they are born among the troops of ghosts. If they are free of these three karmas, they are born in the destiny of gods. The incessant fluctuation between the presence and absence of these karmas gives rise to the cycle of rebirth. 7:252

”For those who make the wonderful discovery of samadhi, neither the presence nor the absence of these karmas exists in that magnificent, eternal stillness; even their non-existence is done away with. Since the lack of killing, stealing, and lust is nonexistent, how could there be actual involvement in deeds of killing, stealing, and lust? 7:254

”Ananda, those who do not cut off the three karmas each have their own private share. Because each has a private share, private shares come to be accumulated, making collective portions. Their location is not arbitrary, yet they themselves are falsely produced. Since they are produced from falseness, they are basically without a cause, and thus they cannot be

traced precisely. 7:254

”You should warn cultivators that they must get rid of these three delusions if they want to cultivate Bodhi. If they do not put an end to these three delusions, then even the spiritual penetrations they may attain are merely a worldly, conditioned function. If they do not extinguish these habits, they will fall into the path of demons. 7:255

”Although they wish to cast out the false, they become doubly deceptive instead. The Thus Come One says that such beings are pitiful. You have created this falseness yourself; it is not the fault of Bodhi. 7:256

"An explanation such as this is proper speech. Any other explanation is the speech of demon kings.” 7:257

8. The Origin of Demonic States

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Chapter 8

The Origin of Demonic States

At that time, the Tathagata was preparing to leave the Dharma seat. From the lion throne, he extended his hand and placed it on a small table wrought of the seven precious things. But then he turned his body, which was the color of purple golden mountains, and leaned back, saying to everyone in the assembly and to Ananda:

"Those of you with More to Learn, those Enlightened by Conditions, and those who are Hearers have now turned your minds to pursue the attainment of supreme Bodhi the unsurpassed, wonderful enlightenment. I have already taught you the true method of cultivation. 8:1

"You are still not aware of the subtle demonic events that can occur when you cultivate shamatha and vipashyana. If you cannot recognize a demonic state when it appears, it is because the cleansing of your mind has not been proper. You will then be engulfed by deviant views. 8:2

”You may be troubled by a demon from your own skandhas or a demon from the heavens. Or you may be possessed by a ghost or spirit, or you may encounter a li ghost or a mei ghost. If your mind is not clear, you will mistake a thief for your own son. 8:3

”It is also possible to feel satisfied after a small accomplishment, like the Unlearned Bhikshu who reached the Fourth Dhyana and claimed that he had realized sagehood. When his celestial reward ended and the signs of decay appeared, he slandered Arhatship as being subject to birth and death, and thus he fell into the Avichi Hell. 8:7

”You should pay attention. I will now explain this for you in detail.” 8:9

Ananda stood up and, with the others in the assembly who had More to Learn, bowed joyfully. They quieted themselves in order to listen to the compassionate instruction. 8:9

The Buddha told Ananda and the whole assembly, “You should know that the twelve categories of beings in this world of outflows are endowed with a wonderfully bright, fundamental enlightenment - the enlightened, perfect substance of the mind which is not different from that of the Buddhas of the ten directions. 8:10

”Due to the fault of false thinking and confusion about the truth, infatuation arises and makes your confusion all pervasive. Consequently, an emptiness appears. Worlds come into being as that confusion is ceaselessly transformed. Therefore, the lands that are not without outflows, as numerous as motes of dust throughout the ten directions, are all created as a result of confusion, dullness, and false thinking. 8:11

”You should know that the space created in your mind is like a wisp of cloud that dots the vast sky. How much smaller must all the worlds within that space be! 8:12

”If even one person among you finds the truth and returns to the source, then all of space in the ten directions is obliterated. How could the worlds within that space fail to be destroyed as well? 8:13

”When you cultivate dhyana and attain samadhi, your mind tallies with the minds of the Bodhisattvas and the great Arhats of the ten directions who are free of outflows, and you abide in a state of profound purity. 8:14

”All the kings of demons, the ghosts and spirits, and the ordinary gods see their palaces collapse for no apparent reason. The earth quakes, and all the creatures in the water, on the land, and in the air, without exception, are frightened. Yet ordinary people who are sunk in dim confusion remain unaware of these changes. 8:15

”All these beings have five kinds of spiritual powers; they lack only freedom from outflows, because they are still attached to worldly passions. How could they allow you to destroy their palaces? That is why the ghosts, spirits, celestial demons, sprites, and goblins come to disturb you when you are in samadhi. 8:17

”Although these demons possess tremendous enmity, they are in the grip of their worldly passions, while you are within wonderful enlightenment. They cannot affect you any more than a blowing wind can affect light or a knife can cut through water. You are like boiling water, while the demons are like solid ice which, in the presence of heat, soon melts away. Since they rely exclusively on spiritual powers, they are like mere guests. 8:19

”They can succeed in their destructiveness through your mind, which is the host of the five skandhas. If the host becomes confused, the guests will be able to do as they please. 8:20

”When you are in dhyana, awakened, aware, and free of delusion, their demonic deeds can do nothing to you. As the skandhas dissolve, you enter the light. All those deviant hordes depend upon dark energy. Since light can destroy darkness, they would be destroyed if they drew near you. How could they dare linger and try to disrupt your dhyana-samadhi? 8:21

”If you were not clear and aware, but were confused by the skandhas, then you, Ananda, would surely become one of the demons; you would turn into a demonic being. 8:23

”Your encounter with Matangi’s daughter was a minor incident. She cast a spell on you to make you break the Buddha’s moral precepts. Still, among the eighty thousand modes of conduct, you violated only one precept. Because your mind was pure, all was not lost. 8:23

”This would be an attempt to completely destroy your precious enlightenment. Were it to succeed, you would become like the family of a senior government official who is suddenly exiled; his family wanders, bereft and alone, with no one to pity or rescue them. 8:24

”Ananda, you should know that as a cultivator sits in the Bodhimanda, he is doing away with all thoughts. When his thoughts come to an end, there will be nothing on his mind. This state of pure clarity will stay the same whether in movement or stillness, in remembrance or forgetfulness. 8:25

”When he dwells in this place and enters samadhi, he is like a person with clear vision who finds himself in total darkness. Although his nature is wonderfully pure, his mind is not yet illuminated. This is the region of the form skandha. 8:26

”If his eyes become clear, he will then experience the ten directions as an open expanse, and the darkness will be gone. This is the end of the form skandha. He will then be able to transcend the turbidity of kalpas. Contemplating the cause of the form skandha, one sees that false thoughts of solidity are its source. 8:26

”Ananda, at this point, as the person intently investigates that wondrous brightness, the four elements will no longer function together, and soon the body will be able to transcend obstructions. This state is called ‘the pure brightness merging into the environment.’ It is a temporary state in the course of cultivation and does not indicate sagehood. If he does not think he has become a sage, then this will be a good state. But if he considers himself a sage, then he will be vulnerable to the demons’ influence. 8:27

”Further, Ananda, as the person uses his mind to intently investigate that wondrous light, the light will pervade his body. Suddenly he will be able extract intestinal worms from his own body, yet his body will remain intact and unharmed. This state is called ‘the pure light surging through one’s physical body.’ It is a temporary state in the course of intense practice, and does not indicate sagehood. If he does not think he has become a sage, then this will be a good state. But if he considers himself a sage, then he will be vulnerable to the demons’ influence. 8:30

”Further, as the person uses his mind to intently investigate inside and outside, his physical and spiritual souls, intellect, will, essence, and spirit will be able to interact with one another without affecting his body. They will take turns as host and guests. Then he may suddenly hear the Dharma being spoken in space, or perhaps he will hear esoteric truths being pronounced simultaneously throughout the ten directions. This state is called ‘the essence and souls alternately separating and uniting, and the planting of good seeds.’ It is a temporary state and does not indicate sagehood. If he does not think he has become a sage, then this will be a good state. But if he considers himself a sage, then he will be vulnerable to the demons’ influence. 8:32

”Further, when the person’s mind becomes clear, unveiled, bright, and penetrating, an internal light will shine forth and turn everything in the ten directions into the color of Jambu-river gold. All the various species of beings will be transformed into Tathagatas. Suddenly he will see Vairochana Buddha seated upon a platform of celestial light, surrounded by a thousand Buddhas, who simultaneously appear upon lotus blossoms in a hundred million lands. This state is called ‘the mind and soul being instilled with spiritual awareness.’ When he has investigated to the point of clarity, the light of his mind will shine upon all worlds. This is a temporary state and does not indicate sagehood. If he does not think he has become a sage, then this will be a good state. But if he considers himself a sage, then he will be vulnerable to

the demons’ influence. 8:35

”Further, as the person uses his mind to intently investigate that wondrous light, he will contemplate without pause, restraining and subduing his mind so that it does not go to extremes. Suddenly the space in the ten directions may take on the colors of the seven precious things or the colors of a hundred precious things, which simultaneously pervade everywhere without hindering one another. The blues, yellows, reds, and whites will each be clearly apparent. This state is called ‘excessively subduing the mind.’ It is a temporary state and does not indicate sagehood. If he does not think he has become a sage, then this will be a good state. But if he considers himself a sage, then he will be vulnerable to the demons’ influence. 8:37

”Further, as the person uses his mind to investigate with clear discernment until the pure light no longer disperses, he will suddenly be able to see various things appear in a dark room at night, just as if it were daytime, while the objects that were already in the room do not disappear. This state is called ‘refining the mind and purifying the vision until one is able to see in the dark.’ It is a temporary state and does not indicate sagehood. If he does not think he has become a sage, then this will be a good state. But if he considers himself a sage, then he will be vulnerable to the demons’ influence. 8:38

”Further, when his mind completely merges with emptiness, his four limbs will suddenly become like grass or wood, devoid of sensation even when burned by fire or cut with a knife. The burning of fire will not make his limbs hot and even when his flesh is cut, it will be like wood being whittled. This state is called ‘the merging of external states and the blending of the four elements into a uniform substance.’ It is a temporary state and does not indicate sagehood. If he does not think he has become a sage, then this will be a good state. But if he considers himself a sage, then he will be vulnerable to the demons’ influence. 8:40

”Further, when his mind accomplishes such purity that his skill in purifying the mind has reached its ultimate, he will suddenly see the earth, the mountains, and the rivers in the ten directions turn into Buddhalands replete with the seven precious things, their light shining everywhere. He will also see Buddhas, Tathagatas, as many as the sands of the Ganges, filling all of space. He will also see pavilions and palaces that are resplendent and beautiful. He will see the hells below and the celestial palaces above, all without obstruction. This state is called ‘the gradual transformation of concentrated thoughts of fondness and loathing.’ It does not indicate sagehood. If he does not think he has become a sage, then this will be a good state. But if he considers himself a sage, then he will be vulnerable to the demons’ influence. 8:41

”Further, as the person uses his mind to investigate what is profound and far away, he will suddenly be able to see distant places in the middle of the night. He will see city markets and

community wells, streets and alleys, and relatives and friends, and he may hear their conversations. This state is called ‘having been suppressed to the utmost, the mind flies out and sees much that had been blocked from view.’ It does not indicate sagehood. If he does not think he has become a sage, then this will be a good state. But if he considers himself a sage, then he will be vulnerable to the demons’ influence. 8:43

”Further, as the person uses his mind to investigate to the utmost point, he may see a Good and Wise Advisor whose body undergoes changes. Within a brief interval, various transformations will occur which cannot be explained. This state is called ‘having an improper mind which is possessed by a li-ghost, a mei-ghost, or a celestial demon, and without reason speaking Dharma that fathoms wondrous truths.’ It does not indicate sagehood. If he does not think he has become a sage, then the demonic formations will subside. But if he considers himself a sage, then he will be vulnerable to the demons’ influence. 8:44

”Ananda, these ten states may occur in Dhyana as one’s mental effort interacts with the form skandha. 8:46

”Dull and confused living beings do not evaluate themselves. Encountering such situations, in their confusion they fail to recognize them and say that they have become sages, thereby uttering a great lie. They will fall into the Relentless Hells. 8:47

”In the Dharma-ending Age, after the Tathagata enters Nirvana, all of you should rely on and proclaim this teaching. Do not let the demons of the heavens have their way. Offer protection so all can realize the unsurpassed Way. 8:49

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Chapter 8

Ananda, when the good person who is cultivating samadhi and shamatha has put an end to the form skandha, he can see the mind of all Buddhas as if seeing an image reflected in a clear mirror. 8:50

”He seems to have obtained something, but he cannot use it. In this he resembles a paralyzed person. His hands and feet are intact, his seeing and hearing are not distorted, and yet his mind has come under a deviant influence, so that he is unable to move. This is the region of the feeling skandha. 8:51

”Once the problem of paralysis subsides, his mind can then leave his body and look back upon his face. It can go or stay as it pleases without further hindrance. This is the end of the feeling skandha. This person can then transcend the turbidity of views. Contemplating the cause of

the feeling skandha, one sees that false thoughts of illusory clarity are its source. 8:51

”Ananda, in this situation the good person experiences a brilliant light. As a result of the excessive internal pressure in his mind, he is suddenly overwhelmed with such boundless sadness that he looks upon even mosquitoes and gadflies as newborn children. He is filled with pity and unconsciously bursts into tears. 8:52

”This is called ‘overexertion in suppressing the mind in the course of cultivation.’ If he understands, then there is no error. This experience does not indicate sage-hood. If he realizes that and remains unconfused, then after a time it will disappear. 8:53

”But if he considers himself a sage, then a demon of sadness will enter his mind. Then, as soon as he sees someone, he will feel sad and cry uncontrollably. Lacking proper samadhi, he will certainly fall. 8:53

”Further, Ananda, in this state of samadhi, the good person sees the disintegration of the form skandha and understands the feeling skandha. At that time he has a sublime vision and is overwhelmed with gratitude. In this situation, he suddenly evinces tremendous courage. His mind is bold and keen. He resolves to equal all Buddhas and says he can transcend three asamkhyeyas of eons in a single thought. 8:54

”This is called ‘being too anxious to excel in cultivation.’ If he understands, then there is no error. This experience does not indicate sagehood. 8:56

”If he realizes that and remains unconfused, then after a time it will disappear. But if he considers himself a sage, then a demon of insanity will enter his mind. As soon as he sees someone, he will boast about himself. He will become extraordinarily haughty, to the point that he recognizes no Buddha above him and no people below him. Lacking proper samadhi, he will certainly fall. 8:56

”Further, in this state of samadhi the good person sees the disintegration of the form skandha and understands the feeling skandha. With no new realization immediately ahead of him, and having lost his former status as well, his power of wisdom weakens, and he enters an impasse in which he sees nothing to anticipate. Suddenly a feeling of tremendous monotony and thirst arises in his mind. At all times he is fixated in memories that do not disperse. He mistakes this for a sign of diligence and vigor. 8:58

”This is called ‘cultivating the mind but losing oneself due to a lack of wisdom.’ If he understands, then there is no error. This experience does not indicate sagehood. 8:59

”But if he considers himself a sage, then a demon of memory will enter his mind. Day and night it will hold his mind suspended in one place. Lacking proper samadhi, he will certainly fall. 8:59

”Further, in this state of samadhi, the good person sees the disintegration of the form skandha and understands the feeling skandha. His wisdom becomes stronger than his samadhi, and he mistakenly becomes impetuous. Cherishing the supremacy of his nature, he imagines that he is a Nishyanda (Buddha) and rests content with his minor achievement. 8:60

”This is called ‘applying the mind, but straying away from constant examination and becoming preoccupied with ideas and opinions.’ If he understands, then there is no error. This experience does not indicate sagehood. 8:61

”But if he considers himself a sage, then a lowly demon that is easily satisfied will enter his mind. As soon as he sees someone, he will announce, ‘I have realized the unsurpassed absolute truth.’ Lacking proper samadhi, he will certainly fall. 8:61

”Further, in this state of samadhi the good person sees the disintegration of the form skandha and understands the feeling skandha. He has not yet obtained any results, and his prior state of mind has already disappeared. Surveying the two extremes, he feels that he is in great danger. Suddenly he becomes greatly distraught, as if he were seated on the Iron Bed, or as if he has taken poison. He has no wish to go on living, and he is always asking people to take his life so he can be released sooner. 8:62

”This is called ‘cultivating, but not understanding expedients.’ If he understands, then there is no error. This experience does not indicate sagehood. 8:64

”But if he considers himself a sage, then a demon of chronic depression will enter his mind. He may take up knives and swords and cut his own flesh, happily giving up his life. Or else, driven by constant anxiety, he may flee into the wilderness and be unwilling to see people. Lacking proper samadhi, he will certainly fall. 8:64

”Further, in this state of samadhi, the good person sees the disintegration of the form skandha and understands the feeling skandha. As he dwells in this purity, his mind is tranquil and at ease. Suddenly a feeling of boundless joy wells up in him. There is such bliss in his mind that

he cannot contain it. 8:67

”This is called, ‘experiencing lightness and ease, but lacking the wisdom to control it.’ If he understands, then there is no error. This experience does not indicate sagehood. 8:67

”But if he considers himself a sage, then a demon that likes happiness will enter his mind. As soon as he sees someone, he will laugh. He will sing and dance in the streets. He will say that he has already attained unobstructed liberation. Lacking proper samadhi, he will certainly fall. 8:68

”Further, in this state of samadhi, the good person sees the disintegration of the form skandha and understands the feeling skandha. He says he is already satisfied. Suddenly, a feeling of unreasonable, intense self-satisfaction may arise in him. It may include pride, outrageous pride, haughty pride, overweening pride, and pride based on inferiority, all of which occur at once. In his mind, he even looks down on the Tathagatas of the ten directions, how much the more so on the lesser positions of Hearers and Those Enlightened by Conditions. 8:68

”This is called ‘viewing oneself as supreme, but lacking the wisdom to save oneself.’ If he understands, then there is no error. This experience does not indicate sagehood. 8:69

”But if he considers himself a sage, then a demon of intense arrogance will enter his mind. He will not bow to stupas or in temples. He will destroy Sutras and images. He will say to the Danapatis, ‘These are gold, bronze, clay, or wood. The Sutras are just leaves or cloth. The flesh body is what is real and eternal, but you don’t revere it; instead you venerate clay and wood. That is totally absurd.’ Those who have deep faith in him will follow him to destroy the images or bury them. He will mislead living beings so that they fall into the Relentless Hells. Lacking proper samadhi, he will certainly fall. 8:70

”Further, in this state of samadhi, the good person sees the disintegration of the form skandha and understands the feeling skandha. In his refined understanding, he awakens completely to subtle principles. Everything is in accord with his wishes. He may suddenly experience limitless lightness and ease in his mind. He may say that he has become a sage and attained great self-mastery. 8:71

”This is called ‘attaining lightness and clarity due to wisdom.’ If he understands, then there is no error. This experience does not indicate sagehood. 8:72

”But if he considers himself a sage, then a demon that likes lightness and clarity will enter his mind. Claiming that he is already satisfied, he will not strive to make further progress. For the most part, such cultivators will become like the Unlearned Bhikshu. He will mislead living beings so that they will fall into the Avichi Hell. Lacking proper samadhi, he will certainly fall. 8:72

”Further in this state of samadhi, the good person sees the disintegration of the form skandha and understands the feeling skandha. In that clear awakening, he experiences an illusory clarity. Within that, suddenly he may veer towards the view of eternal extinction, deny cause and effect, and take everything as empty. The thought of emptiness so predominates that he comes to believe that there is eternal extinction after death. 8:73

”[This is called ‘the mental state of samadhi dissolving so that one loses sight of what is right.’] If he understands, then there is no error. This experience does not indicate sagehood. 8:74

”But if he considers himself a sage, then a demon of emptiness will enter his mind. He will slander the holding of precepts, calling it a ‘Small Vehicle Dharma.’ He will say, ‘Since Bodhisattvas have awakened to emptiness, what is there to hold or violate?’ This person, in the presence of his faithful danapatis, will often drink wine, eat meat, and engage in wanton lust. The power of the demon will keep his followers from doubting or denouncing him. After the ghost has possessed him for a long time, he may consume excrement and urine, or meat and wine, claiming that all such things are empty. He will break the Buddha’s moral precepts and mislead people into committing offenses. Lacking proper samadhi, he will certainly fall. 8:75

”Further, in this state of samadhi, the good person sees the disintegration of the form skandha and understands the feeling skandha. He savors the state of illusory clarity, and it deeply enters his mind and bones. Boundless love may suddenly well forth from his mind. When that love becomes extreme, he goes insane with greed and lust. 8:77

”This is called ‘when an agreeable state of samadhi enters one’s mind, lacking the wisdom to control oneself and mistakenly engaging in lustful behavior.’ If he understands, then there is no error. This experience does not indicate sagehood. 8:77

”But if he considers himself a sage, then a demon of desire will enter his mind. He will become an outspoken advocate of lust, calling it the Way to Bodhi. He will teach his lay followers to indiscriminately engage in acts of lust, calling those who commit acts of lust his Dharma heirs. The power of spirits and ghosts in the Ending Age will enable him to attract a following of

ordinary, naive people numbering one hundred, two hundred, five or six hundred, or as many as one thousand or ten thousand. When the demon becomes bored, it will leave the person's body. Once the person's charisma is gone, he will run afoul of the law. He will mislead living beings, so that they fall into the Relentless Hells. Lacking proper samadhi, he will certainly fall. 8:78

"Ananda, all ten of these states may occur in dhyana as one's mental effort interacts with the feeling skandha. 8:80

"Dull and confused living beings do not evaluate themselves. Encountering such situations, in their confusion they fail to recognize them and say that they have become sages, thereby uttering a great lie. They will fall into the Relentless Hells. 8:80

"In the Dharma-ending Age, after my Nirvana, all of you should pass on the Tathagata's teachings, so that all living beings can awaken to their meaning. Do not let the demons of the heavens have their way. Offer protection so that all can realize the unsurpassed Way. 8:81

"Ananda, when the good person who is cultivating samadhi has put an end to the feeling skandha, although he has not achieved freedom from outflows, his mind can leave his body the way a bird escapes from a cage. From within his ordinary body, he already has the potential for ascending through the Bodhisattvas' sixty levels of sagehood. He attains the 'body produced by intent' and can roam freely without obstruction. 8:82

"This is like someone talking in his sleep. Although he does not know he is doing it, his words are clear, and his voice and inflection are all in order, so those who are awake can understand what he is saying. This is the region of the thinking skandha. 8:83

"If he puts an end to his stirring thoughts and rids himself of superfluous thinking, it is as if he has purged defilement from the enlightened, understanding mind. Then he is perfectly clear about the births and deaths of all categories of beings from beginning to end. This is the end of the thinking skandha. He can then transcend the turbidity of afflictions. Contemplating the cause of the thinking skandha, one sees that interconnected false thoughts are its source. 8:84

"Ananda, in the unhindered clarity and wonder that ensues after the feeling skandha is gone, this good person is untroubled by any deviant mental state and experiences perfect, bright concentration. Within samadhi, his mind craves its perfect brightness, so he sharpens his concentrated thought as he greedily seeks for cleverness and skill. 8:85

”At that time a demon from the heavens seizes the opportunity it has been waiting for. Its spirit possesses another person and uses him as a mouthpiece to expound the Sutras and the Dharma. 8:87

”This person, unaware that he is possessed by a demon, claims he has reached unsurpassed Nirvana. When he comes to see that good person who seeks cleverness and skill, he arranges a seat and speaks the Dharma. In an instant, he may appear to be a Bhikshu, enabling that person to see him as such, or he may appear as Shakra, as a woman, or as a Bhikshuni; or his body may emit light as he sleeps in a dark room. 8:93

”The good person is beguiled and fooled into thinking that the other is a Bodhisattva. He believes the other’s teachings and his mind is swayed. He breaks the Buddha’s moral precepts and covertly indulges his greedy desires. 8:95

”The other person is fond of speaking about calamities, auspicious events, and unusual changes. He may say that a Tathagata has appeared in the world at a certain place. He may speak of catastrophic fires or wars, thus frightening people into squandering their family wealth without reason. 8:96

”This is a strange ghost that in its old age has become a demon. It disturbs and confuses the good person. But when it tires of doing so, it will leave the other person.s body. Then both the disciples and the teacher will get in trouble with the law. 8:98

”You should be aware of this in advance and not get caught up in the cycle of transmigration. If you are confused and do not understand, you will fall into the Relentless Hells. 8:100

”Further, Ananda, in the unhindered clarity and wonder that ensues after the feeling skandha is gone, this good person is untroubled by any deviant mental state and experiences perfect, bright concentration. Within samadhi, his mind craves to roam about, so he lets his subtle thoughts fly out as he greedily seeks for adventure. 8:100

”At that time a demon from the heavens seizes the opportunity it has been waiting for. Its spirit possesses another person and uses him as a mouthpiece to expound the Sutras and the Dharma. 8:101

”This person, unaware that he is possessed by a demon, claims he has reached unsurpassed Nirvana. When he comes to see that good person who seeks to roam, he arranges a seat and

speaks the Dharma. His own body does not change its appearance, but those listening to the Dharma suddenly see themselves sitting on jeweled lotuses and their entire bodies transformed into clusters of purple-golden light. Each person in the audience experiences that state and feels he has obtained something unprecedented. 8:102

”The good person is beguiled and fooled into thinking the other is a Bodhisattva. Lust and laxity corrupt his mind. He breaks the Buddha’s moral precepts and covertly indulges his greedy desires. 8:103

”The other person is fond of saying that Buddhas are appearing in the world. He claims that in a certain place a certain person is actually a transformation body of a certain Buddha. Or he says that a certain person is such and such a Bodhisattva who has come to teach humankind. People who witness this are filled with admiration. Their wrong views multiply, and their Wisdom of Modes is destroyed. 8:104

”This is a drought ghost that in its old age has become a demon. It disturbs and confuses the good person. But when it tires of doing so, it will leave the other person’s body. Then both the disciples and the teacher will get in trouble with the law. 8:105

”You should be aware of this in advance and not get caught up in the cycle of transmigration. If you are confused and do not understand, you will fall into the Relentless Hells. 8:106

”Further, in the unhindered clarity and wonder that ensues after the feeling skandha is gone, this good person is untroubled by any deviant mental state and experiences perfect, bright concentration. Within samadhi, his mind craves spiritual oneness, so he clarifies his concentrated thought as he greedily seeks for union. 8:107

”At that time a demon from the heavens seizes the opportunity it has been waiting for. Its spirit possesses another person and uses him as a mouthpiece to expound the Sutras and the Dharma. 8:107

”This person, unaware that he is actually possessed by a demon, claims he has reached unsurpassed Nirvana. When he comes to see that good person who seeks union, he arranges a seat and speaks the Dharma. Neither his own body nor the bodies of those listening to the Dharma go through any external transformations. But he makes the minds of the listeners become ‘enlightened’ before they listen to the Dharma, so they experience changes in every thought. They may have the knowledge of past lives or the knowledge of others’ thoughts. They may see the hells or know all the good and evil events in the human realm. They may speak verses or spontaneously recite Sutras. Each person is elated and feels he has obtained

something unprecedented. 8:108

”The good person is beguiled and fooled into thinking the other is a Bodhisattva. His thoughts become entangled in love. He breaks the Buddha’s moral precepts and covertly indulges his greedy desires. 8:111

”He is fond of saying that there are greater Buddhas and lesser Buddhas, earlier Buddhas and later Buddhas; that among them are true Buddhas and false Buddhas, male Buddhas and female Buddhas; and that the same is true of Bodhisattvas. When people The Shurangama258 Sutra witness this, their initial resolve is washed away, and they easily get carried away with their wrong understanding. 8:111

”This is a mei-ghost that in its old age has become a demon. It disturbs and confuses the good person. But when it tires of doing so, it will leave the other person’s body. Then both the disciples and the teacher will get in trouble with the law. 8:112

”You should be aware of this in advance and not get caught up in the cycle of transmigration. If you are confused and do not understand, you will fall into the Relentless Hells. 8:113

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Chapter 8

"Further, in the unhindered clarity and wonder that ensues after the feeling skandha is gone, this good person is untroubled by any deviant mental state and experiences perfect, bright concentration. Within samadhi, his mind craves to know the origins of things, so he exhaustively investigates the nature of physical things and their changes from beginning to end. He intensifies the keenness of his thoughts as he greedily seeks to analyze things. 8:113

”At that time a demon from the heavens seizes the opportunity it has been waiting for. Its spirit possesses another person and uses him as a mouthpiece to expound the Sutras and the Dharma. 8:114

”This person, unaware that he is possessed by a demon, claims he has reached unsurpassed Nirvana. When he comes to see that good person who seeks to know the origins of things, he arranges a seat and speaks the Dharma. His body has an awesome spiritual quality which subdues the seeker. He makes the minds of those gathered beside his seat spontaneously compliant, even before they have heard the Dharma. He says to all those people that the Buddha’s Nirvana, Bodhi, and Dharma-body are there before them in the form of his own physical body. He says, ‘The successive begetting of fathers and sons from generation to generation is itself the Dharma-body, which is permanent and never-ending. What you see

right now are those very Buddhalands. There are no other pure dwellings or golden features.’ 8:115

”Those people believe and accept his words, forgetting their initial resolve. They offer up their lives, feeling they have obtained something unprecedented. They are all beguiled and confused into thinking he is a Bodhisattva. As they pursue his ideas, they break the Buddha’s moral precepts and covertly indulge their greedy desires. 8:117

”He is fond of saying that the eyes, ears, nose, and tongue are the Pure Land, and that the male and female organs are the true place of Bodhi and Nirvana. Ignorant people believe these filthy words. 8:118

”This is a poisonous ghost or an evil paralysis ghost that in its old age has become a demon. It disturbs and confuses the good person. But when it tires of doing so, it will leave the other person’s body. Then both the disciples and the teacher will get in trouble with the law. 8:118

”You should be aware of this in advance and not get caught up in the cycle of transmigration. If you are confused and do not understand, you will fall into the Relentless Hells. 8:119

”Further, in the unhindered clarity and wonder that ensues after the feeling skandha is gone, this good person is untroubled by any deviant mental state and experiences perfect, bright concentration. Within samadhi, his mind craves revelations from afar, so he pours all his energy into this intense investigation as he greedily seeks for imperceptible spiritual responses. 8:119

”At that time a demon from the heavens seizes the opportunity it has been waiting for. Its spirit possesses another person and uses him as a mouthpiece to expound the Sutras and the Dharma. 8:120

”This person, completely unaware that he is possessed by a demon, claims he has reached unsurpassed Nirvana. When he comes to see that good person who seeks revelations, he arranges a seat and speaks the Dharma. He briefly appears to his listeners in a body that looks a hundred or a thousand years old. They experience a defiling love for him and cannot bear to part with him. They personally act as his servants, tirelessly making the Four Kinds of Offerings to him. Each member of the assembly believes that this person is his former teacher, his original Good and Wise Advisor. They give rise to love for his Dharma and stick to him as if glued, feeling they have obtained something unprecedented. 8:121

”The good person is beguiled and fooled into thinking the other is a Bodhisattva. Attracted to the other’s thinking, he breaks the Buddha’s moral precepts and covertly indulges his greedy desires. 8:123

”He is fond of saying, ‘In a past life, in a certain incarnation, I rescued a certain person who was then my wife (or my mistress, or my brother). Now I have come to rescue you again. We will stay together and go to another world to make offerings to a certain Buddha.’ Or he may say, ‘There is a Heaven of Great Brilliance where a Buddha now dwells. It is the resting place of all Tathagatas.’ Ignorant people believe his ravings and lose their original resolve. 8:124

”This is a pestilence ghost that in its old age has become a demon. It disturbs and confuses the good person. But when it tires of doing so, it will leave the other person’s body. Then both the disciples and the teacher will get in trouble with the law. 8:125

”You should be aware of this in advance and not get caught up in the cycle of transmigration. If you are confused and do not understand, you will fall into the Relentless Hells. 8:125

”Further, in the unhindered clarity and wonder that ensues after the feeling skandha is gone, this good person is untroubled by any deviant mental state and experiences perfect, bright concentration. Within samadhi, his mind craves deep absorption, so he restrains himself with energetic diligence and likes to dwell in secluded places as he greedily seeks for peace and quiet. 8:126

”At that time a demon from the heavens seizes the opportunity it has been waiting for. Its spirit possesses another person and uses him as a mouthpiece to expound the Sutras and the Dharma. 8:127

”This person, unaware that he is possessed by a demon, claims he has reached unsurpassed Nirvana. When he comes to see that good person who seeks seclusion, he arranges a seat and speaks the Dharma. He causes all of his listeners to think they know their karma from the past. Or he may say to someone there, ‘You haven’t died yet, but you have already become an animal.’ Then he instructs another person to step on the first person’s ‘tail’ and suddenly the first person cannot stand up. At that point, all in the assembly pour out their hearts in respect and admiration for him. If someone has a thought, the demon detects it immediately. He establishes intense ascetic practices that exceed the Buddha’s moral precepts. He slanders Bhikshus, scolds his assembly of disciples, and exposes people’s private affairs without fear of ridicule or rejection. He is fond of foretelling calamities and auspicious events, and when they come to pass, he is not wrong in the slightest. 8:127

”This is a ghost with great powers that in its old age has become a demon. It disturbs and confuses the good person. But when it tires of doing so, it will leave the other person’s body. Then both the disciples and the teacher will get in trouble with the law. You should be aware of this in advance and not get caught up in the cycle of transmigration. If you are confused and do not understand, you will fall into the Relentless Hells. 8:133

”Further, in the unhindered clarity and wonder that ensues after the feeling skandha is gone, this good person is untroubled by any deviant mental state and experiences perfect, bright concentration. Within samadhi, his mind craves more knowledge and understanding, so he diligently toils at examining and probing as he greedily seeks to know past lives. 8:134

”At that time a demon from the heavens seizes the opportunity it has been waiting for. Its spirit possesses another person and uses him as a mouthpiece to expound the Sutras and the Dharma. This person, unaware that he is possessed by a demon, claims he has reached unsurpassed Nirvana. When he comes to see that good person who seeks knowledge, he arranges a seat and speaks the Dharma. 8:135

”There in the Dharma Assembly, inexplicably, that person may obtain an enormous precious pearl. The demon may sometimes change into an animal that holds the pearl or other jewels, bamboo tablets, tallies, talismans, letters, and other unusual things in its mouth. The demon first gives the objects to the person and afterwards possesses him. Or he may fool his audience by burying the objects underground and then saying that a ‘moonlight pearl’ is illuminating the place. Thereupon the audience feels they have obtained something unique. He may eat only medicinal herbs and not partake of prepared food. Or he may eat only one sesame seed and one grain of wheat a day and still look robust. That is because he is sustained by the power of the demon. He slanders Bhikshus and scolds his assembly of disciples without fear of ridicule or rejection. 8:135

”He is fond of talking about treasure troves in other locations, or of remote and hidden places where sages and worthies of the ten directions dwell. Those who follow him often see strange and unusual people. 8:141

”This is a ghost or spirit of the mountain forests, earth, cities, rivers, and mountains that in its old age has become a demon. The person it possesses may advocate promiscuity and violate the Buddha’s precepts. He may covertly indulge in the five desires with his followers. Or he may appear to be vigorous, eating only wild plants. His behavior is erratic, and he disturbs and confuses the good person. But when the demon tires, it will leave the other person’s body. Then both the disciples and the teacher will get in trouble with the law. 8:142

”You should be aware of this in advance and not get caught up in the cycle of transmigration. If you are confused and do not understand, you will fall into the Relentless Hells. 8:142

”Further, in the unhindered clarity and wonder that ensues after the feeling skandha is gone, this good person is untroubled by any deviant mental state and experiences perfect, bright concentration. Within samadhi, his mind craves spiritual powers and all manner of transformations, so he investigates the source of transformations as he greedily seeks for spiritual powers. 8:143

”At that time a demon from the heavens seizes the opportunity it has been waiting for. Its spirit possesses another person and uses him as a mouthpiece to expound the Sutras and the Dharma. 8:144

”This person, truly unaware that he is possessed by a demon, also claims he has reached unsurpassed Nirvana. When he comes to see that good person who seeks spiritual powers, he arranges a seat and speaks the Dharma. The possessed person may hold fire in his hands and, grasping a portion of it, put a flame on the head of each listener in the Fourfold Assembly. The flames on top of their heads are several feet high, yet they are not hot and no one is burned. Or he may walk on water as if on dry land; or he may sit motionless in the air; or he may enter into a bottle or stay in a bag; or he may pass through window panes and walls without obstruction. Only when attacked by weapons does he feel ill at ease. He declares himself to be a Buddha and, wearing the clothing of a lay person, receives bows from Bhikshus. He slanders dhyana meditation and the moral regulations. He scolds his disciples and exposes people’s private affairs without fear of ridicule or rejection. 8:144

”He often talks about spiritual powers and self-mastery. He may cause people to see visions of Buddhalands, but they are unreal and arise merely from the ghost’s power to delude people. He praises the indulgence of lust and does not condemn lewd conduct. He uses indecent means to transmit his Dharma. 8:146

”This is a powerful nature spirit: a mountain sprite, a sea sprite, a wind sprite, a river sprite, an earth sprite, or a grass-and-tree sprite that has evolved over long ages. It may be a dragon-goblin; or a rishi who has been reborn as a goblin; or again a rishi who, having reached the end of his appointed time, should have died, but whose body does not decay and is possessed by a goblin. In its old age it has become a demon. It disturbs and confuses the good person. But when it tires of doing so, it will leave the other person’s body. Then both the disciples and the teacher will get in trouble with the law. 8:146

”You should be aware of this in advance and not get caught up in the cycle of transmigration. If you are confused and do not understand, you will fall into the Relentless Hells. 8:147

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Chapter 8

"Further, in the unhindered clarity and wonder that ensues after the feeling skandha is gone, this good person is untroubled by any deviant mental state and experiences perfect, bright concentration. Within samadhi, his mind craves to enter cessation, so he investigates the nature of transformations as he greedily seeks for profound emptiness. 8:148

”At that time a demon from the heavens seizes the opportunity it has been waiting for. Its spirit possesses another person and uses him as a mouthpiece to expound the Sutras and the Dharma. 8:148

”This person, unaware that he is possessed by a demon, claims he has reached unsurpassed Nirvana. When he comes to see that good person who seeks emptiness, he arranges a seat and speaks the Dharma. In the midst of the great assembly, his physical form suddenly disappears, and no one in the assembly can see him. Then out of nowhere, he abruptly reappears. He can appear and disappear at will, or he can make his body transparent like crystal. From his hands and feet he releases the fragrance of sandalwood, or his excrement and urine may be sweet as thick rock candy. He slanders the precepts and is contemptuous of those who have left the home life. 8:148

”He often says that there is no cause and no effect, that once we die, we are gone forever, that there is no afterlife, and that there are no ordinary people and no sages. Although he has obtained a state of empty stillness, he covertly indulges his greedy desires. Those who give in to his lust also adopt his views of emptiness and deny cause and effect. 8:150

”This is an essence that was created during an eclipse of the sun or moon. Having fallen on gold, jade, a rare fungus, a unicorn, a phoenix, a tortoise, or a crane, the essence endowed it with life, so that it did not die for thousands or tens of thousands of years and eventually became a spirit. It was then born into this land and in its old age has become a demon. It disturbs and confuses the good person. But when it tires of doing so, it will leave the other person’s body. Then both the disciples and the teacher will get in trouble with the law. 8:150

”You should be aware of this in advance and not get caught up in the cycle of transmigration. If you are confused and do not understand, you will fall into the Relentless Hells. 8:154

”Further, in the unhindered clarity and wonder that ensues after the feeling skandha is gone, this good person is untroubled by any deviant mental state and experiences perfect, bright concentration. Within samadhi, his mind craves long life, so he toils at investigating its subtleties as he greedily seeks for immortality. He wishes to cast aside the birth and death of the body, and suddenly he hopes to end the birth and death of thoughts as well, so that he can abide forever in a subtle form. 8:154

”At that time a demon from the heavens seizes the opportunity it has been waiting for. Its spirit possesses another person and uses him as a mouthpiece to expound the Sutras and the Dharma. 8:156

”This person, unaware that he is possessed by a demon, claims he has reached unsurpassed Nirvana. When he comes to see that good person who seeks long life, he arranges a seat and speaks the Dharma. He is fond of saying that he can go places and come back without hindrance, perhaps traveling ten thousand miles and returning in the twinkling of an eye. He can also bring things back from wherever he goes. Or he may tell someone to walk from one end of the room to the other, a distance of just a few paces. Then even if the person walked fast for years, he could not reach the wall. Therefore people believe in the possessed person and mistake him for a Buddha. 8:156

”He often says, ‘All beings in the ten directions are my children. I gave birth to all Buddhas. I created the world. I am the original Buddha. I created this world naturally, not due to cultivation.’ 8:157

”This may be a chamunda sent from the retinue of the demon in the Heaven of Sovereignty, or a youthful pishacha from the Heaven of the Four Kings that has not yet brought forth the resolve. It takes advantage of the person’s luminous clarity and devours his essence and energy. Or perhaps without having to rely on a teacher, the cultivator personally sees a being that tells him, ‘I am a Vajra Spirit who has come to give you long life.’ Or the being transforms itself into a beautiful woman and engages him in frenzied lust, so that within a year his vitality is exhausted. He talks to himself; and to anyone listening he sounds like a goblin. The people around him do not realize what is happening. In most cases such a person will get in trouble with the law. But before he is punished, he will die from depletion. The demon disturbs and confuses the person to the point of death. 8:158

”You should be aware of this in advance and not get caught up in the cycle of transmigration. If you are confused and do not understand, you will fall into the Relentless Hells. 8:162

”Ananda, you should know that in the Dharma-ending Age, these ten kinds of demons may leave the home-life to cultivate the Way within my Dharma. They may possess other people, or they may manifest themselves in various forms. All of them will claim that they have already accomplished Proper and Pervasive Knowledge and Awareness. 8:163

”They praise lust and break the Buddha’s moral precepts. The evil demonic teachers and their demonic disciples that I just discussed transmit their teaching through licentious activity. Such deviant spirits take over cultivators’ minds, and after as few as nine lives or as many as a hundred generations, they turn true practitioners entirely into followers of demons. 8:166

”When their lives are over, they are bound to end up as one of the demonic hordes. They will lose their proper and pervasive knowledge and fall into the Relentless Hells. 8:168

”You need not enter Nirvana yet. Although you are completing your attainment to the level beyond learning, hold nonetheless to your vows to enter the Dharma-ending Age. Bring forth great compassion to rescue and take across living beings who have proper minds and deep faith. Do not let them become possessed by demons. Help them instead to attain proper knowledge and views. I have already rescued you from birth and death. By venerating the Buddha’s words, you will be repaying the Buddha’s kindness. 8:168

”Ananda, all ten of these states may occur in dhyana as one’s mental effort interacts with the thinking skandha. 8:170

”Dull and confused living beings do not evaluate themselves. Encountering such situations, in their confusion they fail to recognize them and say that they have become sages, thereby uttering a great lie. They will fall into the Relentless Hells. 8:171

”In the Dharma-ending Age, after my Nirvana, all of you should pass on the Tathagata’s teachings, so that all living beings can awaken to their meaning. Do not let the demons of the heavens have their way. Offer protection so that all can realize the unsurpassed Way. 8:172

”Ananda, when the good person who is cultivating samadhi has put an end to the thinking skandha, he is ordinarily free of dreaming and idle thinking, so he stays the same whether in wakefulness or in sleep. His mind is aware, clear, empty, and still, like a cloudless sky, devoid of any coarse sense-impressions. He contemplates everything in the world - the mountains, the rivers, and the earth - as reflections in a mirror, appearing without attachment and vanishing without any trace; they are simply received and reflected. He does away with all his old habits, and only the essential truth remains. 8:174

”From this point on, as the origin of production and destruction is exposed, he will completely see all the twelve categories of living beings in the ten directions. Although he has not fathomed the source of their individual lives, he will see that they share a common basis of life, which appears as a mirage - shimmering and fluctuating - and is the ultimate, pivotal point of the illusory faculties and sense objects. This is the region of the formations skandha. 8:179

”Once the basic nature of this shimmering fluctuation returns to its original clarity, his habits will cease, like waves subsiding to become clear, calm water. This is the end of the formations skandha. This person will then be able to transcend the turbidity of living beings. Contemplating the cause of the formations skandha, one sees that subtle and hidden false thoughts are its source. 8:180

”Ananda, you should know that when the good person has obtained proper knowledge in his practice of shamatha, his mind is unmoving, clear, and proper, and it cannot be disturbed by the ten kinds of demons from the heavens. He is now able to intently and thoroughly investigate the origin of all categories of beings. As the origin of each category becomes apparent, he can contemplate the source of the subtle, fleeting, and pervasive fluctuation. But if he begins to speculate on that pervasive source, he could fall into error with two theories of the absence of cause. 8:181

”First perhaps this person sees no cause for the origin of life. Why? Since he has completely destroyed the mechanism of production, he can, by means of the eight hundred merits of the eye organ, see all beings in the swirling flow of karma during eighty thousand eons, dying in one place and being reborn in another as they undergo transmigration. But he cannot see beyond eighty thousand eons. 8:182

”Therefore, he concludes that for the last eighty thousand eons living beings in the ten directions of this and other worlds have come into being without any cause. 8:183

”Because of this speculation, he will lose proper and pervasive knowledge, fall into externalism, and become confused about the Bodhi nature. 8:184

”Second, perhaps this person sees no cause for the end of life. And why? Since he perceives the origin of life, he believes that people are always born as people and birds are always born as birds; that crows have always been black and swans have always been white; that humans and gods have always stood upright and animals have always walked on four legs; that whiteness does not come from being washed and blackness does not come from being dyed; and that there have never been nor will there be any changes for eighty thousand eons. 8:184

”He says, ‘As I now examine to the end of this life, I find the same holds true. In fact, I have never seen Bodhi, so how can there be such a thing as the attainment of Bodhi? You should now realize that there is no cause for the existence of any phenomena.’ 8:188

”Because of this speculation, he will lose proper and pervasive knowledge, fall into externalism, and become confused about the Bodhi nature. 8:190

”This is the first external teaching, which postulates the absence of cause. 8:190

”Ananda, in his practice of samadhi, the good person’s mind is unmoving, clear, and proper and can no longer be disturbed by demons. He can thoroughly investigate the origin of all categories of beings and contemplate the source of the subtle, fleeting, and constant fluctuation. But if he begins to speculate on its pervasive constancy, he could fall into error with four theories of pervasive permanence. 8:190

”First, as this person thoroughly investigates the mind and its states, he may conclude that both are causeless. Through his cultivation, he knows that in twenty thousand eons, as beings in the ten directions undergo endless rounds of birth and death, they are never annihilated. Therefore, he speculates that the mind and its states are permanent. 8:191

”Second, as this person thoroughly investigates the source of the four elements, he may conclude that they are permanent in nature. Through his cultivation, he knows that in forty thousand eons, as living beings in the ten directions undergo births and deaths, their substances exist permanently and are never annihilated. Therefore, he speculates that this situation is permanent. 8:192

”Third, as this person thoroughly investigates the sixth sense faculty, the manas, and the consciousness that grasps and receives, he concludes that the origin of mind, intellect, and consciousness is permanent. Through his cultivation, he knows that in eighty thousand eons, as all living beings in the ten directions revolve in transmigration, this origin is never destroyed and exists permanently. Investigating this undestroyed origin, he speculates that it is permanent. 8:193

”Fourth, since this person has ended the source of thoughts, there is no more reason for them to arise. In the state of flowing, halting, and turning, the thinking mind - which was the cause of production and destruction - has now ceased forever, and so he naturally thinks that this is a state of non-production and non-destruction. As a result of such reasoning, he speculates that this state is permanent. 8:194

”Because of these speculations of permanence, he will lose proper and pervasive knowledge, fall into externalism, and become confused about the Bodhi nature. This is the second external teaching, which postulates pervasive permanence. 8:194

”Further, in his practice of samadhi, the good person’s mind is firm, unmoving, and proper and can no longer be disturbed by demons. He can thoroughly investigate the origin of all categories of beings and contemplate the source of the subtle, fleeting, and constant fluctuation. But if he begins to speculate about self and others, he could fall into error with theories of partial impermanence and partial permanence based on four distorted views. 8:195

”First, as this person contemplates the wonderfully bright mind pervading the ten directions, he concludes that this state of profound stillness is the ultimate spiritual self. Then he speculates, ‘My spiritual self, which is settled, bright and unmoving, pervades the ten directions. All living beings are within my mind, and there they are born and die by themselves. Therefore, my mind is permanent while those who undergo birth and death there are truly impermanent.’ 8:196

”Second, instead of contemplating his own mind, this person contemplates in the ten directions worlds as many as the Ganges’ sands. He regards as ultimately impermanent those worlds that are in eons of decay, and as ultimately permanent those that are not in eons of decay. 8:197

”Third, this person closely examines his own mind and finds it to be subtle and mysterious, like fine motes of dust swirling in the ten directions, unchanging in nature. And yet it can cause his body to be born and then to die. He regards that indestructible nature as his permanent intrinsic nature, and that which undergoes birth and death and flows forth from him as impermanent. 8:197

”Fourth, knowing that the skandha of thinking has ended and seeing the flowing of the skandha of formations, this person speculates that the continuous flow of the skandha of formations is permanent, and that the skandhas of form, feeling, and thinking which have already ended are impermanent. 8:198

”Because of these speculations of impermanence and permanence, he will fall into externalism and become confused about the Bodhi nature. This is the third external teaching, which postulates partial permanence. 8:199

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Chapter 8

"Further, in his practice of samadhi, the good person’s mind is firm, unmoving, and proper and can no longer be disturbed by demons. He can thoroughly investigate the origin of all categories of beings and contemplate the source of the subtle, fleeting, and constant fluctuation. But if he begins to speculate about the making of certain distinctions, he could fall into error with four theories of finiteness. 8:199

”First, this person speculates that the origin of life flows and functions ceaselessly. He judges that the past and the future are finite and that the continuity of the mind is infinite. 8:200

”Second, as this person contemplates an interval of eighty thousand eons, he can see living beings; but earlier than eighty thousand eons is a time of stillness in which he cannot hear or see anything. He regards as infinite that time in which nothing is heard or seen, and as finite that interval in which living beings are seen to exist. 8:202

”Third, this person speculates that his own pervasive knowledge is infinite and that all other people appear within his awareness. And yet, since he himself has never perceived the nature of their awareness, he says they have not obtained an infinite mind, but have only a finite one. 8:203

”Fourth, this person thoroughly investigates the formations skandha to the point that it becomes empty. Based on what he sees, in his mind he speculates that each and every living being, in its given body, is half living and half dead. From this he concludes that everything in the world is half finite and half infinite. 8:204

”Because of these speculations about the finite and the infinite, he will fall into externalism and become confused about the Bodhi nature. This is the fourth external teaching, which postulates finiteness. 8:204

”Further, in his practice of samadhi, the good person’s mind is firm, unmoving, and proper and can no longer be disturbed by demons. He can thoroughly investigate the origin of all categories of beings and contemplate the source of the subtle, fleeting, and constant fluctuation. But if he begins to speculate on what he knows and sees, he could fall into error with four distorted, false theories, which are total speculation based on the sophistry of immortality. 8:205

”First, this person contemplates the source of transformations. Seeing the movement and flow, he says there is change. Seeing the continuity, he says there is constancy. Where he can

perceive something, he says there is production. Where he cannot perceive anything, he says there is destruction. He says that the unbroken continuity of causes is increasing and that the pauses within the continuity are decreasing. He says that the arising of all things is existence and that the perishing of all things is nonexistence. The light of reason shows that his application of mind has led to inconsistent views. If someone comes to seek the Dharma, asking about its meaning, he replies, ‘I am both alive and dead, both existent and nonexistent, both increasing and decreasing.’ He always speaks in a confusing way, causing that person to forget what he was going to say. 8:208

”Second, this person attentively contemplates his mind and finds that everything is nonexistent. He has a realization based on nonexistence. When anyone comes to ask him questions, he replies with only one word. He only says ‘No.’ Aside from saying ‘no,’ he does not speak. 8:210

”Third, this person attentively contemplates his mind and finds that everything is existent. He has a realization based on existence. When anyone comes to ask him questions, he replies with only one word. He only says ‘Yes.’ Aside from saying ‘yes,’ he does not speak. 8:211

”Fourth, this person perceives both existence and nonexistence. Experiencing this branching, his mind becomes confused. When anyone comes to ask questions, he tells them, ‘Existence is also nonexistence. But within nonexistence there is no existence.’ It is all sophistry and does not stand up under scrutiny. 8:213

”Because of these speculations, which are empty sophistries, he will fall into externalism and become confused about the Bodhi nature. This is the fifth external teaching, which postulates four distorted, false theories that are total speculation based on the sophistry of immortality. 8:214

”Further, in his practice of samadhi, the good person’s mind is firm, unmoving, and proper and can no longer be disturbed by demons. He can thoroughly investigate the origin of all categories of beings and contemplate the source of the subtle, fleeting, and constant fluctuation. But if he begins to speculate on the endless flow, he could fall into error with the confused idea that forms exist after death. 8:217

”He may strongly identify with his body and say that form is himself; or he may see himself as perfectly encompassing all worlds and say that he contains form; or he may perceive all external conditions as contingent upon himself and say that form belongs to him; or he may decide that he relies on the continuity of the formations skandha and say that he is within form. 8:218

”In all of these speculations, he says that forms exist after death. Expanding the idea, he comes up with sixteen cases of the existence of forms. 8:218

”Then he may speculate that afflictions are always afflictions, and Bodhi is always Bodhi, and the two exist side by side without contradicting each other. 8:219

”Because of these speculations about what exists after death, he will fall into externalism and become confused about the Bodhi nature. This is the sixth external teaching, which postulates confused theories of the existence of forms after death in the realm of the five skandhas. 8:220

”Further, in his practice of samadhi, the good person’s mind is firm, unmoving, and proper, and can no longer be disturbed by demons. He can thoroughly investigate the origin of all categories of beings and contemplate the source of the subtle, fleeting, and constant fluctuation. But if he begins to speculate on the skandhas of form, feeling, and thinking, which have already ended, he could fall into error with the confused idea that forms do not exist after death. 8:220

”Seeing that his form is gone, his physical shape seems to lack a cause. As he contemplates the absence of thought, there is nothing to which his mind can become attached. Knowing that his feelings are gone, he has no further involvements. Those skandhas have vanished. Although there is still some coming into being, there is no feeling or thought, and he concludes that he is like grass or wood. 8:221

”Since those qualities do not exist at present how can there be any existence of forms after death? Because of his examinations and comparisons, he decides that after death there is no existence. Expanding the idea, he comes up with eight cases of the nonexistence of forms. 8:222

”From that, he may speculate that Nirvana and cause and effect are all empty, that they are mere names and ultimately do not exist. 8:223

”Because of those speculations that forms do not exist after death, he will fall into externalism and become confused about the Bodhi nature. This is the seventh external teaching, which postulates confused theories of the nonexistence of forms after death in the realm of the five skandhas. 8:223

”Further, in his practice of samadhi, the good person’s mind is firm, unmoving, and proper and can no longer be disturbed by demons. He can thoroughly investigate the origin of all categories of beings and contemplate the source of the subtle, fleeting, and constant fluctuation. In this state where the skandha of formations remains, but the skandhas of feeling and thinking are gone, if he begins to speculate that there is both existence and nonexistence, thus contradicting himself, he could fall into error with confused theories that deny both existence and nonexistence after death. 8:224

”Regarding form, feeling, and thinking, he sees that existence is not really existence. Within the flow of the formations skandha, he sees that nonexistence is not really nonexistence. 8:225

”Considering back and forth in this way, he thoroughly investigates the realms of these skandhas and derives an eightfold negation of forms. No matter which skandha is mentioned, he says that after death, it neither exists nor does not exist. 8:225

”Further, because he speculates that all formations are changing in nature, an ‘insight’ flashes through his mind, leading him to deny both existence and nonexistence. He cannot determine what is unreal and what is real. 8:226

”Because of these speculations that deny both existence and nonexistence after death, the future is murky to him and he cannot say anything about it. Therefore, he will fall into externalism and become confused about the Bodhi nature. This is the eighth external teaching, which postulates confused theories that deny both existence and nonexistence after death in the realm of the five skandhas. 8:227

”Further, in his practice of samadhi, the good person’s mind is firm, unmoving, and proper and can no longer be disturbed by demons. He can thoroughly investigate the origin of all categories of beings and contemplate the source of the subtle, fleeting, and constant fluctuation. But if he begins to speculate that there is no existence after death, he could fall into error with seven theories of the cessation of existence. 8:227

”He may speculate that the body will cease to exist or that when desire has ended, there is cessation of existence; or that after suffering has ended, there is cessation of existence; or that when bliss reaches an ultimate point, there is cessation of existence; or that when renunciation reaches an ultimate point there is cessation of existence. 8:228

”Considering back and forth in this way, he exhaustively investigates the limits of the seven states and sees that they have already ceased to be and will not exist again. 8:231

”Because of these speculations that existence ceases after death, he will fall into externalism and become confused about the Bodhi nature. This is the ninth external teaching, which postulates confused theories of the cessation of existence after death in the realm of the five skandhas. 8:231

”Further, in his practice of samadhi, the good person’s mind is firm, unmoving, and proper and can no longer be disturbed by demons. He can thoroughly investigate the origin of all categories of beings and contemplate the source of the subtle, fleeting, and constant fluctuation. But if he begins to speculate on existence after death, he could fall into error with five theories of Nirvana. 8:232

”He may consider the heavens of the Desire Realm a true refuge, because he contemplates their extensive brightness and longs for it; or he may take refuge in the First Dhyana, because there his nature is free from worry; or he may take refuge in the Second Dhyana, because there his mind is free from suffering; or he may take refuge in the Third Dhyana, because he delights in its extreme joy; or he may take refuge in the Fourth Dhyana, reasoning that suffering and bliss are both ended there and that he will no longer undergo transmigration. 8:232

”These heavens are subject to outflows, but in his confusion he thinks that they are unconditioned; and he takes these five states of tranquility to be refuges of supreme purity. Considering back and forth in this way, he decides that these five states are ultimate. 8:234

”Because of these speculations about five kinds of immediate Nirvana, he will fall into externalism and become confused about the Bodhi nature. This is the tenth external teaching, which postulates confused theories of five kinds of immediate Nirvana in the realm of the five skandhas. 8:234

”Ananda, all ten of these crazy explanations may occur in dhyana as one’s mental effort interacts with the formations skandha. That is why these ‘insights’ appear. 8:235

”Dull and confused living beings do not evaluate themselves. Encountering such situations, they mistake their confusion for understanding and say that they have become sages, thereby uttering a great lie. They will fall into the Relentless Hells. 8:235

”After my Nirvana, all of you should pass on the Tathagata’s teachings, transmitting and revealing them to those in the Dharma-ending Age, so that living beings everywhere can awaken to these truths. Do not let demons arise in their minds and cause them to commit

grave offenses. Offer protection so that wrong views will be eradicated. 8:236

”Teach them to awaken to true principles in body and mind, so that they do not stray off the Unsurpassed Path. Do not let them aspire to and be content with small attainments. You should become kings of great enlightenment and serve as guides of purity. 8:236

”Ananda, when that good person, in cultivating samadhi, has put an end to the formations skandha, the subtle, fleeting fluctuations - the deep, imperceptible, pivotal source and the common foundation from which all life in the world springs - are suddenly obliterated. In the submerged network of the retributive karma of the pudgala, the karmic resonances are interrupted. 8:238

”There is about to be a great illumination in the sky of Nirvana. It is like gazing east at the cock’s final crow to see the light of dawn. The six sense faculties are empty and still; there is no further racing about. Inside and outside there is a profound brightness. He enters without entering. Fathoming the source of life of the twelve categories of beings throughout the ten directions, he can contemplate that source without being drawn into any of the categories. He has become identical with the realms of the ten directions. The light does not fade, and what was hidden before is now revealed. This is the region of the consciousness skandha. 8:239

”If he has become identical with the beckoning masses, he may obliterate the individuality of the six gates and succeed in uniting and opening them. Seeing and hearing become linked so that they function interchangeably and purely. The worlds of the ten directions and his own body and mind are as bright and transparent as Vaidurya. This is the end of the consciousness skandha. This person can then transcend the turbidity of life spans. Contemplating the cause of the consciousness skandha, one sees that the negation of existence and the negation of nonexistence are both unreal, and that upside-down false thoughts are its source. 8:241

”Ananda, you should know that the good person has thoroughly seen the formations skandha as empty, and he must return consciousness to the source. He has ended production and destruction, but he has not yet perfected the subtle wonder of ultimate serenity. 8:242

”He can cause the individual sense faculties of his body to unite and open. He also has a pervasive awareness of all the categories of beings in the ten directions. Since his awareness is pervasive, he can enter the perfect source. But if he regards what he is returning to as the cause of true permanence and interprets this as a supreme state, he will fall into the error of holding to that cause. Kapila the Sankhyan, with his theory of returning to the Truth of the Unmanifest, will become his companion. Confused about the Bodhi of the Buddhas, he will lose his knowledge and understanding. 8:243

”This is the first state, in which he concludes that there is a place to which to return, based on the idea that there is something to attain. He strays far from perfect penetration and turns his back on the City of Nirvana, thus sowing the seeds of externalism. 8:246

”Further, Ananda, the good person has thoroughly seen the formations skandha as empty. He has ended production and destruction, but he has not yet perfected the subtle wonder of ultimate serenity. 8:246

”He may regard that to which he is returning as his own body and may see all beings in the twelve categories throughout space as flowing forth from his body. If he interprets this as a supreme state, he will fall into the error of maintaining that he has an ability which he does not really have. Maheshvara, who manifests his boundless body, will become his companion. Confused about the Bodhi of the Buddhas, he will lose his knowledge and understanding. 8:247

”This is the second state, in which he draws conclusions about the workings of an ability based on idea that he has such an ability. He strays far from perfect penetration and turns his back on the City of Nirvana, thus sowing the seeds for being born in the Heaven of Great Pride where the self is considered all-pervading and perfect. 8:249

”Further, the good person has thoroughly seen the formations skandha as empty. He has ended production and destruction, but he has not yet perfected the subtle wonder of ultimate serenity. 8:250

”If he regards what he is returning to as a refuge, he will suspect that his body and mind come forth from there, and that all things throughout space in the ten directions arise from there as well. He will explain that place from which all things issue forth is the truly permanent body, which is not subject to production and destruction. While still within production and destruction, he prematurely reckons that he abides in permanence. Since he is deluded about non-production, he is also confused about production and destruction. He is sunk in confusion. If he interprets this as a supreme state, he will fall into the error of taking what is not permanent to be permanent. He will speculate that the Sovereign God (Ishvaradeva) is his companion. Confused about the Bodhi of the Buddhas, he will lose his knowledge and understanding. 8:250

”This is the third state, in which he makes a false speculation based on the idea that there is a refuge. He strays far from perfect penetration and turns his back on the City of Nirvana thus sowing the seeds of an distorted view of perfection. 8:252

”Further, the good person has thoroughly seen the formations skandha as empty. He has ended production and destruction, but he has not yet perfected the subtle wonder of ultimate serenity. 8:252

”Based on his idea that there is universal awareness, he formulates a theory that all the plants in the ten directions are sentient, not different from human beings. He claims that plants can become people, and that when people die they again become plants in the ten directions. If he considers this idea of unrestricted, universal awareness to be supreme, he will fall into the error of maintaining that what is not aware has awareness. Vasishtha and Sainika, who maintained the idea of comprehensive awareness, will become his companions. Confused about the Bodhi of the Buddhas, he will lose his knowledge and understanding. 8:253

”This is the fourth state, in which he draws an erroneous conclusion based on the idea that there is a universal awareness. He strays far from perfect penetration and turns his back on the City of Nirvana, thus sowing the seeds of a distorted view of awareness. 8:254

”Further, the good person has thoroughly seen the formations skandha as empty. He has ended production and destruction, but he has not yet perfected the subtle wonder of ultimate serenity. 8:255

”If he has attained versatility in the perfect fusion and interchangeable functioning of the sense faculties, he may speculate that all things arise from these perfect transformations. He then seeks the light of fire, delights in the purity of water, loves the wind’s circuitous flow, and contemplates the accomplishments of the earth. He reveres and serves them all. He takes these mundane elements to be a fundamental cause and considers them to be everlasting. He will then fall into the error of taking what is not production to be production. Kashyapa and the Brahmans who seek to transcend birth and death by diligently serving fire and worshipping water will become his companions. Confused about the Bodhi of the Buddhas, he will lose his knowledge and understanding. 8:256

”This is the fifth state, in which he confusedly pursues the elements, setting up a false cause that leads to false aspirations based on speculations about his attachment to worship. He strays far from perfect penetration and turns his back on the City of Nirvana, thus sowing the seeds of a distorted view of transformation. 8:258

”Further, the good person has thoroughly seen the formations skandha as empty. He has ended production and destruction, but he has not yet perfected the subtle wonder of ultimate serenity. 8:258

”He may speculate that there is an emptiness within the perfect brightness, and based on that he denies the myriad transformations, taking their eternal cessation as his refuge. If he interprets this as a supreme state, he will fall into the error of taking what is not a refuge to be a refuge. Those abiding in the shunyata of the Heaven of [Neither Thought nor] Non-Thought will become his companions. Confused about the Bodhi of the Buddhas, he will lose his knowledge and understanding. 8:259

”This is the sixth state, in which he realizes a state of voidness based on the idea of emptiness within the perfect brightness. He strays far from perfect penetration and turns his back on the City of Nirvana, thus sowing the seeds of annihilationism. 8:260

”Further, the good person has thoroughly seen the formations skandha as empty. He has ended production and destruction, but he has not yet perfected the subtle wonder of ultimate serenity. 8:260

”In the state of what seems to be perfect permanence, he may bolster his body, hoping to live for a long time in that subtle and perfect condition without dying. If he interprets this as a supreme state, he will fall into the error of being greedy for something unattainable. Asita and those who seek long life will become his companions. Confused about the Bodhi of the Buddhas, he will lose his knowledge and understanding. 8:261

”This is the seventh state, in which he sets up the false cause of bolstering and aspires to permanent worldly existence, based on his attachment to the life-source. He strays far from perfect penetration and turns his back on the City of Nirvana, thus sowing the seeds for false thoughts of lengthening life. 8:262

”Further, the good person has thoroughly seen the formations skandha as empty. He has ended production and destruction, but he has not yet perfected the subtle wonder of ultimate serenity. 8:262

”As he contemplates the interconnection of all lives, he wants to hang on to worldly enjoyments and is afraid they will come to an end. Caught up in this thought, he will, by the power of transformation, seat himself in a lotus flower palace, conjure up an abundance of the seven precious things, increase his retinue of beautiful women, and indulge his mind. If he interprets this as a supreme state, he will fall into the error of taking what is not the truth to be the truth. Vignakara will become his companion. Confused about the Bodhi of the Buddhas, he will lose his knowledge and understanding. 8:263

”This is the eighth state, in which he decides to indulge in worldly enjoyments, based on his wrong thinking. He strays far from perfect penetration and turns his back on the City of Nirvana, thus sowing the seeds for becoming a demon of the heavens. 8:264

”Further, the good person has thoroughly seen the formations skandha as empty. He has ended production and destruction, but he has not yet perfected the subtle wonder of ultimate serenity. 8:264

”In his understanding of life, he distinguishes the subtle and the coarse and determines the true and the false. But he only seeks a response in the mutual repayment of cause and effect, and he turns his back on the Way of Purity. In the practice of seeing suffering, eliminating accumulation, realizing cessation, and cultivating the Way, he dwells in cessation and stops there, making no further progress. If he interprets this as a supreme state, he will fall and become a fixed-nature Hearer. Unlearned Sanghans and those of overweening pride will become his companions. Confused about the Bodhi of the Buddhas, he will lose his knowledge and understanding. 8:265

”This is the ninth state, in which he aspires toward the fruition of cessation, based on perfecting the mind that seeks responses. He strays far from perfect penetration and turns his back on the City of Nirvana, thus sowing the seeds for becoming enmeshed in emptiness. 8:266

”Further, the good person has thoroughly seen the formations skandha as empty. He has ended production and destruction, but he has not yet perfected the subtle wonder of ultimate serenity. 8:267

”In that perfectly fused, pure, bright enlightenment, as he investigates the profound wonder, he may take it to be Nirvana and fail to make further progress. If he interprets this as a supreme state, he will fall and become a fixed-nature Pratyeka. Those Enlightened by Conditions and Solitarily Enlightened Ones who do not turn their minds to the Great Vehicle will become his companions. Confused about the Bodhi of the Buddhas, he will lose his knowledge and understanding. 8:267

”This is the tenth state, in which he realizes a profound brightness based on fusing the mind with perfect enlightenment. He strays far from perfect penetration and turns his back on the City of Nirvana, thus sowing the seeds for being unable to surpass his attachment to the brightness of perfect enlightenment. 8:268

”Ananda, these ten states of dhyana are due to crazy explanations on the path of cultivation. Relying on them, the cultivator becomes confused and claims to have attained complete realization before actually having done so. All these states are the result of interactions between the consciousness skandha and his mental efforts. 8:269

”Dull and confused living beings do not evaluate themselves. Encountering such situations, their minds are confused by their individual likings and past habits, so they stop to rest in what they take to be the ultimate refuge. They claim to have perfected unsurpassed Bodhi, thus uttering a great lie. After their karmic retribution as externalists and deviant demons comes to an end, they will fall into the Relentless Hells. The Hearers and Those Enlightened by Conditions cannot make further progress. 8:273

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Chapter 8

All of you should cherish the resolve to sustain the Way of the Tathagata. After my Nirvana, transmit this Dharma-door to those in the Dharma-ending Age, universally causing living beings to awaken to its meaning. Do not let the demons of views cause them to create their own grave offenses and fall. Protect, comfort, and compassionately rescue them and dispel evil conditions. Enable them to enter the Buddhas’ knowledge and understanding with body and mind so that from the beginning to the final accomplishment they never go astray. 8:275

”It is by relying on this Dharma-door that the Tathagatas of the past, as many as fine motes of dust in eons as many as the Ganges’ sands, have enlightened their minds and attained the Unsurpassed Way. 8:277

”When the consciousness skandha ends, your present sense faculties will function interchangeably. Within that interchangeable functioning, you will be able to enter the Bodhisattvas’ Vajra Dry Wisdom. In your perfect, bright, pure mind, there will be a transformation. 8:278

”It will be like pure Vaidurya that contains a precious moon, and in that way you will transcend the Ten Faiths, the Ten Dwellings, the Ten Practices, the Ten Transferences, the Four Additional Practices, the Vajra-like Ten Grounds of a Bodhisattva’s practice, and the perfect brightness of Equal Enlightenment. 8:279

”You will enter the Tathagata’s sea of wondrous adornments, perfect the cultivation of Bodhi, and return to the state of non-attainment. 8:279

”These are subtle demonic states that all Buddhas, World Honored Ones, of the past, discerned with their enlightened clarity while in the state of shamatha and vipashyana. 8:280

”If you can recognize a demonic state when it appears and wash away the filth in your mind, you will not develop wrong views. 8:282

”The demons of the skandhas will melt away, and the demons from the heavens will be destroyed. The mighty ghosts and spirits will lose their wits and flee. And the li, mei, and wang liang will not dare to show themselves again. 8:283

”You will directly arrive at Bodhi without the slightest weariness, progressing from lower positions to Great Nirvana without becoming confused or discouraged. 8:283

”If there are beings in the Dharma-ending Age who delight in cultivating samadhi, but who are stupid and dull, who fail to recognize the importance of dhyana, or who have not heard the Dharma spoken, you should be concerned lest they get caught up in deviant ways. You should single-mindedly exhort them to uphold the Dharani Mantra of the Buddha’s Summit. If they cannot recite it from memory, they should have it written out and place it in the meditation hall or wear it on their person. Then none of the demons will be able to disturb them. 8:284

”You should revere this final paradigm of ultimate cultivation and progress of the Tathagatas of the ten directions.” 8:286

Ananda then arose from his seat. Having heard the Buddha’s instruction, he bowed and respectfully upheld it, remembering every word and forgetting none. Then once more in the great assembly he spoke to the Buddha, “The Buddha has told us that in the manifestation of the five skandhas, there are five kinds of falseness that come from our own thinking minds. We have never before been blessed with such subtle and wonderful instructions as the Tathagata has now given. 8:287

”Further, are these five skandhas destroyed all at the same time, or are they extinguished in sequence? What are the boundaries of these five layers? 8:289

”We only hope the Tathagata, out of great compassion, will explain this in order to purify the eyes and illuminate the minds of those in the great assembly, and in order to serve as eyes for living beings of the future.” 8:289

The Buddha told Ananda, “The essential, true, wonderful brightness and perfect purity of basic enlightenment does not admit birth and death, nor any mundane defilements, nor even empty space itself. All these are brought forth because of false thinking. 8:290

”The source of basic enlightenment, which is wonderfully bright, true, and pure, falsely gives rise to the material world, just as Yajnadatta became confused about his head when he saw his own reflection. 8:292

”The falseness basically has no cause, but in your false thinking, you set up causes and conditions. But those who are confused about the principle of causes and conditions call it spontaneity. Even empty space is an illusory creation; how much the more so are causes and conditions and spontaneity, which are mere speculations made by the false minds of living beings. 8:295

”Ananda, if you perceive the arising of falseness, you can speak of the causes and conditions of that falseness. But if the falseness has no source, you will have to say that the causes and conditions of that falseness basically have no source. How much the more is this the case for those who fail to understand this and advocate spontaneity. 8:297

”Therefore, the Tathagata has explained to you that the fundamental cause of all five skandhas is false thinking. 8:298

”Your body’s initial cause was a thought on the part of your parents. But if you had not entertained any thought in your own mind, you would not have been born. Life is perpetuated by means of thought. 8:300

”As I have said before, when you call to mind the taste of vinegar, your mouth waters. When you think of walking along a precipice, the soles of your feet tingle. Since the precipice doesn’t exist and there isn’t any vinegar, how could your mouth water at the mere mention of vinegar, if it were not the case that your body originated from falseness? 8:301

”Therefore, you should know that your present physical body is brought about by the first kind of false thinking, which is characterized by solidity. 8:303

”As described earlier, merely thinking about a high place can cause your body to tingle and ache. 8:303

”Due to that cause, feelings arise and affect your body, so that at present you pursue pleasant feelings and are repelled by unpleasant feelings. These two kinds of feelings that compel you are brought about by the second kind of false thinking, which is characterized by illusory clarity. 8:305

”Once your thoughts arise, they can control your body. Since your body is not the same as your thoughts, why is it that your body follows your thoughts and engages in every sort of grasping at objects? A thought arises, and the body grasps at things in response to the thought. 8:305

”When you are awake, your mind thinks. When you are asleep, you dream. Thus your thinking is stirred to perceive false situations. This is the third kind of false thinking, which is characterized by interconnectedness. 8:307

”The metabolic processes never stop; they progress through subtle changes: your nails and hair grow, your energy wanes, and your skin becomes wrinkled. These processes continue day and night, and yet you never wake up to them. 8:308

”If these things aren’t part of you, Ananda, then why does your body keep changing? And if they are really part of you, then why aren’t you aware of them? 8:309

”Your formations skandha continues in thought after thought without cease. It is the fourth kind of false thinking, which is subtle and hidden. 8:310

”Finally, if your pure, bright, clear, and unmoving state is permanent, then there should be no seeing, hearing, awareness, or knowing in your body. If it is genuinely pure and true, it should not contain habits or falseness. 8:310

”How does it happen, then, that having seen some unusual thing in the past, you eventually forget it over time, until neither memory nor forgetfulness of it remain; but then later, upon suddenly seeing that unusual thing again, you remember it clearly from before without forgetting a single detail? How can you keep track of the permeation that goes on in thought after thought in this pure, clear, and unmoving consciousness? 8:311

”Ananda, you should know that this state of clarity is not real. It is like rapidly flowing water that appears to be still on the surface. Due to its speed you cannot perceive the flow, but that does not mean it is not flowing. If this were not the source of thinking, then how could one be subject to false habits? 8:312

”If you do not open and unite your six sense faculties so that they function interchangeably, this false thinking will never cease. 8:313

"That’s why your seeing, hearing, awareness, and knowing are presently strung together by subtle habits, so that within the profound clarity, existence and nonexistence are both unreal. This is the fifth kind of upside-down, minutely subtle thinking. 8:313

”Ananda, these five skandhas of reception develop with five kinds of false thinking. 8:314

”You also wanted to know the depth and scope of each realm. Form and emptiness are the boundaries of form. Contact and separation are the boundaries of feeling. Remembering and forgetting are the boundaries of thinking. Destruction and production are the boundaries of formations. Deep purity entering to unite with deep purity belongs to the boundaries of consciousness. 8:314

”At their source, these five skandhas arise in layers. Their arising is due to consciousness, while their cessation begins with the elimination of form. 8:315

”You may have a sudden awakening to the principle, at which point they all simultaneously vanish. But in terms of the specifics, they are eliminated not all at once, but in sequence. 8:315

”I have already shown you the knots tied in the Karpasa cloth. What is it that you do not understand, that causes you to ask about it again? 8:317

”You should gain a thorough understanding of the origin of this false thinking and then transmit your understanding to cultivators in the future Dharma-ending Age. Let them recognize this falseness and naturally give rise to deep disdain for it. Let them know of Nirvana so that they will not linger in the Triple Realm. 8:317

”Ananda, suppose someone were to fill up all the space in the ten directions with the seven precious things and then present them as an offering to Buddhas as numerous as motes of dust, with his mind set on serving and making offerings to them in thought after thought. Do you think this person would reap many blessings from making such an offering to the Buddhas?” 8:320

Ananda answered, “Since space is limitless, the precious things would be boundless. In the past, someone gave the Buddha seven coins and consequently was reborn as a Wheel-turning King in his next life. As to this person who now fills up all of space and all the Buddhalands with an offering of precious things that could not be reckoned through endless eons, how could there be a limit to his blessings?” 8:321

The Buddha told Ananda, “All Buddhas, Tathagatas, speak words which are not false. There might be another person who had personally committed the four major offenses and the ten parajikas so that, in an instant he would have to pass through the Avichi Hells in this world and other worlds, until he had passed through all the Relentless Hells in the ten directions without exception. 8:322

”And yet if he could explain this Dharma-door for just the space of a thought to those in the Dharma-ending Age who have not yet studied it, his obstacles from offenses would be eradicated in response to that thought, and all the hells where he was to undergo suffering would become lands of peace and bliss. 8:322

”The blessings he would obtain would surpass those of the person previously mentioned by hundreds of thousands of millions of billions of times, indeed by so many times that no calculations or analogies could express it. 8:323

”Ananda, if living beings are able to recite this Sutra and uphold this mantra, I could not describe in endless eons how great the benefits will be. Rely on the teaching I have spoken. Cultivate in accord with it, and you will directly realize Bodhi without encountering demonic karma.” 8:324

When the Buddha finished speaking this Sutra, the Bhikshus, Bhikshunis, Upasakas, Upasikas, and all the gods, humans, and asuras in this world, as well as all the Bodhisattvas, those of the Two Vehicles, sages, immortals, and pure youths in other directions, and the mighty ghosts and spirits of initial resolve all felt elated, made obeisance, and withdrew. 8:327

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