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The Great Prajna Paramita Sutra

Volume 23

(Fascicles 441-460)

Translated by

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A Complete English Version of

The 600-fascicle Chinese

Da Bo Re Bo Luo Mi Duo Jing (600 Juan)

Translated from Sanskrit by

Master Xuanzang

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Fascicle 441

Chapter 45

The Discordance

Section 2

(In the Second Assembly)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the good gentlemen and gentlewomen of the bodhisattva vehicle were writing, accepting, embracing, reading, reciting, cultivating, learning, reflecting on, or lecturing on the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita. At that time, someone came to admire various superior things in the human realm and the Heaven of the Four Great kings, Heaven of Thirty-Three Smaller Heavens, and so forth, and Heaven of Enjoying Other-Made Changes; the Heaven of Brahma Followers, Heaven of Brahma Associates, and so forth, and Heaven of Ultimate Form; and the Sphere of Boundless Emptiness, Boundless Consciousness, and so forth, and Sphere of Nonthinking and Not Nonthinking. This person further said, 'Although one may enjoy various happiness of desire in the realm of desire, concentration in the realm of form, and tranquility in the realm of formlessness, these are all the dharmas that are impermanent, painful, empty, selfless, impure, and in decay; they are the dharmas of exhaustion, decline, departure, and extinction. Why don't you cultivate diligently to attain stream-entry effect, once-return effect, nonreturn effect, arhat effect, or self-enlightenment bodhi to enter ultimate peace and happiness of nirvana? Why do you stay endlessly in the birth and death and suffer from various pains for the sake of other sentient beings to pursue the so-called unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi?' Because of these words, these good gentlemen and gentlewomen gave up what they were doing; they did not continue to write, accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, learn, reflect on, and lecture on the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita, and never finished them. You must know that this is a demonic hindrance for bodhisattvas.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the dharma teacher is free from bondages and devoted to cultivation without being distracted by other matters, while the dharma listeners have entangled in the troubles of many people and cannot focus on their cultivation. Because of this difference, the dharma listeners do not have the opportunity to hear, accept, write, embrace, read,

recite, cultivate, and learn the fathomless prajna paramita. You must know that this is a demonic hindrance for bodhisattvas.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the dharma listeners are free from bondages and dedicated to cultivation, whereas the dharma teacher deals with many people's troubles. Because of this difference, the dharma listeners are unable to hear, accept, write, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, and learn the fathomless prajna paramita. You must know that this is a demonic obstacle for bodhisattvas.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the dharma teacher prefers solitude, while the dharma listeners enjoy mingling with the noisy crowd. Because they are so different, the dharma listeners are unable to hear, write, accept, write, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, and learn the fathomless prajna paramita. You must know that this is a demonic hindrance for bodhisattvas.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the dharma listeners do not like mingling with people, while the dharma teacher enjoys socializing with the crowd. Because they are so different, the dharma listeners are unable to hear, accept, write, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, and learn the fathomless prajna paramita. You must know that this is a demonic hindrance for bodhisattvas.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the dharma teacher likes others to assist him in whatever he does, while the dharma listeners do not like to assist the teacher, and that dissatisfies the teacher. Because they are so different, the dharma listeners are unable to hear, accept, write, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, and learn the fathomless prajna paramita. You must know that this is a demonic hindrance for bodhisattvas.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the dharma listeners like others to assist them in whatever they are doing, while the dharma teacher does not like to assist others. Because they are so different, the dharma listeners are unable to hear, accept, write, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, and learn the fathomless prajna paramita. You must know that this is a demonic hindrance for bodhisattvas.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the dharma teacher demands listeners to write, accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, and learn the fathomless prajna paramita to invite wealth,

while the dharma listeners disagree. Because they are so different, the dharma listeners are unable to hear, accept, write, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, and learn the fathomless prajna paramita. You must know that this is a demonic hindrance for bodhisattvas.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the dharma listeners request the teacher to teach them the fathomless prajna paramita to invite wealth and allow them to write, accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, and learn conveniently, but the dharma teacher does not fulfill their requests. Because they are so different, the dharma listeners are unable to hear, accept, write, embrace, read, chant, cultivate, and learn the fathomless prajna paramita. You must know that this is a demonic hindrance for bodhisattvas.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the dharma teacher wants to go to a perilous place far away, while the dharma listeners do not want to risk their lives. Because they are so different, the dharma listeners are unable to hear, accept, write, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, and learn the fathomless prajna paramita. You must know that this is a demonic hindrance for bodhisattvas.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the dharma listeners want to go to a perilous place far away, while the dharma teacher does not want to risk his life. Because they are so different, the dharma listeners are unable to hear, accept, write, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, and learn the fathomless prajna paramita. You must know that this is a demonic hindrance for bodhisattvas.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the dharma teacher wants to go to a place where robberies are active, plague is wide spreading, and food and drinking water are in shortage, while the dharma listeners worry about the difficult life there and do not want to go with him. Because they are so different, the dharma listeners are unable to hear, accept, write, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, and learn the fathomless prajna paramita. You must know that this is a demonic hindrance for bodhisattvas.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the dharma listeners want to go to a place where robberies are active, plague is wide spreading, and drinking water and food are in shortage, while the dharma teacher worries about the difficult life there and does not want to go with them.

Because they are so different, the dharma listeners are unable to hear, accept, write, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, and learn the fathomless prajna paramita. You must know that this is a demonic hindrance for bodhisattvas.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the dharma teacher is planning to visit a prosperous, happy, and disaster-free place, and the dharma listeners are eager to join him. But at that time the teacher said, 'You may go with me and benefit, but it is uncertain how comfortable you will feel there. Why don't you consider it carefully so you will not regret it.' The dharma listeners heard this and thought, 'It is obvious that he does not want us to go with him. If we insist on going, who can guarantee that we will be able to hear the dharma?' Because of this disagreement, the dharma listeners were unable to hear, accept, write, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, and learn the fathomless prajna paramita. You must know that this is a demonic hindrance for bodhisattvas.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the dharma teacher wanted to go somewhere, but the road in the wilderness was dangerous, and many horrible things caused by robbers, candāla, hunters, wild beasts, and poisonous snakes happened frequently. The dharma listeners were ready to go with him, but the teacher warned them, 'Why will you go through such a dangerous area with no specific purpose? You'd better think about it carefully, so you won't regret it.' The listeners heard this and thought, 'It is obvious that he does not want us to go with him. If we insist on going, it is uncertain that we will be able to hear the dharma.' Because of this disagreement, the dharma listeners were unable to hear, accept, write, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, and learn the fathomless prajna paramita. You must know that this is a demonic hindrance for bodhisattvas.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, when the dharma listeners went to hear the dharma teacher's teaching and were ready to write, accept, embrace, read, recite, and cultivate as they were taught, the dharma teacher was followed by many almsgivers and was not available. As the teacher became free and could teach the listeners later, the listeners were unhappy with the postponement and were not present in the class. Because of this disagreement, the dharma listeners could not hear, accept, write, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, and learn the fathomless prajna paramita. You must know that this is a demonic hindrance for bodhisattvas.

(The Buddha taught Well-Appearing One about various kinds of demonic hindrances for bodhisattvas.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, various evil demons disguised themselves as monks to disrupt the bodhisattva's place. As a result, the bodhisattva was unable to write, accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, learn, reflect on, and lecture for others on the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita."

In the meantime, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "World-Honored One, why did the evil demons pretend to be monks to destroy the bodhisattva's place, so the bodhisattva was unable to write, accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, learn, reflect on, and lecture for others on the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita?"

The Buddha replied, "Well-Appearing One, the evil demons disguised as monks to destroy the bodhisattva's place intending to make this bodhisattva reject the fathomless prajna paramita so he would not write, accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, learn, reflect on, and lecture on it any longer. The demons said, 'The sutras without forms that you are learning and chanting are not the real prajna paramita. The sutras with forms that we are learning and chanting are the real prajna paramita.' This bodhisattva had not been conferred the prophecy by the Buddha by that time, so he began to doubt prajna paramita, and further became disgust with it and ceased writing, accepting, embracing, reading, reciting, cultivating, learning, reflecting on, and lecturing for others on the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita. You must know that this is a demonic hindrance for bodhisattvas.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, some evil demons pretended to be monks and said to the bodhisattva, 'You bodhisattvas will at most realize the reality and attain stream-entry effect, once-return effect, nonreturn effect, arhat effect, and self-enlightenment bodhi, but that is nothing to do with the unsurpassed Buddha effect. Why are you troubled to do this in vain?' After hearing this, the bodhisattva gave up and did not write, accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, learn, reflect on, and lecture on the fathomless prajna paramita any longer. You must know that this is a demonic hindrance for bodhisattvas.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, when the bodhisattvas write, accept, embrace, read, recite, reflect on, and lecture on the fathomless prajna paramita, many evil demons will try to hinder them from pursuing the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. The great bodhisattvas should be very cautious and stay far away from them."

(The Buddha cautioned great bodhisattvas to stay away from evil demons.)

Meanwhile, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "World-Honored One, what are the demonic hindrances that the bodhisattvas should be aware of and stay far away from?"

The Buddha replied, "Well-Appearing One, when the good gentlemen and gentlewomen of the bodhisattva vehicle write, accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, learn, reflect on, and lecture on the fathomless prajna paramita, the fake prajna, meditation, forbearance, diligence, pure precept, and giving paramitas will often appear as obstacles to them. The bodhisattvas should be alert to and stay away from these obstacles.

(The Buddha advised great bodhisattvas to be careful to notice the counterfeit paramitas and other false superior dharmas.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, when the good gentlemen and gentlewomen of the bodhisattva vehicle write, accept, embrace, read, recite, reflect on, and lecture on the fathomless prajna paramita, the fake internal emptiness, external emptiness, internal-external emptiness, emptiness of emptiness, emptiness of space, emptiness of ultimate truth, emptiness of conditioned phenomena, emptiness of unconditioned reality, emptiness in the final analysis, emptiness of nontemporality, emptiness of deconstruction, emptiness of changelessness, emptiness of original nature, emptiness of particular characteristics, emptiness of common characteristics, emptiness of all dharmas, emptiness of nonattainment, emptiness of selflessness, emptiness of self-nature, and emptiness of selfless self-nature will often appear as demonic obstacles to them. The bodhisattvas should be alert to and stay away from these obstacles.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, when the good gentlemen and gentlewomen of the bodhisattva vehicle write, accept, embrace, read, recite, reflect on, and lecture on the fathomless prajna paramita, the fake realness, dharma realm, dharma nature, reality, realm of the

inconceivable, and other numberless and boundless fake Buddha dharma will often appear as demonic obstacles to them. The bodhisattvas should be alert to and stay away from these obstacles.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, when the good gentlemen and gentlewomen of the bodhisattva vehicle were writing, accepting, embracing, reading, reciting, reflecting on, and lecturing on the fathomless prajna paramita, someone carried the texts in accord with the two vehicles and said to them, 'These are the teachings really given by Thus-Comer. Ones who learn them will realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi very soon.' This is also a demonic hindrance. The bodhisattvas should be alert to and stay far away from such obstacle.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the evil demons will pretend to be monks and come to bodhisattvas' places to lecture on internal emptiness and external emptiness learned and practiced by the two vehicles. Or they will lecture on the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, four bases of power, five roots, five powers, seven factors for enlightenment, and noble eightfold path as well as the three liberation gates. After giving the lectures, they will say to the bodhisattvas, 'Great Bodhisattvas, you must know that if you cultivate these various approaches attentively and diligently, you will attain stream-entry effect, once-return effect, nonreturn effect, arhat effect, and self-enlightenment bodhi, and will be free from birth, old age, illness, and death. Why are you troubled pursuing the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi?' Because of this cause and condition, the bodhisattvas will not write, accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, learn, reflect on, and lecture for others on the fathomless prajna paramita. This is a demonic hindrance for bodhisattvas.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, some evil demons will pretend to be monks with gracious and dignified demeanor. The bodhisattvas will be attracted by them and become very fond of them. Because of this cause and condition, the bodhisattvas' perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge will be damaged, and they will lose the opportunity to hear, write, accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, learn, reflect on, and lecture on the fathomless prajna paramita. You must know that this is a demonic hindrance for bodhisattvas.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, some evil demons pretend to be Buddhas. They show up with thirty-two major marks and eighty minor features. Their bodies look pure gold, and

constant lights are shining as wide as eight meters. The bodhisattvas will love them very much, so their perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge will diminish, and they will not be able to hear, write, accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, learn, reflect on, and lecture on the fathomless prajna paramita. You must know that this is a demonic hindrance for bodhisattvas.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, some evil demons pretended to be Buddhas who were teaching the essential meanings of the dharma with a group of monks sitting around them. The bodhisattva saw this and became fond of them. He then thought, 'I hope when I become a Thus-Comer, One Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened One, I will teach the essential meanings of the dharma with a group of monks surrounding me just like what I saw today.' Because of this cause and condition, the bodhisattva lost the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge and the opportunity of hearing, accepting, embracing, reading, reciting, cultivating, learning, reflecting on, and lecturing on the fathomless prajna paramita. You must know that this is a demonic hindrance for bodhisattvas.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, some evil demons made hundreds of thousands of transformed bodhisattvas with unhindered talent of debate and perfect features. The demons themselves pretended to be Buddhas, teaching the essential meanings of the dharma to the transformed bodhisattvas and encouraging them to practice giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita. As they came to the bodhisattva's place, the bodhisattva became very fond of them and attached to them. Because of this cause and condition, the bodhisattva lost the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge and the opportunity of hearing, accepting, embracing, reading, reciting, cultivating, learning, reflecting on, and lecturing on the fathomless prajna paramita. You must know that this is a demonic hindrance for bodhisattvas.

"Why? Well-Appearing One, in the fathomless prajna paramita, matter is nonexistent and unattainable, and feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness are nonexistent and unattainable. The eye sphere is nonexistent and unattainable, and the ear, nose, tongue, body, and conscious spheres are nonexistent and unattainable. The sight sphere is nonexistent and unattainable, and the sound, smell, taste, touch, and mental-image spheres are nonexistent and unattainable. The eye realm is nonexistent and unattainable, and the ear, nose, tongue, body, and conscious realms

are nonexistent and unattainable. The sight realm is nonexistent and unattainable, and the sound, smell, taste, touch, and mental-image realms are nonexistent and unattainable. The eye consciousness realm is nonexistent and unattainable, and the ear consciousness realm, nose consciousness realm, tongue consciousness realm, body consciousness realm, and conscious consciousness realm are nonexistent and unattainable. The eye contact is nonexistent and unattainable, and the ear, nose, tongue, body, and conscious contacts are nonexistent and unattainable. The feelings produced by eye contact are nonexistent and unattainable, and the feelings produced by ear, nose, tongue, body, and conscious contacts are nonexistent and unattainable. The earth realm is nonexistent and unattainable, and the water, fire, wind, space, and consciousness realms are nonexistent and unattainable. Ignorance is nonexistent and unattainable, and action, consciousness, name and form, six sense spheres, contact, reception, craving, grasping, existence, birth, old age, death, worry, sorrow, misery, anxiety, and upset are nonexistent and unattainable. The realm of desire is nonexistent and unattainable, and the realm of form and the realm of formlessness are also nonexistent and unattainable. The past is nonexistent and unattainable, and the future and present are also nonexistent and unattainable. The flawed dharmas are nonexistent and unattainable, and the flawless dharmas are also nonexistent and unattainable. The conditioned dharmas are nonexistent and unattainable, and the unconditioned dharmas are also nonexistent and unattainable. The dharmas of the world are nonexistent and unattainable, and the dharmas beyond the world are also nonexistent and unattainable. Giving paramita is nonexistent and unattainable, and pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna paramitas are also nonexistent and unattainable. Internal emptiness is nonexistent and unattainable, and external emptiness, internal-external emptiness, emptiness of emptiness, emptiness of space, emptiness of ultimate meaning, emptiness of conditioned phenomena, emptiness of unconditioned reality, emptiness in the final analysis, emptiness of nontemporality, emptiness of deconstruction and nondeconstruction, emptiness of original nature, emptiness of particular and common characteristics, emptiness of all dharmas, emptiness of nonattainment, emptiness of selflessness, emptiness of self-nature, and emptiness of selfless self-nature are also nonexistent and unattainable. Realness is nonexistent and unattainable, and dharma realm, dharma nature, the nature of nonillusion, nature of changelessness, nature of equality, nature of nonarising, dharma concentration, dharma dwelling, reality, the realm of empty space, and the realm of the inconceivable are also nonexistent and

unattainable. The noble truth of suffering is nonexistent and unattainable, and the noble truths of the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering are also nonexistent and unattainable. The four meditations are nonexistent and unattainable, and the four immeasurable minds and four formless concentrations are also nonexistent and unattainable. The eight liberations are nonexistent and unattainable, and the eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations are also nonexistent and unattainable. The four bases of mindfulness are nonexistent and unattainable, and the four correct endeavors, four bases of power, five roots, five powers, seven factors for enlightenment, and noble eightfold path are also nonexistent and unattainable. The liberation gate of emptiness is nonexistent and unattainable, and the liberation gates of formlessness and nonaspiration are also nonexistent and unattainable. The stage of pure contemplation is nonexistent and unattainable, and the stages of embryonic Buddha nature, eight-forbearance, insight, slight vexation, freedom from all desires, arhat, self-enlightenment bodhi, bodhisattva, and Thus-Comer are also nonexistent and unattainable. The stage of ecstasy is nonexistent and unattainable, and the stages of freedom from defilements, emitting light, flaming wisdom, being extremely difficult to surpass, pure realness manifestation, going far away, the unmovable, expedient wisdom, and dharma cloud are also nonexistent and unattainable. The five eyes are nonexistent and unattainable, and the six supernatural powers are also nonexistent and unattainable. The Buddha’s ten abilities are nonexistent and unattainable, and the four kinds of fearlessness, four unhindered understandings, great loving-kindness, great compassion, great joy, great equanimity, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha’s wisdom and power are also nonexistent and unattainable. The thirty-two perfect major marks are nonexistent and unattainable, and the eighty distinguishing minor features are also nonexistent and unattainable. Staying in correct mindfulness is nonexistent and unattainable, and dwelling in equanimity at all times is also nonexistent and unattainable. The perfect knowledge of everything is nonexistent and unattainable, and the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths and perfect knowledge of all phenomena are also nonexistent and unattainable. Assisting the sentient beings to grow and mature is nonexistent and unattainable, and dignifying and purifying the Buddha lands is also nonexistent and unattainable. The great aspirations of the bodhisattvas are nonexistent and unattainable, and the supernatural powers of the bodhisattvas are also nonexistent and unattainable. All dharani gates are nonexistent and unattainable, and all samadhi gates are also

nonexistent and unattainable. Stream-entry effect is nonexistent and unattainable, and once-return effect, nonreturn effect, arhat effect, and self-enlightenment bodhi are also nonexistent and unattainable. All great bodhisattva actions are nonexistent and unattainable, and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas is also nonexistent and unattainable.

"Well-Appearing One, if in the fathomless prajna paramita, matter is nonexistent and unattainable, and feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness are nonexistent and unattainable; and so forth, and all great bodhisattva actions and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas are nonexistent and unattainable, then in the fathomless prajna paramita, all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones, great bodhisattvas, self-enlightened ones, voice-hearers, and ordinary sentient beings are also nonexistent and unattainable. Why? Well-Appearing One, because the self-natures of all dharmas are empty.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, when the good gentlemen and gentlewomen of the bodhisattva vehicle write, accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, learn, reflect on, and lecture on the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita, they will often encounter demonic obstacles, and thus the less blessed ones will be difficult to fulfill their aspirations. As various kinds of treasures in the continent of Jambudvipa, such as blue green gem, spiral shell, jade, coral, stone deposits, jewel, pearl, Emperor Indra green gem, deep green gem, diamond, amber, gold, silver, and so forth, are stolen and damaged by thieves and robbers so often, it will become difficult for the less blessed ones to acquire them. So is the priceless treasure of fathomless prajna paramita; the less blessed ones will be often hindered by various demonic obstacles, so they will be kept away from writing, accepting, embracing, reading, reciting, cultivating, learning, reflecting on, and lecturing on the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita."

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One said, "Yes, World-Honored One. Yes, Well-Gone One. It is exactly as your holy teaching. The fathomless prajna paramita cannot be obtained by less blessed ones just like the various treasures in the continent of Jambudvipa cannot be obtained by less blessed people because they often encounter hindrances. If the good gentlemen and gentlewomen of the bodhisattva vehicle have only few merits and virtues, they inevitably will be hindered when they write, accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, learn, reflect

on, and lecture on the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita, so they will not be able to accomplish what they intend to do. Why? Some ignorant ones are driven by demons to hinder the good gentlemen and gentlewomen of the bodhisattva vehicle once they decide to write, accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, learn, reflect on, and lecture for others on the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita. World-Honored One, the ignorant ones have weak and inferior minds and cannot be awakened to the broad and great Buddha dharma. They do not write, accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, learn, reflect on, and lecture on the fathomless prajna paramita themselves, but they do try to prevent others from writing, accepting, and so forth, and lecturing on the fathomless prajna paramita."

The Buddha said, "Yes, Well-Appearing One, it is as you say. Some ignorant ones are driven by the demons to hinder the good gentlemen and gentlewomen of the bodhisattva vehicle when they write, accept, embrace, read, recite, reflect on, and lecture on the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita. Well-Appearing One, these ignorant ones are feeble minded and cannot imagine how vast and great the Buddha dharma is. They have not planted virtuous roots or made great vows in the Buddhas' places, but they are absorbed by evil intellectuals. Because their merits and virtues are very few, they cannot write, accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, learn, reflect on, and lecture on the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita themselves, but they will try to hinder the novice great-vehicle practitioners when the latter ones start to write, accept, read, recite, cultivate, learn, reflect on, and lecture on the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita. Well-Appearing One, some good gentlemen and gentlewomen with feeble wisdom and inferior roots will be absorbed by evil intellectuals, so they cannot believe in and enjoy the vast, great merits and virtues of the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones. They cannot write, accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, learn, reflect on, and lecture on the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita themselves, but they will try to hinder other good gentlemen and gentlewomen from writing, accepting, embracing, reading, reciting, cultivating, learning, reflecting on, and lecturing on the fathomless prajna paramita. They thus will commit immeasurable sins.

(The Buddha approved what Well-Appearing One said and further elaborated that the less blessed people are often hindered by demons. The ignorant ones with weak and inferior minds

cannot learn and practice prajna paramita themselves, but they are often driven by demons or evil intellectuals to hinder the unsurpassed-bodhi pursuers.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, if the good gentlemen and gentlewomen of the bodhisattva vehicle are hindered by evil demons when they write, accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, learn, reflect on, and lecture on the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita, they will not be able to finish writing, accepting, embracing, reading, reciting, cultivating, learning, reflecting on, and lecturing on the fathomless prajna paramita. They will not be able to fulfill prajna, meditation, diligence, forbearance, pure precept, and giving paramitas. They will not be able to fulfill internal emptiness, external emptiness, internal-external emptiness, emptiness of emptiness, emptiness of space, emptiness of ultimate truth, emptiness of conditioned phenomena, emptiness of unconditioned reality, emptiness in the final analysis, emptiness of nontemporality, emptiness of deconstruction and nondeconstruction, emptiness of original nature, emptiness of particular and common characteristics, emptiness of all dharmas, emptiness of nonattainment, emptiness of selflessness, emptiness of self-nature, and emptiness of selfless self-nature. They will not be able to fulfill realness, dharma realm, dharma nature, the nature of nonillusion, nature of changelessness, nature of equality, nature of nonarising, dharma concentration, dharma dwelling, reality, the realm of empty space, and the realm of the inconceivable. They will not be able to fulfill the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering. They will not be able to fulfill the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations. They will not be able to fulfill the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations. They will not be able to fulfill the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, four bases of power, five roots, five powers, seven factors for enlightenment, and noble eightfold path. They will not be able to fulfill the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration. They will not be able to fulfill the ten stages of bodhisattva; the five eyes and six supernatural powers perfectly; the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, four unhindered understandings, great loving-kindness, great compassion, great joy, great equanimity, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power perfectly; the thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features; staying in correct mindfulness and dwelling in equanimity at all times; assisting the sentient beings to mature and

dignifying and purifying the Buddha lands; all dharani gates and all samadhi gates; all bodhisattva actions and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of various Buddhas; and the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena. They are unable to fulfill all these virtues and merits because they are hindered by the evil demons.

(The Buddha pointed out that the hindered bodhisattvas will not be able to fulfill various superior holy dharmas.)

"Well-Appearing One, if the good gentlemen and gentlewomen of the bodhisattva vehicle are not hindered by evil demons when they write, accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, learn, reflect on, and lecture on the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita, then they will be able to fulfill prajna, meditation, diligence, forbearance, pure precept, and giving paramitas, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena. You must know that it is with the protection and support of the supernatural powers of the Thus-Comers that they are able to write, accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, learn, reflect on, and lecture on the fathomless prajna paramita without hindrance. It is also because of the supernatural powers of the Thus-Comers that the good gentlemen and gentlewomen are able to fulfill prajna, meditation, diligence, forbearance, pure precept, and giving paramitas, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena.

(The Buddha said that with the protection and support of Thus-Comers, the prajna paramita learners will not be hindered by demons.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones, who are currently conducting peacefully the numberless, countless, and boundless worlds of the ten directions and teaching the correct dharma, keep and protect the good gentlemen and gentlewomen of the bodhisattva vehicle with their supernatural powers, so the good gentlemen and gentlewomen are able to write, accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, learn, reflect on, and lecture on the fathomless prajna paramita without hindrance. They thus are able to fulfill prajna, meditation, diligence, forbearance, pure

precept, and giving paramitas, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, all nonregressive great bodhisattvas in as many Buddha worlds of the ten directions as the sands of the Ganges are currently keeping and protecting the good gentlemen and gentlewomen of the bodhisattva vehicle with supernatural powers, so the good gentlemen and gentlewomen are able to write, accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, learn, reflect on, and lecture on the fathomless prajna paramita without hindrance. These good gentlemen and gentlewomen therefore are able to fulfill prajna, meditation, diligence, forbearance, pure precept, and giving paramitas, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena."

(The Buddha said that not only the Thus-Comers but the nonregressive great bodhisattvas also protect and support the prajna paramita learners so that they will not be hindered by demons.)

Chapter 46

The Mother of the Buddha

Section 1

(In the Second Assembly)

The Buddha said, "Well-Appearing One, a woman has given birth to five sons, ten sons, twenty sons, thirty sons, forty sons, fifty sons, one hundred or one thousand sons. One day, the mother was ill, and each son looked for the best medical treatment for her. They all thought, 'How can we do to keep our mother in good health so that she will be free from suffering and worries and have a long and happy life?' At that time, all sons decided to do whatever they could to protect and soothe their mother and purged away disturbances caused by mosquitoes, snakes,

scorpions, cold, heat, hunger, and thirst. They further made various entertainments as offerings to their mother, and said, ‘Mother is very loving-kind and compassionate; she has not only given birth to us but also reared and nurtured us, and taught us various worldly affairs. How can we not return the favor with gratitude?’

“Well-Appearing One, so are the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Ones, who have always overseen and protected the fathomless prajna paramita with the Buddha eye. Why? Well-Appearing One, the fathomless prajna paramita can give birth to all Buddha dharmas for us, give us the perfect knowledge of all phenomena, and show the reality of all dharmas of the world. All Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones who are conducting the worlds of the ten directions and teaching the dharma also oversee and protect the fathomless prajna paramita with the Buddha eye. Why? Well-Appearing One, the fathomless prajna paramita can give birth to the Buddha dharma of all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones in innumerable, countless, and boundless worlds of the ten directions, bring them the perfect knowledge of all phenomena, and show the real phenomena of all dharmas in the world. Because of this cause and condition, various Buddhas have always overseen and protected the fathomless prajna paramita incessantly to return the favor.

“Why? Well-Appearing One, meditation, diligence, forbearance, pure precept, and giving paramitas of all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones arise from the fathomless prajna paramita. Internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature appear in the world because of the fathomless prajna paramita. Realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable appear in the world because of the fathomless prajna paramita. The noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering appear in the world because of the fathomless prajna paramita. The four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations arise from the fathomless prajna paramita. The eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations arise from the fathomless prajna paramita. The four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path arise from the fathomless prajna paramita. The liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration

arise from the fathomless prajna paramita. The ten stages of bodhisattva arise from the fathomless prajna paramita. The five eyes and six supernatural powers arise from the fathomless prajna paramita. The Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power arise from the fathomless prajna paramita. The thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features arise from the fathomless prajna paramita. Staying in correct mindfulness and dwelling in equanimity at all times arise from the fathomless prajna paramita. All dharani gates and all samadhi gates arise from the fathomless prajna paramita. Stream-entry effect, once-return effect, nonreturn effect, arhat effect, and self-enlightenment bodhi arise from the fathomless prajna paramita. All great bodhisattva actions and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas arise from the fathomless prajna paramita. All stream-enterers, once-returners, nonreturners, arhats, self-enlightened ones, great bodhisattvas, and Buddhas arise from the fathomless prajna paramita.

"Well-Appearing One, it is because of the fathomless prajna paramita that all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones have attained, are attaining, and will attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. Therefore, the Buddhas have always overseen and protected the fathomless prajna paramita with the Buddha eye to return the great favor granted by the fathomless prajna paramita. Well-Appearing One, if the good gentlemen and gentlewomen of the bodhisattva vehicle can write, accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, learn, reflect on, and lecture extensively on the fathomless prajna paramita, all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones will oversee and protect them with Buddha eye, keep them in peace and happiness and purge away all demonic obstacles, so that they can cultivate virtuous karmas without hindrance. Well-Appearing One, if the good gentlemen and gentlewomen of the bodhisattva vehicle can write, accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, learn, reflect on, and lecture extensively on fathomless prajna paramita, all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones in the worlds of the ten direction will have great concern over them and protect them, so that they will not regress in the pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi."

(The Buddha taught how prajna paramita benefit all virtuous dharmas and give birth to all holy effects. The Buddhas have always protected prajna paramita to return the favor with gratitude.

The Buddhas have also always protected the learners of prajna paramita so that they will not be hindered.)

At that time, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, “World-Honored One, as the Buddha says, the fathomless prajna paramita can give birth to Buddha dharma of the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones, bring the perfect knowledge of all phenomena to them, and show the real phenomena of various dharmas in the world. World-Honored One, how does the fathomless prajna paramita give birth to the Buddha dharma of the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones? How does it bring the perfect knowledge of all phenomena to the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones? How does it show the real phenomena of the dharmas in the world? How are the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones born from the fathomless prajna paramita? And how do the Buddhas teach about the phenomena of the world?”

The Buddha replied, “Well-Appearing One, the fathomless prajna paramita can give birth to the ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, four unhindered understandings, great loving-kindness, great compassion, great joy, great equanimity, the eighteen distinctive features of Buddha’s wisdom and power, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena of the Thus-Comer, One Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened One. Well-Appearing One, all these numberless and boundless merits and virtues of the Thus-Comer arise and grow from the fathomless prajna paramita. The Buddha is named Buddha because he has the merits and virtues possessed by the Buddha. The fathomless prajna paramita can give birth to Buddha dharma and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena and give them to all Thus-Comers, so I say that the Thus-Comers are born from the fathomless prajna paramita. Well-Appearing One, the real phenomena of all dharmas in the world shown by the fathomless prajna paramita mean the real phenomena of the five aggregates of the world. The Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones have also taught the real phenomena of the five aggregates of the world.”

Meanwhile, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, “World-Honored One, how does the fathomless prajna paramita of the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of

Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones show the real phenomena of the five aggregates?"

The Buddha replied, "Well-Appearing One, the fathomless prajna paramia of all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones does not speak and manifest that the five aggregates have formation and destruction, arising and extinction, continuation and discontinuation, contamination and purification, increase and decrease, or entering and getting out. It does not speak and manifest the five aggregates that are in the past, future, or present. It does not speak and manifest that the five aggregates are virtuous, not virtuous, or neutral. It does not speak and manifest that the five aggregates are tied with the realm of desire, the realm of form, or the realm of formlessness. Why? Well-Appearing One, the dharmas of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration do not have formation and destruction, arising and extinction, continuation and discontinuation, contamination and purification, increase and decrease, or entering and getting out. They are not in the past, future, or present. They are not virtuous, not virtuous, or neutral. They are not tied with the realm of desire, the realm of form, or the realm of formlessness. The dharmas without arising, extinction, making, doing, and nature do not have formation and destruction, arising and extinction, continuation and discontinuation, contamination and purification, increase and decrease, or entering and getting out. They are not in the past, future, or present. They are not virtuous, not virtuous, or neutral. They are not tied with the realm of desire, the realm of form, or the realm of formlessness. Well-Appearing One, the fathomless prajna paramita of all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones has spoken and manifested the real phenomena of the five aggregates this way. The phenomena of the five aggregates are the world. Therefore, the world does not have formation and destruction, arising and extinction, continuation and discontinuation, contamination and purification, increase and decrease, or entering and getting out. The world is not in the past, future, or the present; it is not virtuous, not virtuous, or neutral; it is not tied with the realm of desire, the realm of form, or the realm of formlessness either. It does not have any other phenomena.

(The Buddha taught how prajna paramita shows the real phenomena of the world, and what the real phenomena of the world are.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones have universally realized the differences of the minds and actions of innumerable, countless, and boundless sentient beings based on the fathomless prajna paramita. But in the fathomless meaning of prajna paramita, the sentient beings and their establishments are unattainable. Matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness and their establishments are unattainable. The eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and conscious spheres and their establishments are unattainable. The sight, sound, smell, taste, touch, and mental-image spheres and their establishments are unattainable. The eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and conscious realms and their establishments are unattainable. The sight, sound, smell, taste, touch, and mental-image realms and their establishments are unattainable. The eye consciousness realm, ear consciousness realm, nose consciousness realm, tongue consciousness realm, body consciousness realm, and conscious consciousness realm and their establishments are unattainable. The eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and conscious contacts and their establishments are unattainable. The feelings produced by eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and conscious contacts and their establishments are unattainable. The earth, water, fire, wind, space, and consciousness realms and their establishments are unattainable. Ignorance, action, consciousness, and so forth, and old age and death and their establishments are unattainable. Giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita and their establishments are unattainable. Internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature and their establishments are attainable. The four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path and their establishments are unattainable. The Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power and their establishments are unattainable. The perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena and their establishments are unattainable. Well-Appearing One, the fathomless prajna paramita of the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones teaches and demonstrates the real phenomena of the world this way."

(The Buddha taught that the essential meaning of prajna paramita is that all dharmas and their establishments are unattainable.)

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Chapter 46

The Mother of the Buddha

Section 2

(In the Second Assembly)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the fathomless prajna paramita does not manifest matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness. It does not manifest the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and conscious spheres; the sight, sound, smell, taste, touch, and mental-image spheres; the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and conscious realms; the sight, sound, smell, taste, touch, and mental-image realms; the eye consciousness realm, ear consciousness realm, nose consciousness realm, tongue consciousness realm, body consciousness realm, and conscious consciousness realm; the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and conscious contacts; the feelings produced by eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and conscious contacts. The fathomless prajna paramita does not manifest the earth, water, fire, wind, space, and consciousness realms. It does not manifest ignorance, action, consciousness, name and form, six sense spheres, contact, reception, craving, grasping, existence, birth, old age, and death. It does not manifest giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna paramitas. It does not manifest internal emptiness, external emptiness, internal-external emptiness, emptiness of emptiness, emptiness of space, emptiness of ultimate truth, emptiness of conditioned phenomena, emptiness of unconditioned reality, emptiness in the final analysis, emptiness of nontemporality, emptiness of deconstruction and nondeconstruction, emptiness of original nature, emptiness of particular and common characteristics, emptiness of all dharmas, emptiness of nonattainment, emptiness of selflessness, emptiness of self-nature, and emptiness of selfless self-nature realness. It does not manifest dharma realm, dharma nature, the nature of nonillusion, nature of changelessness, nature of equality, nature of nonarising, dharma concentration, dharma dwelling, reality, the realm of empty space, and the realm of the inconceivable. It does not manifest the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering; the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations; the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations; the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, four bases of

power, five roots, five powers, seven factors for enlightenment, and noble eightfold path; the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration; the stages of pure contemplation, embryonic Buddha nature, eight-forbearance, insight, slight vexation, freedom from desires, arhat, self-enlightened one, bodhisattva, and Thus-Comer; the stages of ecstasy, freedom from defilements, emitting light, flaming wisdom, being extremely difficult to surpass, realness manifestation, going far away, the unmovable, expedient wisdom, and dharma cloud; the five eyes and six supernatural powers; the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, four unhindered understandings, great loving-kindness, great compassion, great joy, great equanimity, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power; the thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features; staying in correct mindfulness and dwelling in equanimity at all times; stream-entry effect, once-return effect, nonreturn effect, arhat effect, and self-enlightenment bodhi; all great bodhisattva actions; the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas; the turning of the wonderful dharma wheel; ferrying the sentient beings to the other shore; dignifying and purifying the Buddha lands; assisting the sentient beings to mature; all dharani gates and all samadhi gates; and the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena. Why? Well-Appearing One, as in the fathomless meaning of prajna paramita, the fathomless prajna paramita is nonexistent and unattainable, how can we say that matter, feeling, thinking, action, consciousness, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena can be manifested?

(The Buddha further taught Well-Appearing One that the fathomless prajna paramita does not manifest all dharmas because it is nonexistent and unattainable.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, all sentient beings, the three realms, and the five destinies are established with languages and speeches. All Thus-Comers accurately know all dharmas as they really are based on the fathomless prajna paramita whether they are visible or invisible; they can think, cannot think, and neither can nor cannot think; and whether they are in this world or in the rest of numberless and boundless worlds of the ten directions. All Thus-Comers also know all sentient beings accurately as they really are based on the fathomless prajna paramita whether they have absorbent minds or distracted minds; they are virtuous, not virtuous, or neither virtuous nor not virtuous. Well-Appearing One, how can the Thus-Comers, based on

the fathomless prajna paramita, accurately know the sentient beings as they are with absorbing mind or with distracted mind; they are virtuous, not virtuous, or neutral? Well-Appearing One, they can do this because of the dharma nature."

Meanwhile, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "World-Honored One, how do the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and universally Enlightened Ones accurately know the sentient beings as they are with absorbing mind or distracted mind or they are virtuous, not virtuous, or neutral based on the fathomless prajna paramita because of dharma nature?"

(Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha how the Thus-Comers could know the minds and characters of all sentient beings accurately because of the dharma nature.)

The Buddha replied, "Well-Appearing One, all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Universally and perfectly Enlightened Ones understand that the dharma nature is nonexistent and unattainable, therefore, they can understand that sentient beings, whether they have absorbing mind or distracted mind, and whether they are virtuous, not virtuous, or neutral, are also nonexistent and unattainable. Well-Appearing One, this is how the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones, based on the fathomless prajna paramita and the dharma nature, know accurately the sentient beings with absorbing mind or distracted mind or the sentient beings who are virtuous, not virtuous, or neutral.

(The Buddha replied that because the Thus-Comers know dharma nature is nonexistent and unattainable, they realize that the sentient beings, regardless of different minds and characters, are also nonexistent and unattainable.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones, based on the fathomless prajna paramita, accurately know the sentient beings whether they are with absorbing mind or distracted mind, and whether they are virtuous, not virtuous, or neutral. Well-Appearing One, how do the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones, based on the fathomless prajna paramita, accurately know the sentient beings whether they are with absorbing mind or distracted mind, and whether they are virtuous, not virtuous, or neutral? All Thus-Comers, Ones

Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones can accurately know the sentient beings whether they are with absorbing mind or distracted mind, and whether they are virtuous, not virtuous, or neutral because of the qualities of prajna paramita, such as exhaustion, freedom from defilements, extinction, termination, tranquility, and getting far away."

(The Buddha explained that because prajna paramita is exhaustible, free from defilements, extinguishing, terminated, tranquil, and far away, the Thus-Comers can accurately understand the minds and characters of all sentient beings, which have similar qualities.)

In the meantime, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "World-Honored One, how do the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones, based on the fathomless prajna paramita, accurately know the sentient beings whether thay are with absorbing mind or distracted mind, and whether they are virtuous, not virtuous, or neutral because of the exhaustion, freedom from defilements, extinction, termination, tranquility, and getting far away of prajna paramita?"

The Buddha replied, "Well-Appearing One, all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones, based on the fathomless prajna paramita, accurately know that in exhaustion, freedom from defilements, extinction, termination, tranquility, and getting far away, the natures of exhaustion, freedom from defilements, and so forth, and getting far away are nonexistent and unattainable, not to mention the sentient beings who are with absorbing mind or the distracted mind or who are virtuous, not virtuous, and neutral are attainable.

(The Buddha further explained why.)

"Well-Appearing One, this is how the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones, based on the fathomless prajna paramita, accurately know the sentient beings who are with absorbing mind or distracted mind or who are virtuous, not virtuous, or neutral because of the exhaustion, freedom from defilements, extinction, termination, tranquility, and getting far away of prajna paramita.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones, based on the fathomless prajna paramita, accurately

know the mind of greed, the mind free from greed, the mind of hatred, the mind free from hatred, the mind of ignorance, and the mind free from ignorance of various sentient beings as they really are."

Meanwhile, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "World-Honored One, how do the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones, based on the fathomless prajna paramita, accurately know the mind of greed, the mind free from greed, the mind of hatred, the mind free from hatred, the mind of ignorance, and the mind free from ignorance of various sentient beings as they really are?"

The Buddha replied, "Well-Appearing One, all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones, based on the fathomless prajna paramita, accurately know the real nature of the greedy mind of various sentient beings; that is, there is neither the greedy mind nor the not greedy mind. Why? In real nature, the mind and the associated images are nonexistent and unattainable, let alone the greedy mind and the not greedy mind are attainable. All Thus-Comers also accurately know the real nature of the mind of hatred of various sentient beings; that is, there is neither the mind of hatred nor the mind of no hatred. Why? In real nature, the mind and the associated images are nonexistent and unattainable, let alone the mind of hatred and the mind of no hatred are attainable. They also accurately know the real nature of the ignorant mind of various sentient beings; that is, there is neither the ignorant mind nor the not ignorant mind. Why? In real nature, the mind and the associated images are nonexistent and unattainable, let alone the ignorant mind and the not ignorant mind are attainable.

(The Buddha explained why Thus-Comers can accurately understand the greedy and not greedy minds, and so forth, and ignorant and not ignorant minds of various sentient beings.)

"Well-Appearing One, this is how the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones, based on the fathomless prajna paramita, accurately know the greedy minds, angry minds, and ignorant minds of various sentient beings as they really are.

"Well-Appearing One, all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones, based on the fathomless prajna paramita, accurately know the real

nature of the mind free from greed of various sentient beings; that is, there is neither the mind free from greed nor the mind not free from greed. Why? In real nature, the mind and the associated images are nonexistent and unattainable, let alone the mind free from greed and the mind not free from greed are attainable. They also accurately know the real nature of the mind free from anger of various sentient beings; that is, there is neither the mind free from anger nor the mind not free from anger. Why? In real nature, the mind and the associated images are nonexistent and unattainable, let alone the mind free from anger and the mind not free from anger are attainable. They also accurately know the real nature of the mind free from ignorance of various sentient beings; that is, there is neither the mind free from ignorance nor the mind not free from ignorance. Why? In real nature, the mind and the associated images are nonexistent and unattainable, let alone the mind free from ignorance and the mind not free from ignorance are attainable.

(Similarly, the Thus-Comers can understand other minds of various sentient beings as they really are.)

"Well-Appearing One, this is how the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones, based on the fathomless prajna paramita, can accurately know the minds free from greed, the minds free from anger, and the minds free from ignorance of various sentient beings as they really are.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones, based on the fathomless prajna paramita, can discern that some sentient beings have the minds of greed, hatred, and ignorance. It should not be said they do not have the minds of greed, hatred, and ignorance or they are free from the minds free from greed, hatred, and ignorance. Why? It is because these two minds are in contradiction.

"Well-Appearing One, all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones, based on the fathomless prajna paramita, accurately know the sentient beings who have the minds free from greed, hatred and ignorance. It should not be said they are not free from the minds of greed, hatred, and ignorance, or they have the minds of greed, hatred and ignorance. Why? It is because these two minds are in contradiction. Well-Appearing One, this is how the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally

Enlightened Ones accurately know the sentient beings who have greedy minds or the minds free from greed; angry minds or the minds free from anger; and ignorant minds or the minds free from ignorance.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones, based on the fathomless prajna paramita, accurately know the broad minds of various sentient beings."

Meanwhile, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "World-Honored One, how do the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones, based on the fathomless prajna paramita, accurately know the broad minds of various sentient beings?"

The Buddha said, "Well-Appearing One, all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones accurately know the broad minds of various sentient beings. That is, the mind is neither broad nor narrow; it neither increases nor decreases; and it neither goes nor comes. Why? The self-nature of the mind is far away in the final analysis. The self-nature is neither broad nor narrow; it neither increases nor decreases; and it neither goes nor comes. Why? As the self-nature of the mind is nonexistent and unattainable, how can we say that it is broad or narrow, increases or decreases, and goes or comes? Well-Appearing One, this is how the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones, based on the fathomless prajna paramita, accurately know the broad minds of various sentient beings as they really are.

(The Buddha explained how Thus-Comers know the broad minds of sentient beings accurately.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones, based on the fathomless prajna paramita, accurately know the great minds of various sentient beings."

In the meantime, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "World-Honored One, how do the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones, accurately know the great minds of sentient beings?"

The Buddha replied, “Well-Appearing One, all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones, based on the fathomless prajna paramita, accurately know the great minds of the sentient beings. They know that the mind is neither great nor small; the mind does not go or come, arise or extinguish, stay or change; it is neither contaminated nor purified. Why? The self-nature of the mind is in the final analysis far away, so the Buddha does not see the mind as great or small. It does not go or come, arise or extinguish, stay or change; it is neither contaminated nor purified. Why? As the self-nature of the mind is nonexistent and unattainable, how can we say that it is great or small; it goes or comes, arises or extinguishes, stays or changes; and it is contaminated or purified? Well-Appearing One, this is how the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones accurately know the great minds of sentient beings.

(In the preceding and subsequent paragraphs, the Buddha taught how the Thus-Comers know various kinds of sentient beings’ minds as they really are.)

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones, based on the fathomless prajna paramita, accurately know the immeasurable minds of sentient beings.”

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, “World-Honored One, how do the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones, based on the fathomless prajna paramita, accurately know the immeasurable minds of sentient beings?”

The Buddha replied, “Well-Appearing One, all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones accurately know the immeasurable minds of sentient beings. They know that their minds are neither measurable nor immeasurable; their minds neither stay nor not stay, neither go nor come. Why? The self-nature of the mind is in the final analysis far away. The Buddha does not see it as measurable or immeasurable, staying or not staying, going or coming. Why? As the nature of immeasurable minds relies on nothing, how can we say the minds are measurable or immeasurable, staying or not staying, going or coming? As the self-nature of the mind relies on nothing and is nonexistent and unattainable, how can the measurable and immeasurable, staying and not staying, and going and coming minds be attainable? Well-

Appearing One, this is how the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones, based on the fathomless prajna paramita, accurately know the immeasurable minds of sentient beings."

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones, based on the fathomless prajna paramita, accurately know the invisible and unsubstantial minds of sentient beings."

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha\, "World-Honored One, how do the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones, based on the fathomless prajna paramita, accurately know the invisible and unsubstantial minds of sentient beings?"

The Buddha replied, "Well-Appearing One, all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones, based on the fathomless prajna paramita, know accurately that the invisible and unsubstantial minds of sentient beings are without forms. Why? It is because all particular characteristics of the minds are empty. Well-Appearing One, this is how the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones, based on the fathomless prajna paramita, accurately know the invisible and unsubstantial minds of sentient beings as they really are.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones, based on the fathomless prajna paramita, accurately know the immaterial and invisible minds of sentient beings."

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "World-Honored One, how do the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones, based on the fathomless prajna paramita, accurately know the immaterial and invisible minds of sentient beings?"

The Buddha replied, "Well-Appearing One, all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones, based on the fathomless prajna paramita, accurately know that the Buddha's five eyes cannot see the immaterial and invisible minds of sentient beings. Why? It is because the self-natures of all minds are empty. Well-Appearing One, this is

how the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones, based on fathomless prajna paramita, accurately know the immaterial and invisible minds of sentient beings.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones, based on the fathomless prajna paramita, accurately know the minds and associated images of sentient beings whether they emerge or disappear, bend or stretch."

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "World-Honored One, how do the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones, based on the fathomless prajna paramita, accurately know the minds and associated images of the sentient beings whether they emerge or disappear, bend or stretch?"

The Buddha replied, "Well-Appearing One, all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones, based on the fathomless prajna paramita, know accurately that the emerging or disappearing minds, the bending or stretching minds, and their associated images of sentient beings arise dependent on matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness. Well-Appearing One, this is how the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones, based on the fathomless prajna paramita, know accurately the minds and associated images of sentient beings whether they emerge or disappear, bend or stretch. The Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones, based on the fathomless prajna paramita, know that the emerging or disappearing and the bending or stretching minds and the associated images of sentient beings are attached to the view that the 'I' and the world are permanent because of matter, insisting that this is the truth while the views other than this one are wrong. They are attached to the view that the 'I' and the world are impermanent because of matter, insisting that this is the truth while the views other than this one are wrong. They are attached to the view that the 'I' and the world are permanent and impermanent because of matter, insisting that this is the truth while the views other than this one are wrong. They are attached to the view that the 'I' and the world are neither permanent nor impermanent because of matter, insisting that this is the truth while the views other than this one are wrong. They are attached to the view that the 'I' and the world are

permanent because of feeling, insisting that this is the truth while the views other than this one are wrong. They are attached to the view that the ‘I’ and the world are impermanent because of feeling, insisting that this is the truth while the views other than this one are wrong. They are attached to the view that the ‘I’ and the world are permanent and impermanent because of feeling, insisting that this is the truth while the views other than this one are wrong. They are attached to the view that the ‘I’ and the world are neither permanent nor impermanent because of feeling, insisting that this is the truth while the views other than this one are wrong. They are attached to the view that the ‘I’ and the world are permanent because of thinking, insisting that this is the truth while the views other than this one are wrong. They are attached to the view that the ‘I’ and the world are impermanent because of thinking, insisting that this is the truth while the views other than this one are wrong. They are attached to the view that the ‘I’ and the world are permanent and impermanent because of thinking, insisting that this is the truth while the views other than this one are wrong. They are attached to the view that the ‘I’ and the world are neither permanent nor impermanent because of thinking, insisting that this is the truth while the views other than this one are wrong. They are attached to the view that the ‘I’ and the world are permanent because of action, insisting that this is the truth while the views other than this one are wrong. They are attached to the view that the ‘I’ and the world are impermanent because of action, insisting that this is the truth while the views other than this one are wrong. They are attached to the view that the ‘I’ and the world are permanent and impermanent because of action, insisting that this is the truth while the views other than this one are wrong. They are attached to the view that the ‘I’ and the world are neither permanent nor impermanent because of action, insisting that this is the truth while the views other than this one are wrong. They are attached to the view that the ‘I’ and the world are permanent because of consciousness, insisting that this is the truth while the views other than this one are wrong. They are attached to the view that the ‘I’ and the world are impermanent because of consciousness, insisting that this is the truth while the views other than this one are wrong. They are attached to the view that the ‘I’ and the world are permanent and impermanent because of consciousness, insisting that this is the truth while the views other than this one are wrong. They are attached to the view that the ‘I’ and the world are neither permanent nor impermanent because of consciousness, insisting that this is the truth while the views other than this one are wrong.

(The Buddha stated in this and following paragraphs that the Thus-Comers precisely and accurately know how sentient beings are attached to the five aggregates and hold incorrect views of the "I" and the world as permanent, impermanent, neither permanent nor impermanent, and so forth.)

"The sentient beings are attached to the view that the 'I' and the world are with boundaries because of matter, insisting that this is the truth while the views other than this one are wrong. They are attached to the view that the 'I' and the world are without boundaries because of matter, insisting that this is the truth while the views other than this one are wrong. They are attached to the view that the 'I' and the world are with and without boundaries because of matter, insisting that this is the truth while the views other than this one are wrong. They are attached to the view that the 'I' and the world are neither with nor without boundaries because of matter, insisting that this is the truth while the views other than this one are wrong. They are attached to the view that the 'I' and the world are with boundaries because of feeling, insisting that this is the truth while the views other than this one are wrong. They are attached to the view that the 'I' and the world are without boundaries because of feeling, insisting that this is the truth while the views other than this one are wrong. They are attached to the view that the 'I' and the world are with and without boundaries because of feeling, insisting that this is the truth while the views other than this one are wrong. They are attached to the view that the 'I' and the world are neither with nor without boundaries because of feeling, insisting that this is the truth while the views other than this one are wrong. They are attached to the view that the 'I' and the world are with boundaries because of thinking, insisting that this is the truth while the views other than this one are wrong. They are attached to the view that the 'I' and the world are without boundaries because of thinking, insisting that this is the truth while the views other than this one are wrong. They are attached to the view that the 'I' and the world are with and without boundaries because of thinking, insisting that this is the truth while the views other than this one are wrong. They are attached to the view that the 'I' and the world are neither with nor without boundaries because of thinking, insisting that this is the truth while the views other than this one are wrong. They are attached to the view that the 'I' and the world are with boundaries because of action, insisting that this is the truth while the views other than this one are wrong. They are attached to the view that the 'I' and the world are without boundaries because of action, insisting that this is the truth

while the views other than this one are wrong. They are attached to the view that the ‘I’ and the world are with and without boundaries because of action, insisting that this is the truth while the views other than this one are wrong. They are attached to the view that the ‘I’ and the world are neither with nor without boundaries because of action, insisting that this is the truth while the views other than this one are wrong. They are attached to the view that the ‘I’ and the world are with boundaries because of consciousness, insisting that this is the truth while the views other than this one are wrong. They are attached to the view that the ‘I’ and the world are without boundaries because of consciousness, insisting that this is the truth while the views other than this one are wrong. They are attached to the view that the ‘I’ and the world are with and without boundaries because of consciousness, insisting that this is the truth while the views other than this one are wrong. They are attached to the view that the ‘I’ and the world are neither with nor without boundaries because of consciousness, insisting that this is the truth while the views other than this one are wrong.

“The sentient beings are attached to the view that the living one is the body because of matter, insisting that this is the truth while the views other than this one are wrong. They are attached to the view that the living one is not the body because of matter, insisting that this is the truth while the views other than this one are wrong. They are attached to the view that the living one is the body because of feeling, insisting that this is the truth while the views other than this one are wrong. They are attached to the view that the living one is not the body because of feeling, insisting that this is the truth while the views other than this one are wrong. They are attached to the view that the living one is the body because of thinking, insisting that this is the truth while the views other than this one are wrong. They are attached to the view that the living one is not the body because of thinking, insisting that this is the truth while the views other than this one are wrong. They are attached to the view that the living one is the body because of action, insisting that this is the truth while the views other than this one are wrong. They are attached to the view that the living one is not the body because of action, insisting that this is the truth while the views other than this one are wrong. They are attached to the view that the living one is the body because of consciousness, insisting that this is the truth while the views other than this one are wrong. They are attached to the view that the living one is not the body because of consciousness, insisting that this is the truth while the views other than this one are wrong.

"The sentient beings are attached to the view that the Thus-Comer is existent after death because of matter, insisting that this is the truth while the views other than this one are wrong. They are attached to the view that the Thus-Comer is nonexistent after death because of matter, insisting that this is the truth while the views other than this one are wrong. They are attached to the view that the Thus-Comer is existent and nonexistent after death because of matter, insisting that this is the truth while the views other than this one are wrong. They are attached to the view that the Thus-Comer is neither existent nor nonexistent after death because of matter, insisting that this is the truth while the views other than this one are wrong. They are attached to the view that the Thus-Comer is existent after death because of feeling, insisting that this is the truth while the views other than this one are wrong. They are attached to the view that the Thus-Comer is nonexistent after death because of feeling, insisting that this is the truth while the views other than this one are wrong. They are attached to the view that the Thus-Comer is existent and nonexistent after death because of feeling, insisting that this is the truth while the views other than this one are wrong. They are attached to the view that the Thus-Comer is neither existent nor nonexistent after death because of feeling, insisting that this is the truth while the views other than this one are wrong. They are attached to the view that the Thus-Comer is existent after death because of thinking, insisting that this is the truth while the views other than this one are wrong. They are attached to the view that the Thus-Comer is nonexistent after death because of thinking, insisting that this is the truth while the views other than this one are wrong. They are attached to the view that the Thus-Comer is existent and nonexistent after death because of thinking, insisting that this is the truth while the views other than this one are wrong. They are attached to the view that the Thus-Comer is neither existent nor nonexistent after death because of thinking, insisting that this is the truth while the views other than this one are wrong. They are attached to the view that the Thus-Comer is existent after death because of action, insisting that this is the truth while the views other than this one are wrong. They are attached to the view that the Thus-Comer is nonexistent after death because of action, insisting that this is the truth while the views other than this one are wrong. They are attached to the view that the Thus-Comer is existent and nonexistent after death because of action, insisting that this is the truth while the views other than this one are wrong. They are attached to the view that the Thus-Comer is neither existent nor nonexistent after death because of action, insisting that this is the truth while the views other than this one are wrong. They are attached to the view that the Thus-Comer is existent after death

because of consciousness, insisting that this is the truth while the views other than this one are wrong. They are attached to the view that the Thus-Comer is nonexistent after death because of consciousness, insisting that this is the truth while the views other than this one are wrong. They are attached to the view that the Thus-Comer is existent and nonexistent after death because of consciousness, insisting that this is the truth while the views other than this one are wrong. They are attached to the view that the Thus-Comer is neither existent nor nonexistent after death because of consciousness, insisting that this is the truth while the views other than this one are wrong. Well-Appearing One, this is how the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones, based on the fathomless prajna paramita, know accurately the minds and the associated images of the sentient beings whether they emerge or disappear, bend or stretch.

(The Buddha further stated that the Thus-Comers accurately and precisely understand how sentient beings are attached to the five aggregates and hold various incorrect views.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones, based on the fathomless prajna paramita, know accurately what matter really is, and also know what feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness really are."

Meanwhile, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "World-Honored One, how do the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones, based on the fathomless prajna paramita, know accurately what matter really is, and also know what feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness really are?"

The Buddha replied, "Well-Appearing One, all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones know accurately that the realness of matter is without change, differentiation, form, operation, nonsensical argument, and attainment; they also know accurately that the realness of feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness is without change, differentiation, form, operation, nonsensical argument, and attainment. Well-Appearing One, this is how the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones, based on the fathomless prajna paramita, know accurately what matter really is, and what feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness really are.

(The Buddha taught that all Thus-Comers precisely understand the realness of the five aggregates as without change, differentiation, form, and so forth.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the realness of the five aggregates is the realness of the sentient beings. The realness of the sentient beings is the realness of emerging, disappearance, stretching, and bending. The realness of emerging, disappearance, stretching, and bending is the realness of the five aggregates. The realness of the five aggregates is the realness of the twelve spheres. The realness of the twelve spheres is the realness of the eighteen realms. The realness of the eighteen realms is the realness of all dharmas. The realness of all dharmas is the realness of the six paramitas. The realness of the six paramitas is the realness of the thirty-seven aids to enlightenment. The realness of the thirty-seven aids to enlightenment is the realness of the eighteen kinds of emptiness. The realness of the eighteen kinds of emptiness is the realness of the eight liberations. The realness of the eight liberations is the realness of the eight vexation-overcoming meditations. The realness of the eight vexation-overcoming meditations is the realness of the nine concentrations in sequence. The realness of the nine concentrations in sequence is the realness of the Buddha's ten abilities. The realness of the Buddha's ten abilities is the realness of the four kinds of fearlessness. The realness of the four kinds of fearlessness is the realness of the four unhindered understandings. The realness of the four unhindered understandings is the realness of great loving-kindness, great compassion, great joy, and great equanimity. The realness of great loving-kindness, great compassion, great joy, and great equanimity is the realness of the eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power. The realness of the eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power is the realness of the perfect knowledge of everything. The realness of the perfect knowledge of everything is the realness of the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths. The realness of the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths is the realness of the perfect knowledge of all phenomena. The realness of the perfect knowledge of all phenomena is the realness of the virtuous dharmas. The realness of the virtuous dharmas is the realness of the not virtuous dharmas. The realness of the not virtuous dharmas is the realness of the neutral dharmas. The realness of the neutral dharmas is the realness of the dharmas of the world. The realness of the dharmas of the world is the realness of the dharmas beyond the world. The realness of the dharmas beyond the world is the realness of the flawed dharmas. The realness of the flawed dharmas is the realness of the

flawless dharmas. The realness of the flawless dharmas is the realness of the conditioned dharmas. The realness of the conditioned dharmas is the realness of the unconditioned dharmas. The realness of the unconditioned dharmas is the realness of the dharmas in the past. The realness of the dharmas in the past is the realness of the dharmas in the future. The realness of the dharmas in the future is the realness of the dharmas in the present. The realness of the dharmas in the present is the realness of stream-entry effect. The realness of the stream-entry effect is the realness of once-return effect. The realness of once-return effect is the realness of nonreturn effect. The realness of nonreturn effect is the realness of arhat effect. The realness of arhat effect is the realness of the self-enlightenment bodhi. The realness of the self-enlightened bodhi is the realness of all great bodhisattva actions. The realness of all great bodhisattva actions is the realness of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas. The realness of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas is the realness of all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones. The realness of all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened One is the realness of all sentient beings.

(The Buddha implied that all dharmas and sentient beings share the same realness.)

"Well-Appearing One, the realness of all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones, the realness of all sentient beings, and the realness of all dharmas are not different or separate. They are the one realness, which is nothing else. It will not decay or extinguish, nor does it differentiate. Well-Appearing One, as all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones, based on the fathomless prajna paramita, realize the ultimate realness of all dharmas, they will also attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. Therefore, it is said that the fathomless prajna paramita can give birth to the Buddhas and thus is the mother of the Buddhas. The fathomless prajna paramita can demonstrate the real phenomena of the world for the Buddhas. Well-Appearing One, based on this fathomless prajna paramita, the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones can realize the nature of nonillusion and the nature of changelessness of the realness of all dharmas. Because they can realize the phenomena of the realness as they really are, they are named the Thus-Comer, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones."

(The Buddha instructed that prajna paramita allows the Thus-Comers to realize the ultimate realness of all dharmas and attain the unsurpassed bodhi. Therefore, prajna paramita is the mother of the Buddhas.)

In the meantime, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One said to the Buddha, "World-Honored One, the realness, the nature of nonillusion, and the nature of changelessness of all dharmas that the fathomless prajna paramita demonstrates and unveils are very profound; they are difficult to perceive and become awakened to. World-Honored One, all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones have used realness, the nature of nonillusion, and the nature of changelessness of all dharmas to manifest and analyze the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas. World-Honored One, who can believe in and understand the profound realness of all dharmas? Only the great bodhisattvas without regression and the flawless arhats possessing correct views can believe in and understand the profound realness when hearing the Buddha's teaching. The Thus-Comer has manifested and analyzed the phenomena of realness that he has realized for them."

The Buddha said, "Yes, Well-Appearing One, it is as you say. Why? Well-Appearing One, realness is infinite, so it is very profound. Only the Thus-Comers can achieve complete and universal awareness of the infinite realness."

Meanwhile, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "World-Honored One, how do the Buddhas realize the infinite realness?"

The Buddha replied, "Well-Appearing One, the Buddhas realize the infinite realness through realness."

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, "World-Honored One, what infinite realness have the Thus-Comers realized?"

The Buddha replied, "Well-Appearing One, the Thus-Comers can realize the infinite realness of all dharmas. Well-Appearing One, because the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones have realized the infinite realness of all dharmas, they achieve perfect enlightenment and can explain the reality of all beings for various sentient beings. Therefore, they are named the ones who speak of the truth."

(The Buddha concluded this chapter by stating that Thus-Comers can teach sentient beings the truth of all existent beings.)

Chapter 47

The Manifestation of the Forms

Section 1

(In the Second Assembly)

At that time, the heavenly beings from the realm of desire and the realm of form in the large threefold thousand-world made wonderful and fragrant heavenly flowers as offerings to esteem the World-Honored One by scattering them in the sky from far away. They then came to the Buddha's place, bowed down to the ground before Buddha's feet, stood to one side, and said to the Buddha, "What is the form of the fathomless prajna paramita that you have taught?"

The Buddha replied to the heavenly beings, "The fathomless prajna paramita adopts emptiness, formlessness, nonaspiration, nonmaking and nondoing, nonarising and nonextinction, noncontamination and nonpurification, nonnature and nonform, nonreliance and nondwelling, nondiscontinuation and nonpermanence, nonsameness and nondifference, noncoming and nongoing, and empty space as its form. The profound prajna paramita embraces countless forms.

"All heavenly beings should understand that the various forms spoken by all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones are expressed not in terms of the ultimate meaning, but in terms of the worldly truth and provisionally established language to benefit heavenly beings, human beings, asuras, and others. You should know that all these forms of the fathomless prajna paramita cannot be damaged by heavenly beings, human beings, asuras, and so forth of the world. Why? It is because all heavenly beings, human beings, asuras, and so forth also have forms. You must know that forms cannot destroy forms; forms cannot understand forms; forms cannot destroy formlessness; forms cannot understand formlessness; formlessness cannot destroy forms; formlessness cannot understand forms; formlessness cannot destroy formlessness; and formlessness cannot understand

formlessness. Why? All dharmas with form, without form, or with and without form are nonexistent. No dharma can destroy and know, and no dharma can be destroyed and known; the destroyers and the knowers are all unattainable.

(The Buddha taught that forms and formlessness cannot interact or destroy and understand each other. This is because all forms, formlessness, and combinations of both are unattainable.)

"You heavenly beings should know that all these forms are not created by matter, or by feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness. They are not created by the eye sphere, or by the ear, nose, tongue, body, and conscious spheres. They are not created by the sight, sound, smell, taste, touch, and mental-image spheres; the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and conscious realms; the sight, sound, smell, taste, touch, and mental-image realms; the eye consciousness realm, ear consciousness realm, nose consciousness realm, tongue consciousness realm, body consciousness realm, and conscious consciousness realm; the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and conscious contacts; the feelings produced by eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and conscious contacts. These forms are not made by giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna paramitas. They are not created by internal emptiness, external emptiness, internal-external emptiness, emptiness of emptiness, emptiness of space, emptiness of ultimate truth, emptiness of conditioned phenomena, emptiness of unconditioned reality, emptiness in the final analysis, emptiness of nontemporality, emptiness of deconstruction and nondeconstruction, emptiness of original nature, emptiness of particular and common characteristics, emptiness of all dharmas, emptiness of nonattainment, emptiness of selflessness, emptiness of self-nature, and emptiness of selfless self-nature. They are not created by realness, dharma realm, dharma nature, the nature of nonillusion, nature of changelessness, nature of equality, nature of nonarising, dharma concentration, dharma dwelling, reality, the realm of empty space, and the realm of the inconceivable. They are not created by the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering. They are not created by the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, four formless concentrations; the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations; the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, four bases of power, five roots, five powers, seven factors for enlightenment, and noble eightfold path; and the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration. They are not created by the stages of pure

contemplation, embryonic Buddha nature, eight-forbearance, insight, slight vexation, elimination of desires, arhat, self-enlightenment bodhi, bodhisattva, and Thus-Comer. They are not created by the stages of ecstasy, freedom from defilements, emitting light, flaming wisdom, being extremely difficult to surpass, realness manifestation, going far away, the unmovable, expedient wisdom, and dharma cloud. They are not created by the five eyes and six supernatural powers. They are not created by the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, four unhindered understandings, great loving-kindness, great compassion, great joy, great equanimity, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power. They are not created by the thirty-two perfect major features and eighty distinguishing minor marks. They are not created by staying in correct mindfulness and dwelling in equanimity at all times. They are not created by all dharani gates and all samadhi gates. They are not created by the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena.

(The Buddha taught heavenly beings that these forms are not created by perceptions, practices, or superior holy dharmas.)

"You heavenly beings should know that all these forms are not created or owned by heavens or nonheavens, humans or nonhumans. They are neither flawed nor flawless, neither of the world nor beyond the world, and neither conditioned nor unconditioned. They are not unattached and unspeakable.

"Various heavenly beings, understanding that the fathomless prajna paramita is far away from all forms, you should not ask about the forms adopted by the fathomless prajna paramita. Consider this: Does it make sense to ask what forms have been adopted by empty space?"

The heavenly beings replied, "No, World-Honored One. No, Well-Gone One. Why? Empty space has no body, form, and action, so such a question should not be asked."

The World-Honored One said, "Similarly, the fathomless prajna paramita should not questioned regarding the forms it has adopted. The forms of various dharmas always appear as they are irrespective of the Buddha's presence in the world. The Buddha is named the Thus-Comer because of his enlightenment and intuitive awareness of the forms as they truly are."

(The Buddha elucidated the nature of the forms of all dharmas for heavenly beings.)

Meanwhile, the heavenly beings said to the Buddha. “The forms realized by the Thus-Comer are extremely profound. They are difficult to detect and acknowledge. Because the Thus-Comers have been awakened to these forms, they can turn all dharmas wisely without hindrance. All Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones have dwelled in such forms, so they are able to analyze and explain the fathomless prajna paramita. They have collected and explained expediently the forms of the dharmas to help sentient beings achieve unhindered understanding of prajna paramita.

“It is unusual, World-Honored One. The fathomless prajna paramita is the domain where various Thus-comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones in the past, future, and present always go to. By continually going to this domain, they have attained the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi and further analyzed and elucidated all dharma forms for sentient beings. They have analyzed and elucidated the forms of matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness; the forms of the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and conscious spheres; the forms of the sight, sound, smell, taste, touch, and mental-image spheres; the forms of the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and conscious realms; the forms of the sight, sound, smell, taste, touch, and mental-image realms; the forms of the eye consciousness realm, ear consciousness realm, nose consciousness realm, tongue consciousness realm, body consciousness realm, and conscious consciousness realm; and the forms of the feelings produced by eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and conscious contacts. The Thus-Comers have also analyzed and elucidated the forms of giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna paramitas; the forms of internal emptiness, external emptiness, internal-external emptiness, emptiness of emptiness, emptiness of space, emptiness of ultimate truth, emptiness of conditioned phenomena, emptiness of unconditioned reality, emptiness in the final analysis, emptiness of nontemporality, emptiness of deconstruction and nondeconstruction, emptiness of original nature, emptiness of particular and common characteristics, emptiness of all dharmas, emptiness of nonattainment, emptiness of selflessness, emptiness of self-nature, and emptiness of selfless self-nature; the forms of realness, dharma realm, dharma nature, the nature of nonillusion, nature of changelessness, nature of equality, nature of nonarising, dharma concentration, dharma dwelling, reality, the realm of empty space, and the realm of the

inconceivable. The Thus-Comers have analyzed and elucidated the forms the forms of the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering; the forms of the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations; the forms of the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations; the forms of the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, four bases of power, five roots, five powers, seven factors for enlightenment, and noble eightfold path; the forms of the liberation gate of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration; the forms of the stages of pure contemplation, embryonic Buddha nature, eight-forbearance, insight, slight vexation, freedom from desires, arhat, self-enlightened one, bodhisattva, and Thus-Comer; the forms of the stages of ecstasy, freedom from defilements, emitting light, flaming wisdom, being extremely difficult to surpass, realness manifestation, going far away, the unmovable, expedient wisdom, and dharma cloud. The Thus-Comers have analyzed and elucidated the forms the forms of the five eyes and six supernatural powers; the forms of the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, four unhindered understandings, great loving-kindness, great compassion, great joy, great equanimity, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power; the forms of the thirty-two perfect major features and eighty distinguishing minor marks; the forms of staying in correct mindfulness and dwelling in equanimity at all times; the forms of all dharani gates and all samadhi gates; the forms of stream-entry effect, once-return effect, nonreturn effect, arhat effect, and self-enlightenment bodhi; the forms of all great bodhisattva actions and the unsurpassed, perfect and universal bodhi of the Buddhas; and the forms of the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena."

(The heavenly beings acclaimed that because Thus-Comers in the past, future, and present always go to the domain of prajna paramita, they can achieve perfect and universal enlightenment and further elucidate the forms of various dharmas.)

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Chapter 47

The Manifestation of the Forms

Section 2

(In the Second Assembly)

At that time, the Buddha said to the heavenly beings, “Yes, it is as you say. You various heavenly beings should know that the forms of all dharmas are formless as they are viewed by

the fully awakened Thus-Comers. Changing substance is the form of matter, but the Thus-Comer realizes that it is formless as it really is. Reception is the form of feeling, but the Thus-Comer realizes that it is formless as it really is. Image is the form of thinking, but the Thus-Comer realizes that it is formless as it really is. Making is the form of action, but the Thus-Comer realizes that it is formless as it really is. Cognition is the form of consciousness, but the Thus-Comer realizes that it is formless as it really is. Accumulation of suffering is the form of aggregate, but the Thus-Comer realizes that it is formless as it really is. The gate of arising and growth is the form of sphere, but the Thus-Comer realizes that it is formless as it really is. Poisonous harmfulness is the form of realm, but the Thus-Comer realizes that it is formless as it really is. Generosity is the form of giving paramita, but the Thus-Comer realizes that it is formless as it really is. Freedom from vexations is the form of pure-precept paramita, but the Thus-Comer realizes that it is formless as it really is. Freedom from anger and hatred is the form of forbearance paramita, but the Thus-Comer realizes that it is formless as it really is. Never giving up is the form of diligence paramita, but the Thus-Comer realizes that it is formless as it really is. Freedom from restlessness and distraction is the form of meditation paramita, but the Thus-Comer realizes that it is formless as it really is. Freedom from attachment is the form of prajna paramita, but the Thus-Comer realizes that it is formless as it really is. Nonexistence is the form of internal emptiness, external emptiness, internal-external emptiness, and so forth, but the Thus-Comer realizes that it is formless as it really is. No turning upside down is the form of realness, dharma realm, dharma nature, and so forth, but the Thus-Comer realizes that it is formless as it really is. No illusion is the form of the four noble truths, but the Thus-Comer realizes that it is formless as it really is. Freedom from disturbance and annoyance is the form of the four meditations, but the Thus-Comer realizes that it is formless as it really is. Limitlessness is the form of the four immeasurable minds, but the Thus-Comer realizes that it is formless as it really is. No noise or mixture is the form of the four formless concentrations, but the Thus-Comer realizes that it is formless as it really is. Freedom from bondage is the form of the eight liberations, but the Thus-Comer realizes that it is formless as it really is. Subjugation is the form of the eight vexation-overcoming meditations, but the Thus-Comer realizes that it is formless as it really is. Tranquility is the form of the nine concentrations in sequence, but the Thus-Comer realizes that it is formless as it really is. Boundlessness is the form of the ten universal contemplations, but the Thus-Comer realizes that it is formless as it really is. Getting rid of

bondage is the form of the thirty-seven aids to enlightenment, but the Thus-Comer realizes that it is formless as it really is. Getting far away is the form of the liberation gate of emptiness, but the Thus-Comer realizes that it is formless as it really is. No grasping or attachment is the form of the liberation gate of formlessness, but the Thus-Comer realizes that it is formless as it really is. No pursuit is the form of the liberation gate of nonaspiration, but the Thus-Comer realizes that it is formless as it really is. Absorbing pure states is the form of the ten stages of the three vehicles, but the Thus-Comer realizes that it is formless as it really is. Approaching the great enlightenment is the form of the ten stages of bodhisattva, but the Thus-Comer realizes that it is formless as it really is. The ability to contemplate and illumine is the form of the five eyes, but the Thus-Comer realizes that it is formless as it really is. No hindrance is the form of the six supernatural powers, but the Thus-Comer realizes that it is formless as it really is. Invincibility is the form of the Buddha's ten abilities, but the Thus-Comer realizes that it is formless as it really is. Freedom from fear is the form of the four kinds of fearlessness, but the Thus-Comer realizes that it is formless as it really is. No disturbance is the form of the four unhindered understandings, but the Thus-Comer realizes that it is formless as it really is. Bringing benefits and happiness to others is the form of great loving-kindness, but the Thus-Comer realizes that it is formless as it really is. Relieving others from suffering and deterioration is the form of great compassion, but the Thus-Comer realizes that it is formless as it really is. Celebrating the virtuous things is the form of great joy, but the Thus-Comer realizes that it is formless as it really is. Discarding defilements is the form of great equanimity, but the Thus-Comer realizes that it is formless as it really is. Not shared by others is the form of the eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power, but the Thus-Comer realizes that it is formless as it really is. Being able to adorn and dignify is the form of the perfect features, but the Thus-Comer realizes that it is formless as it really is. Remembrance is the form of staying in correct mindfulness, but the Thus-Comer realizes that it is formless as it really is. Nonattachment is the form of dwelling in equanimity at all times, but the Thus-Comer realizes that it is formless as it really is. Universal absorbing or retention is the form of all dharani gates, but the Thus-Comer realizes that it is formless as it really is. Being universally absorbed is the form of all samadhi gates, but the Thus-Comer realizes that it is formless as it really is. Excellently receiving teachings is the form of the four voice-hearer effects, but the Thus-Comer realizes that it is formless as it really is. Being awakened by oneself is the form of self-enlightenment bodhi, but the Thus-Comer realizes that it

is formless as it really is. Accomplishing great things is the form of all great bodhisattva actions, but the Thus-Comer realizes that it is formless as it really is. Holding great powers of operation is the form of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas, but the Thus-Comer realizes that it is formless as it really is. The manifestation of the perfect and universal enlightenment is the form of the perfect knowledge of everything, but the Thus-Comer realizes that it is formless as it really is. Thorough and insightful understanding is the form of the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, but the Thus-Comer realizes that it is formless as it really is. The universal enlightenment of individual phenomena is the form of the perfect knowledge of all phenomena, but the Thus-Comer realizes that it is formless as it really is.

(The Buddha acknowledged the statements made by heavenly beings and described the attributes of various dharmas as they are viewed as formless by Thus-Comers.)

"Heavenly beings, all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones realize that the forms of various dharmas are inherently formless. Therefore, I say the knowledge and the views of all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones are unhindered and unmatched."

At that time, the World-Honored One said to the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One, "You must know, Well-Appearing One, the fathomless prajna paramita is the mother of the Buddhas. The fathomless prajna paramita can manifest the real forms of all dharmas in the world. Therefore, the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones rely on the dharma and make offerings respectfully to esteem, acclaim, absorb, and protect the dharma. This dharma is the fathomless prajna paramita. No Thus-Comer, One Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened One does not rely on the fathomless prajna paramita, nor neglect to make offerings respectfully to esteem, acclaim, absorb, and protect the fathomless prajna paramita. Why? Well-Appearing One, because of the fathomless prajna paramita, all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones come into existence and grow. The fathomless prajna paramita is the foundation upon which various Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones rely. The fathomless prajna paramita can manifest the real phenomena of all dharmas in the world.

(The Buddha told Well-Appearing One that prajna paramita is the basis for Thus-Comers. Prajna paramita reveals the true phenomena of all dharmas in the world.)

"Well-Appearing One, you must know that all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones are deeply grateful for the prajna paramita. The Buddha is most grateful and wants to repay the favor best. Why? Because no one understands and repays better than the Buddha."

In the meantime, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "World-Honored One, how does the Buddha express his deepest gratitude and wish to repay the favor?"

The Buddha replied, "Well-Appearing One, as all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi by riding this vehicle and walking on this path, they will always make offerings respectfully to esteem, acclaim, absorb, and protect this vehicle and this path without a brief interruption. This vehicle or this path is the fathomless prajna paramita. Well-Appearing One, this is how the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones express their deepest gratitude and wish to repay the favor.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones have become awakened through the fathomless prajna paramita, understanding that all dharmas are without making as no maker exists. All Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones have become awakened through the fathomless prajna paramita, understanding that all dharmas cannot be formed because the forms and the materials are unattainable. Well-Appearing One, because the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones have become awakened through the fathomless prajna paramita, understanding that all dharmas are without making and cannot be formed, they have always made offerings respectfully to esteem, acclaim, absorb, and protect the fathomless prajna paramita uninterruptedly; they are therefore named the best ones who can express gratitude and repay the favor.

(The Buddha explained why Thus-Comers are the best ones to express gratitude and repay the favor.)

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, it is because of the fathomless prajna paramita that all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones do not make, form, and turn all dharmas based on the understanding that all dharmas do not arise and turn. Therefore, it is important to realize that the fathomless prajna paramita can give birth to the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones and manifest the real forms of the world.”

At that time, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, “World-Honored One, the Thus-Comer has often said that the natures of all dharmas are without arising, initiation, knowledge, and views. If this is the case, how can the fathomless prajna paramita give birth to Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones and manifest the real forms of all dharmas in the world?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “As you say, all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones have taught that all dharmas have no arising, initiation, knowledge, or views. It is in terms of the worldly perspective to say that the fathomless prajna paramita gives birth to the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones and manifests the forms of the world as they really are.”

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, “World-Honored One, why are all dharmas without arising, initiation, knowledge, and views?”

The Buddha replied, “Well-Appearing One, it is because all dharmas are empty, nonexistent, not at ease, unreal, and not solid. Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the natures of all dharmas do not depend on or belong to anything. Because of this cause and condition, all dharmas are without arising, initiation, knowledge, and views. Well-Appearing One, you must know that although the fathomless prajna paramita can give rise to all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones and manifest the real forms of the world, it does not truly create or manifest them.

(The Buddha explained why all dharmas do not arise, initiate, know, and view.)

"Well-Appearing One, you must know that as the fathomless prajna paramita does not see matter, it does manifest the form of matter; as it does not see feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness, it does manifest the forms of feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness. As the fathomless prajna paramita does not see the eye sphere, it does manifest the form of the eye sphere; as it does not see the ear, nose, tongue, body, and conscious spheres, it does manifest the forms of the ear, nose, tongue, body, and conscious spheres. As the fathomless prajna paramita does not see the sight sphere, it does manifest the form of the sight sphere; as it does not see the sound, smell, taste, touch, and mental-image spheres, it does manifest the forms of the sound, smell, taste, touch, and mental-image spheres. As the fathomless prajna paramita does not see the eye realm, it does manifest the form of the eye realm; as it does not see the ear, nose, tongue, body, and conscious realms, it does manifest the forms of the ear, nose, tongue, body, and conscious realms. As the fathomless prajna paramita does not see the sight realm, it does manifest the form of the sight realm; as it does not see the sound, smell, taste, touch, and mental-image realms, it does manifest the forms of the sound, smell, taste, touch, and mental-image realms. As the fathomless prajna paramita does not see the eye consciousness realm, it does manifest the form of the eye consciousness realm; as it does not see the ear consciousness realm, nose consciousness realm, tongue consciousness realm, body consciousness realm, and conscious consciousness realm, it does manifest the forms of the ear consciousness realm, nose consciousness realm, tongue consciousness realm, body consciousness realm, and conscious consciousness realm. As the fathomless prajna paramita does not see the eye contact, it does manifest the form of the eye contact; as it does not see the ear, nose, tongue, body, and conscious contacts, it does manifest the forms of the ear, nose, tongue, body, and conscious contacts. As the fathomless prajna paramita does not see the feelings produced by eye contact, it does manifest the forms of the feelings produced by eye contact; as it does not see the feelings produced by ear, nose, tongue, body, and conscious contacts, it does manifest the forms of the feelings produced by ear, nose, tongue, body, and conscious contacts. As the fathomless prajna paramita does not see the earth realm, it does manifest the form of the earth realm; as it does not see the water, fire, wind, space, and consciousness realms, it does manifest the forms of the water, fire, wind, space, and consciousness realms. As the fathomless does not see ignorance, it does manifest the form of ignorance; as it does not see action, consciousness, name and form, six sense spheres, contact, reception, craving, grasping, existence, birth, old age, death, worry, sorrow, misery, anxiety, and

upset, it does manifest the forms of action, consciousness, and so forth, and old age, death, worry, sorrow, misery, anxiety, and upset. As the fathomless prajna paramita does not see giving paramita, it does manifest the form of giving paramita; as it does not see pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna paramitas, it does manifest the forms of pure-precept paramita, forbearance paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita. As the fathomless prajna paramita does not see internal emptiness, it does manifest the form of internal emptiness; as it does not see external emptiness, internal-external emptiness, emptiness of emptiness, emptiness of space, emptiness of ultimate truth, emptiness of conditioned phenomena, emptiness of unconditioned reality, emptiness in the final analysis, emptiness of nontemporality, emptiness of deconstruction and nondeconstruction, emptiness of original nature, emptiness of particular and common characteristics, emptiness of all dharmas, emptiness of nonattainment, emptiness of selflessness, emptiness of self-nature, and emptiness of selfless self-nature, it does manifest the forms of external emptiness, internal-external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature. As the fathomless prajna paramita does not see realness, it does manifest the form of realness; as it does not see dharma realm, dharma nature, the nature of nonillusion, nature of changelessness, nature of equality, nature of nonarising, dharma concentration, dharma dwelling, reality, the realm of empty space, and the realm of the inconceivable, it does manifest the forms of dharma realm, dharma nature, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable. As the fathomless prajna paramita does not see the noble truth of suffering, it does manifest the form of the noble truth of suffering; as it does not see the noble truths of the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering, it does manifest the forms of the noble truths of the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering. As the fathomless prajna paramita does not see the four meditations, it does manifest the forms of the four meditations; as it does not see the four immeasurable minds and four formless concentrations, it does manifest the forms of the four immeasurable minds and four formless concentrations. As the fathomless prajna paramita does not see the eight liberations, it does manifest the forms of the eight liberations; as it does not see the eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations, it does manifest the forms of the eight vexation-overcoming meditation, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations. As the fathomless prajna paramita does not see the four bases of mindfulness, it does manifest the forms of the four bases of mindfulness; as it does not see the

four correct endeavors, four bases of power, five roots, five powers, seven factors for enlightenment, and noble eightfold path, it does manifest the forms of the four correct endeavors, four bases of power, and so forth, and noble eightfold path. As the fathomless prajna paramita does not see the liberation gate of emptiness, it does manifest the form of the liberation gate of emptiness; as it does not see the liberation gates of formlessness and nonaspiration, it does manifest the forms of liberation gates of formlessness and nonaspiration. As the fathomless prajna paramita does not see the ten stages of the three vehicles, it does manifest the forms of the ten stages of the three vehicles; as it does not see the ten stages of bodhisattva, it does manifest the forms of the ten stages of bodhisattva. As the fathomless prajna paramita does not see the five eyes, it does manifest the forms of the five eyes; as it does not see the six supernatural powers, it does manifest the forms of the six supernatural powers. As the fathomless prajna paramita does not see the Thus-Comer's ten abilities, it does manifest the forms of the Thus-Comer's ten abilities; as it does not see the four kinds of fearlessness, four unhindered understandings, great loving-kindness, great compassion, great joy, great equanimity, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power, it does manifest the forms of the four kinds of fearlessness, four unhindered understandings, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power. As the fathomless prajna paramita does not see the thirty-two perfect major marks, it does manifest the forms of the thirty-two perfect major marks; as it does not see the eighty distinguishing minor features, it does manifest the forms of the eighty distinguishing minor features. As the fathomless prajna paramita does not see staying in correct mindfulness, it does manifest the form of staying in correct mindfulness; as it does not see always dwelling in equanimity, it does manifest the form of always dwelling in equanimity. As the fathomless prajna paramita does not see all dharani gates, it does manifest the forms of all dharani gates; as it does not see all samadhi gates, it does manifest the forms of all samadhi gates. As the fathomless prajna paramita does not see the stream-entry effect, it does manifest the form of stream-entry effect; as it does not see the once-return effect, nonreturn effect, arhat effect, and self-enlightenment bodhi, it does manifest the forms of once-return effect, nonreturn effect, arhat effect, and self-enlightenment bodhi. As the fathomless prajna paramita does not see all great bodhisattva actions, it does manifest the forms of all great bodhisattva actions; as it does not see the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas, it does manifest the form of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas. As the fathomless prajna paramita

does not see the perfect knowledge of everything, it does manifest the form of the perfect knowledge of everything; as it does not see the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena, it does manifest the forms of the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena. Well-Appearing One, it is based on these meanings to say that the fathomless prajna paramita manifests the real forms of all dharmas of the world and gives rise to Thus-Comers."
(The Buddha taught that as the profound prajna paramita does not see various dharmas, it truly manifest the real forms of all dharmas and gives rise to Thus-Comers.)

At that time, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "World-Honored One, why is it said that the fathomless prajna paramita manifests the forms of matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena as it does not see matter, feeling, thinking, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena?"

The Buddha replied, "The fathomless prajna paramita arises in consciousness without relying on matter as its condition, so it does not see matter while it does manifest the form of matter; it arises in consciousness without relying on feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness as its conditions, so it does not see feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness while it does manifest the forms of feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness. And so on, it arises in consciousness without relying on the perfect knowledge of everything as its condition, so it does not see the perfect knowledge of everything while it does manifest the form of the perfect knowledge of everything; it arises in consciousness without relying on the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena as its conditions, so it does not see the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena while it does manifest the forms of the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena. Well-Appearing One, based on these meanings, it is said that the fathomless prajna paramita can manifest the real forms of all dharmas of the world and is named the mother of the Thus-Comers because it can give arise to Thus-Comers.

(The Buddha elucidated why prajna paramita can reveal the forms of the dharmas when it does not see the dharmas: prajna paramita does not rely on various dharmas to arise in consciousness.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the fathomless prajna paramita can manifest the emptiness of the world, so it is named the mother of the Thus-Comers."

Meanwhile, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "World-Honored One, how does the fathomless prajna paramita manifest the emptiness of the world for the Thus-Comers?"

The Buddha replied, "Well-Appearing One, the fathomless prajna paramita can manifest the worldly emptiness of matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness. The fathomless prajna paramita can manifest the worldly emptiness of the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and conscious spheres; the worldly emptiness of the sight, sound, smell, taste, touch, and mental-image spheres; the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and conscious realms; the worldly emptiness of the sight, sound, smell, taste, touch, and mental-image realms; the worldly emptiness of the eye consciousness realm, ear consciousness realm, nose consciousness realm, tongue consciousness realm, body consciousness realm, and conscious consciousness realm. Prajna paramita can manifest the worldly emptiness of the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and conscious contacts; the worldly emptiness of the feelings produced by eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and conscious contacts; the worldly emptiness of the earth, water, fire, wind, space, and consciousness realms; the worldly emptiness of the twelve chains of dependent origination; the worldly emptiness of the sixty-two incorrect views; the worldly emptiness of the path of the ten virtuous karmas; the worldly emptiness of the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations; the worldly emptiness of giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita; the worldly emptiness of internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature; the worldly emptiness of the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering; the worldly emptiness of the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations; the worldly emptiness of the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path; the worldly emptiness of the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration; the worldly emptiness of the ten stages of the three vehicles; the worldly emptiness of the ten stages of bodhisattva; the worldly emptiness of the five eyes and six supernatural powers; the worldly emptiness of the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen

distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power; the worldly emptiness of the thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features; the worldly emptiness of staying in correct mindfulness and dwelling in equanimity at all times; the worldly emptiness of all dharani gates and all samadhi gates; the worldly emptiness of the stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi; the worldly emptiness of all great bodhisattva actions and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas; and the worldly emptiness of the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena. Well-Appearing One, it is based on these meanings to say that the fathomless prajna paramita can manifest the real phenomena of the world. Therefore, it can give rise to Thus-Comers and thus is named the mother of Thus-Comers.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones, based on the fathomless prajna paramita, have manifested the emptiness of matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness, and so forth, and the emptiness of the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena of the world, so the sentient beings in the world can receive, recognize, reflect on, and understand the emptiness of the world. Well-Appearing One, it is based on these meanings to say that the fathomless prajna paramita can manifest the real phenomena of the world. Therefore, it can give rise to Thus-Comers and thus is named the mother of Thus-Comers.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, because of the fathomless prajna paramita, the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones can see the emptiness of the world. What kinds of emptiness do they see? They see the emptiness of matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena in the world. Well-Appearing One, it is based on these meanings to say that the fathomless prajna paramita can manifest the real phenomena of the world for Thus-Comers. Therefore, it can give rise to Thus-Comers and thus is named the mother of Thus-Comers.

(The Buddha explained how the prajna paramita reveals the emptiness of the world for Thus-Comers, so Thus-Comers can convey this knowledge to sentient beings. Prajna paramita is thus named the mother of the Thus-Comers.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the fathomless prajna paramita can manifest the inconceivable phenomena of the world for the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones. Therefore, it is named the mother of Thus-Comers."

In the meantime, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha: "World-Honored One, how does the fathomless prajna paramita manifest the inconceivable phenomena of the world for the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones?"

The Buddha replied, "Well-Appearing One, the fathomless prajna paramita can manifest for the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones the inconceivable forms of matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness, and so forth, and the inconceivable forms of the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena in the world. Well-Appearing One, it is based on these meanings to say that the fathomless prajna paramita can manifest for Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones the real phenomena of the world. It is thus named the mother of the Thus-Comers because it can give rise to Thus-Comers.

(The Buddha explained how prajna paramita reveals the inconceivable forms of the world for Thus-Comers.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the fathomless prajna paramita can manifest the faraway phenomena of the world for the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones. It is named the mother of the Thus-Comers because it can manifest the real phenomena of the world."

In the meantime, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "World-Honored One, how does the fathomless prajna paramita manifest the faraway phenomena of the

world for the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones?"

The Buddha replied, "Well-Appearing One, the fathomless prajna paramita can manifest for the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones the faraway forms of matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness, and so forth, and the faraway forms of the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena in the world. Well-Appearing One, it is based on these meanings to say that the fathomless prajna paramita can manifest the real phenomena of the world for the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones. It is named the mother of the Thus-Comers because it can give rise to all Thus-Comers.

(The Buddha explained how the prajna paramita reveals the faraway forms of the world for Thus-Comers.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the fathomless prajna paramita can manifest the tranquil forms of the world for the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones. It is named the mother of the Thus-Comers because it can manifest the real phenomena of the world for Thus-Comers."

In the meantime, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "World-Honored One, how does the fathomless prajna paramita manifest the tranquil forms of the world for the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones?"

The Buddha replied, "Well-Appearing One, the fathomless prajna paramita can manifest the tranquil forms of matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena in the world for the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones. Well-Appearing One, it is based on these meanings to say that the fathomless prajna paramita can manifest the real phenomena of the world for Thus-Comers. It is named the mother of Thus-Comers because it can give rise to all Thus-Comers.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the fathomless prajna paramita can manifest the phenomena of emptiness in the final analysis of the world for the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones. It is named the mother of Thus-Comers because it can manifest the real phenomena of the world for Thus-Comers."

In the meantime, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "World-Honored One, how does the fathomless prajna paramita manifest the phenomena of emptiness in the final analysis of the world for the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones?"

The Buddha replied, "Well-Appearing One, the fathomless prajna paramita can manifest the phenomena of emptiness in the final analysis of matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena in the world for Thus-Comers. Well-Appearing One, it is based on these meanings to say that the fathomless prajna paramita can manifest the real phenomena of the world for Thus-Comers. It is named the mother of the Thus-Comers because it can give rise to all Thus-Comers.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the fathomless prajna paramita can manifest the phenomena of empty selflessness of the world for the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones and is named the mother of Thus-Comers since it can manifest the real phenomena of the world for Thus-Comers."

In the meantime, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "World-Honored One, how does the fathomless prajna paramita manifest the phenomena of empty selflessness of the world for the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones?"

The Buddha replied, "Well-Appearing One, the fathomless prajna paramita can manifest the phenomena of empty selflessness of mater, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness, and so forth, and empty selflessness of the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena in the world for the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones. Well-Appearing One, it

is based on these meanings to say that the fathomless prajna paramita can manifest the real phenomena of the world for Thus-Comers and is named the mother of the Thus-Comers since it can give rise to all Thus-Comers.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the fathomless prajna paramita can manifest the phenomena of empty self-nature of the world for the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones. It is named the mother of the Thus-Comers since it can manifest the real phenomena of the world for Thus-Comers."

In the meantime, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "World-Honored One, how does the fathomless prajna paramita manifest the phenomena of empty self-nature of the world for the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones?"

The Buddha replied, "Well-Appearing One, the fathomless prajna paramita can manifest the phenomena of empty self-nature of matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness, and so forth, and perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena in the world for the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones. Well-Appearing One, it is based on these meanings to say that the fathomless prajna paramita can manifest the real phenomena of the world for Thus-Comers and is named the mother of the Thus-Comers since it can give rise to all Thus-Comers.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the fathomless prajna paramita can manifest the phenomena of empty selfless self-nature of the world for the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones and is named the mother of Thus-Comers since it can manifest the real phenomena of the world for Thus-Comers.

In the meantime, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "World-Honored One, how does the fathomless prajna paramita manifest the phenomena of empty selfless self-nature of the world for the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones?"

The Buddha replied, “Well-Appearing One, the fathomless prajna paramita can manifest the phenomena of empty selfless self-nature of matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena in the world for the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones. Well-Appearing One, it is based on these meanings to say that the fathomless prajna paramita can manifest the real phenomena of the world for Thus-Comers and is named the mother of Thus-Comers since it can give rise to all Thus-Comers.

(The Buddha explained how prajna paramita reveals the forms of the empty selflessness, self-nature, and selfless self-nature for Thus-Comers.)

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the fathomless prajna paramita can manifest the phenomena of pure empty world for the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones and is named the mother of the Thus-Comers since it can manifest the real phenomena of the world for Thus-Comers.”

In the meantime, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, “World-Honored One, how does the fathomless prajna paramita manifest the phenomena of pure empty world for the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones?”

The Buddha replied, “Well-Appearing One, the fathomless prajna paramita can manifest the forms of pure empty matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness, and so forth, and the pure empty perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena in the world for the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones. Well-Appearing One, it is based on these meanings to say that the fathomless prajna paramita can manifest the real phenomena of the world for Thus-Comers and is named the mother of Thus-Comers since it can give rise to all Thus-Comers.

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the fathomless prajna paramita can manifest the phenomena of selfless world for the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and

Universally Enlightened Ones and is named the mother of the Thus-Comers since it can manifest the real phenomena of the world for Thus-Comers."

In the meantime, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "World-Honored One, how does the fathomless prajna paramita manifest the phenomena of selfless world for the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones?"

The Buddha replied, "Well-Appearing One, the fathomless prajna paramita can manifest the forms of selfless matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness, and so forth, and selfless perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena in the world for the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones. Well-Appearing One, it is based on these meanings to say that the fathomless prajna paramita can manifest the real phenomena of the world for Thus-Comers and is named the mother of the Thus-Comers since it can give rise to all Thus-Comers.

(The Buddha also explained how the fathomless prajna paramita manifest the phenomena of pure empty world and selfless dharmas for Thus-Comers.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, as it is said that the fathomless prajna paramita can manifest the phenomena of the world for the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones, it means that the fathomless prajna paramita does not allow the Thus-Comers to think about this world or think about other worlds. Why? It is because all dharmas are nonexistent and unattainable, so you cannot rely on the dharmas to think about this world or other worlds."

At that time, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One said to the Buddha, "World-Honored One, the fathomless prajna paramita appears in this world for one great thing, for inconceivable things, and for immeasurable, countless, and incomparably equal things."

The Buddha said, "Yes, it is as you say. The fathomless prajna paramita appears in this world for one great thing, for inconceivable things, and for immeasurable, countless, and incomparably equal things.

"Well-Appearing One, what is the great thing for which the fathomless prajna paramita appears in the world? Well-Appearing One, all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones have always devoted themselves to reliving all sentient beings. The fathomless prajna paramita has appeared in the world for this great thing.

(The Buddha described one noble purpose for which the prajna paramita has appeared in the world.)

"Well-Appearing One, what are the inconceivable things for which the fathomless prajna paramita has appeared in the world? Well-Appearing One, the nature of the perfect and universal enlightenment, the nature of Thus-Comer, the nature of natural enlightenment, and the nature of the perfect knowledge of everything of all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones are all inconceivable. It is for these inconceivable things that the fathomless prajna paramita has appeared in the world.

(The Buddha described the inconceivable things for which the prajna paramita has appeared in the world.)

"Well-Appearing One, what are the immeasurable things for which the fathomless prajna paramita has appeared in the world? Well-Appearing One, the nature of the perfect and universal enlightenment, the nature of Thus-Comer, the nature of natural enlightenment, and the nature of the perfect knowledge of everything of all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones are so immeasurable that none of the sentient and insentient beings in the three realms, five destinies, and the four forms of birth can measure them. It is for these immeasurable things that the fathomless prajna paramita has appeared in the world.

(The Buddha described the immeasurable things for which prajna paramita has appeared in the world are.)

"Well-Appearing One, what are the countless things for which the fathomless prajna paramita has appeared in the world? Well-Appearing One, the nature of the perfect and universal enlightenment, the nature of Thus-Comer, the nature of natural enlightenment, and the nature of the perfect knowledge of everything of all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones are so countless that none of the sentient and insentient beings

in the three realms, five destinies, and the four forms of birth can count them. It is for these countless things that the fathomless prajna paramita has appeared in the world.

(The Buddha described the countless things for which prajna paramita has appeared in the world are.)

"Well-Appearing One, why does the fathomless prajna paramita appear in the world for the sake of the incomparably equal things? Well-Appearing One, the nature of the perfect and universal enlightenment, the nature of the Thus-Comer, the nature of the natural enlightenment, and the nature of the perfect knowledge of everything of all the Thus-comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones are incomparably equal; nothing in the world can be more equal than them. It is for these incomparably equal things that the fathomless prajna paramita has appeared in the world."

In the meantime, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "World-Honored One, are only the nature of the perfect and universal enlightenment, the nature of the Thus-Comer, the nature of the natural enlightenment, and the nature of the perfect knowledge of everything of the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones inconceivable, immeasurable, countless, and incomparably equal, or are there other dharmas also inconceivable, immeasurable, countless, and incomparably equal?"

The Buddha replied, "Well-Appearing One, not only the nature of the perfect and universal enlightenment, the nature of Thus-Comer, the nature of natural enlightenment, and the nature of the perfect knowledge of everything of the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones are inconceivable, immeasurable, countless, and incomparably equal; all other dharmas are also inconceivable, immeasurable, countless, and incomparably equal. Well-Appearing One, matter is inconceivable, immeasurable, countless, and incomparably equal, and feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness are also inconceivable, immeasurable, countless, and incomparably equal. And so forth, the perfect knowledge of everything is inconceivable, immeasurable, countless, and incomparably equal, and the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena are also inconceivable, immeasurable, countless, and incomparably equal. Well-Appearing One, all dharmas are inconceivable, immeasurable, countless, and incomparably equal. Well-Appearing

One, in the real dharma nature of all dharmas, the mind and the associated images are unattainable.

(The Buddha taught that not only are the perfect enlightenment and Thus-Comers inconceivable, immeasurable, countless, and incomparably equal, but all dharmas are inconceivable, immeasurable, and so forth.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, matter, feeling, thinking, action, consciousness, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena should not be established as inconceivable, immeasurable, countless, and incomparably equal."

At that time, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "World-Honored One, why should matter, feeling, thinking, action, consciousness, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena not be established as inconceivable, immeasurable, countless, and incomparably equal?"

The Buddha replied, "Well-Appearing One, it is because matter, feeling, thinking, action, consciousness, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena should not be established as conceivable, measurable, countable, and equal or not equal."

In the meantime, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "World-Honored One, why should matter, feeling, thinking, action, consciousness, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena not be established as conceivable, measurable, countable, and equal or not equal?" 」

The Buddha replied, "Well-Appearing One, because the self-nature of matter, feeling, thinking, action, consciousness, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena is inconceivable, immeasurable, countless, incomparably equal, and selfless, these dharmas should not be established as conceivable, measurable, countable, and equal or not equal.

(The Buddha taught that because the self-nature of the five aggregates, and so forth, and the three kinds of perfect knowledge is inconceivable, immeasurable, countless, incomparably equal, and selfless, these dharmas should not be established as conceivable, measurable, countable, and equal or not equal. They should not be established as inconceivable, immeasurable, countless, and incomparably equal either, since they are selfless and unattainable.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, because matter, feeling, thinking, action, consciousness, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena are unattainable, these dharmas are inconceivable, immeasurable, countless, and incomparably equal."

In the meantime, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "World-Honored One, based on what cause and condition do you say that because matter, feeling, thinking, action, consciousness, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena are unattainable, these dharmas are inconceivable, immeasurable, countless, and incomparably equal?"

The Buddha replied, "Well-Appearing One, because matter, feeling, thinking, action, consciousness, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena are limitless, they are unattainable. Because they are unattainable, they are inconceivable, immeasurable, countless, and incomparably equal."

(The Buddha further taught that because the five aggregates, and so forth, and the three kinds of perfect knowledge are limitless, they are unattainable. Because they are unattainable, they are inconceivable, immeasurable, countless, and incomparably equal.)

In the meantime, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "World-Honored One, based on what cause and condition do you say that because matter, feeling, thinking, action, consciousness, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena are limitless, they are unattainable?"

The Buddha replied, “Well-Appearing One, because the forms of matter, feeling, thinking, action, consciousness, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena are inconceivable, immeasurable, countless, and incomparably equal, they are limitless.

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, what do you think about this? Is mater attainable if it is inconceivable, immeasurable, countless, and incomparably equal? Are feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness attainable if they are inconceivable, immeasurable, countless, and incomparably equal? Is the perfect knowledge of everything attainable if it is inconceivable, immeasurable, countless, and incomparably equal? Are the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena attainable if they are inconceivable, immeasurable, countless, and incomparably equal?”

Well-Appearing One replied, “No, they are not attainable, World-Honored One. No, they are not attainable, Well-Gone One.”

(In these paragraphs the Buddha taught that because the forms of the five aggregates, and so forth, and the three kinds of perfect knowledge are inconceivable and so forth, they are limitless and unattainable.)

The Buddha said, “You are right, Well-Appearing One. Because of this cause and condition, all dharmas are inconceivable, immeasurable, countless, and incomparably equal. Well-Appearing One, because all dharmas are inconceivable, immeasurable, countless, and incomparably equal, the dharma of the perfect and universal enlightenment, the dharma of Thus-Comer, the dharma of natural enlightenment, and the dharma of the perfect knowledge of everything of all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones are also inconceivable, immeasurable, countless, and incomparably equal. Well-Appearing One, the dharma of the perfect and universal enlightenment, the dharma of Thus-Comer, the dharma of natural enlightenment, and the dharma of the perfect knowledge of everything of all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones are inconceivable because conceivability extinguishes. They are immeasurable because measurement extinguishes. They are countless because countability extinguishes. They are incomparably equal because equality extinguishes. Well-Appearing One, because of this

cause and condition, all dharmas are inconceivable, immeasurable, countless, and incomparably equal.

"Well-Appearing One, the dharma of the perfect and universal enlightenment, the dharma of Thus-Comer, the dharma of natural enlightenment, and the dharma of the perfect knowledge of everything of all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones are inconceivable because they surpass conceivability. They are immeasurable because they surpass measurement. They are countless because they go beyond countability. They are incomparably equal because they go beyond equality. Well-Appearing One, because of this cause and condition, all dharmas are inconceivable, immeasurable, countless, and incomparably equal.

"Well-Appearing One, the inconceivable is just a designated statement; the immeasurable is just a designated statement; the countless is just a designated statement; and the incomparably equal is just a designated statement. Well-Appearing One, because of this cause and condition, the dharma of the perfect and universal enlightenment, the dharma of Thus-Comer, the dharma of natural enlightenment, and the dharma of the perfect knowledge of everything of all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones are inconceivable, immeasurable, countless, and incomparably equal.

"Well-Appearing One, the inconceivable is like empty space that is inconceivable; the immeasurable is like empty space that is immeasurable; the countless is like empty space that is countless; the incomparably equality is like empty space that is incomparably equal. Well-Appearing One, because of this cause and condition, the dharma of the perfect and universal enlightenment, the dharma of Thus-Comer, the dharma of natural enlightenment, and the dharma of the perfect knowledge of everything of all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones are inconceivable, immeasurable, countless, and incomparably equal.

"Well-Appearing One, the dharma of perfect and universal enlightenment, the dharma of Thus-Comer, the dharma of natural enlightenment, and the dharma of the perfect knowledge of everything of all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones cannot be conceived, measured, and counted by voice-hearers, self-

enlightened ones, heavenly beings, human beings, asuras, and so forth of the world, nor are they equal to voice-hearers and so forth of the world. Well-Appearing One, because of this cause and condition, the dharma of the perfect and universal enlightenment, the dharma of Thus-Comer, the dharma of natural enlightenment, and the dharma of the perfect knowledge of everything of all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones are inconceivable, immeasurable, countless, and incomparably equal."

(The Buddha said that the dharma of perfect enlightenment, the dharma of Thus-Comer, and so forth are like empty space, going beyond conceivability, measurement, and so forth; not equal to, nor can be conceived by voice-hearers, self-enlightened ones, heavenly beings, and human beings. Therefore, they are inconceivable, immeasurable, and so forth.)

As the Buddha was teaching the inconceivable, immeasurable, countless, and incomparably equal dharma, five hundred monks and two hundred nuns' minds were liberated from flawed things. Six hundred laymen and three hundred laywomen stayed far away from defilements of all dharmas and attained pure dharma eye. Two thousand bodhisattvas attained the dharma forbearance of nonarising and would be conferred by Buddha the prophecy of attaining Buddhahood in the Kalpa of the Sages.

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Chapter 48

Fulfillment

(In the Second Assembly)

At that time, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One said to the Buddha, "World-Honored One, the fathomless prajna paramita has appeared in the world for the sake of one great thing and for the sake of the inconceivable, immeasurable, countless, and incomparably equal things."

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, “Yes, it is as you say. The fathomless prajna paramita has appeared in the world for the sake of one great thing and the inconceivable, immeasurable, countless, and incomparably equal things. Why? Well-Appearing One, the fathomless prajna paramita can fulfill giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna paramitas. It can fulfill internal emptiness, external emptiness, internal-external emptiness, emptiness of emptiness, emptiness of space, emptiness of ultimate truth, emptiness of conditioned phenomena, emptiness of unconditioned reality, emptiness in the final analysis, emptiness of nontemporality, emptiness of deconstruction and nondeconstruction, emptiness of original nature, emptiness of particular and common characteristics, emptiness of all dharmas, emptiness of nonattainment, emptiness of selflessness, emptiness of self-nature, and emptiness of selfless self-nature. It can fulfill realness, dharma realm, dharma nature, the nature of nonillusion, nature of changelessness, nature of equality, nature of nonarising, dharma concentration, dharma dwelling, reality, the realm of empty space, and the realm of the inconceivable. It can fulfill the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for cessation of suffering as well. It can fulfill the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations. It can fulfill the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations. It can fulfill the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, four bases of power, five roots, five powers, seven factors for enlightenment, and noble eightfold path. It can fulfill the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration. It can fulfill the ten stages of the three vehicles and the ten stages of bodhisattva. It can fulfill the five eyes and six supernatural powers. It can fulfill the Buddha’s ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, four unhindered understandings, great loving-kindness, great compassion, great joy, great equanimity, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha’s wisdom and power. It can fulfill the thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features. It can fulfill staying in correct mindfulness and dwelling in equanimity at all times. It can fulfill all dharani gates and all samadhi gates. It can fulfill stream-entry effect, once-return effect, nonreturn effect, arhat effect, and self-enlightenment bodhi. It can fulfill all great bodhisattva actions and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas. It can fulfill the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena.

(The Buddha said that prajna paramita appears for one great thing and for inconceivable things. Prajna paramita can fulfill various superior holy dharmas.)

"Well-Appearing One, like Ksatriya Great King of Pouring Water on Head, who could subjugate all with his virtues, powers, and self-ease and rule the country without doing anything but entrusting all to his high ranking officials while he himself lived a peaceful and happy life, so does the Thus-Comer, who is a great dharma king and can subjugate all with his virtues, powers, and self-ease and entrusts the dharma of voice-hearer, self-enlightened one, bodhisattva, and the dharma of the Buddha to the fathomless prajna paramita so that all can be fulfilled owing to this fathomless prajna paramita. Therefore, Well-Appearing One, the fathomless prajna paramita has appeared in the world for one great thing and the inconceivable and incomparably equal things.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the fathomless prajna paramita neither grasps nor attaches to matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness, but it can fulfill various things as it appears in the world. It neither grasps nor attaches to the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and conscious spheres, but it can fulfill various things as it appears in the world. It neither grasps nor attaches to the sight, sound, smell, taste, touch, and mental-image spheres, but it can fulfill various things as it appears in the world. It neither grasps nor attaches to the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and conscious realms, but it can fulfill various things as it appears in the world. It neither grasps nor attaches to the sight, sound, smell, taste, touch, and mental-image realms, but it can fulfill various things as it appears in the world. It neither grasps nor attaches to the eye consciousness realm, ear consciousness realm, nose consciousness realm, tongue consciousness realm, body consciousness realm, and conscious consciousness realm, but it can fulfill various things as it appears in the world. It neither grasps nor attaches to the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and conscious contacts, but it can fulfill various things as it appears in the world. It neither grasps nor attaches to the feelings produced by eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and conscious contacts, but it can fulfill various things as it appears in the world. It neither grasps nor attaches to the earth, water, fire, wind, space, and consciousness realms, but it can fulfill various things as it appears in the world. It neither grasps nor attaches to ignorance, act, consciousness, name and form, six sense spheres, contact, reception, craving, grasping, existence, birth, old age, and death, but it can fulfill various things as it appears in the world. The fathomless prajna paramita neither grasps nor attaches to giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita,

but it can fulfill various things as it appears in the world. The fathomless prajna paramita neither grasps nor attaches to internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature, but it can fulfill various things as it appears in the world. It neither grasps nor attaches to realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable, but it can fulfill various things as it appears in the world. It neither grasps nor attaches to the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering, but it can fulfill various things as it appears in the world. It neither grasps nor attaches to the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations, but it can fulfill various things as it appears in the world. It neither grasps nor attaches to the eight liberations, the eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations, but it can fulfill various things as it appears in the world. It neither grasps nor attaches to the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path, but it can fulfill various things as it appears in the world. It neither grasps nor attaches to the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration, but it can fulfill various things as it appears in the world. The fathomless prajna paramita neither grasps nor attaches to the ten stages of the three vehicles and the ten stages of bodhisattva, but it can fulfill various things as it appears in the world. It neither grasps nor attaches to the five eyes and six supernatural powers, but it can fulfill various things as it appears in the world. It neither grasps nor attaches to the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power, but it can fulfill various things as it appears in the world. It neither grasps nor attaches to the thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features, but it can fulfill various things as it appears in the world. It neither grasps nor attaches to staying in correct mindfulness and dwelling in equanimity at all times, but it can fulfill various things as it appears in the world. It neither grasps nor attaches to all dharani gates and all samadhi gates, but it can fulfill various things as it appears in the world. The fathomless prajna paramita neither grasps nor attaches to stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi, but it can fulfill various things as it appears in the world. The fathomless prajna paramita neither grasps nor attaches to all great bodhisattva actions and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas, but it can fulfill various things as it appears in the world. The fathomless prajna paramita neither grasps nor attaches to the

perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena, but it can fulfill various things as it appears in the world."

(The Buddha pointed out since prajna paramita does not attach to or grasp all dharmas, it can fulfill various wonderful things as it appears in the world.)

At that time, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "World-Honored One, why can the fathomless prajna paramita fulfill a lot of things as it appears in the world since it does not grasp or attach to matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena?"

The Buddha replied by asking Well-Appearing One, "What do you think about this? Do you see matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness that one can grasp or attach to? Do you see the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena that one can grasp or attach to?"

Well-Appearing One replied, "No, World-Honored One. No, Well-Gone One."

The Buddha said, "Excellent, excellent, Well-Appearing One, it is as you say. Well-Appearing One, I do not see matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness that one can grasp or attach to, nor do I see the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena that one can grasp or attach to. Because I do not see them, I will not grasp them; because I do not grasp them, I will not attach to them. Because of this cause and condition, the fathomless prajna paramita will not grasp or attach to matter, feeling, thinking, action, consciousness, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, perfect knowledge of all phenomena.

"Well-Appearing One, I do not see the dharma of the perfect and universal enlightenment, the dharma of Thus-Comer, the dharma of natural enlightenment, and the dharma of the perfect knowledge of everything of all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones that one can grasp or attach to. Because I do not see them, I will not grasp them; because I do not grasp them, I will not attach to them. So does the fathomless prajna paramita. It does not see the dharma of the perfect and universal

enlightenment, the dharma of Thus-Comer, dharma of the natural enlightenment, and the dharma of the perfect knowledge of everything of all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones that one can grasp or attach to. Because of this cause and condition, the fathomless prajna paramita will not grasp attach to them. Therefore, Well-Appearing One, when cultivating prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas should not grasp or attach to matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena. They should not grasp or become attached to the dharma of the perfect and universal enlightenment, the dharma of Thus-Comer, the dharma of natural enlightenment, and the dharma of the perfect knowledge of everything of all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones."

(The Buddha explained why prajna paramita does not grasp or attach to dharmas, and why great bodhisattvas should not become attached to various dharmas.)

At that time, the heavenly beings from the realm of desire and the realm of form said to the Buddha, "World-Honored One, prajna paramita is extremely profound. It is difficult to see and become awakened to. It is beyond one's imagination and thinking. It is so tranquil, subtle, refined, real, fathomless, and mystic that only the very intelligent ones can understand it. The sentient beings believing in and understanding prajna paramita must have in the past made offerings to numberless Buddhas and taken vows with great aspirations in Buddhas' places. They must have planted many virtuous roots, served many virtuous friends, and been absorbed by immeasurable virtuous friends so that they are able to believe in and understand prajna paramita now. Those who deeply believe in and understand prajna paramita upon hearing it certainly will attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. World-Honored One, suppose that all sentient beings in this large threefold thousand-world have cultivated and acted in accord with belief, dharma, eight-forbearance, stream-entry effect, once-return effect, nonreturn effect, arhat effect, or self-enlightenment bodhi based on wisdom and the termination of defilements. On the other hand, one great bodhisattva can refrain from pleasures to reflect on the fathomless prajna paramita and investigate and contemplate it for just one day, then the forbearance achieved by this great bodhisattva will be superior to the former ones by countless times. Why? The blessings

caused by wisdom and the termination of defilements in accord with belief, dharma, and so forth, are less than the blessings caused by practicing the forbearance of nonarising."

At that time, the Buddha said to the heavenly beings, "Excellent, excellent! It is as you say. The wisdom and termination of defilements in accord with belief, dharma, eight-forbearance, stream-entry effect, once-return effect, nonreturn effect, arhat effect, and the self-enlightenment bodhi are inferior to the forbearance of nonarising. You must know, if the good gentlemen and gentlewomen can believe in, understand, accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, learn, reflect on, and lecture on the fathomless prajna paramita after hearing it, they will realize nirvana, get rid of birth and death, and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly. Their achievement will be greater than the two-vehicle pursuers, who stay far away from prajna paramita and learn the sutras other than prajna paramita for one kalpa or more than one kalpa. Why? In the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita, all exquisite, subtle, and superior dharmas are extensively taught. Those who practice in accord with belief, dharma, eight-forbearance, stream-entry, once-return, nonreturn, arhat, and self-enlightenment bodhi should also learn the sutras of prajna paramita diligently and attentively, so that they will be able to fulfill what they are pursuing soon. All Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones had attained, will attain, and are attaining the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi because of learning the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita."

(The Buddha advised heavenly beings that the two-vehicle pursuers should also learn prajna paramita diligently so that they could fulfill what they are pursuing soon. In the profound sutras of prajna paramita, all superior dharmas are extensively taught.)

Meanwhile, the heavenly beings said, "Prajna paramita is the great paramita, the inconceivable paramita, the immeasurable paramita, the countless paramita, and the incomparably equal paramita. World-Honored One, the practitioners relying on belief, dharma, eight-forbearance, stream-entry effect, once-return effect, nonreturn effect, arhat effect, and self-enlightenment bodhi should also cultivate and learn diligently and attentively this fathomless prajna paramita, so that they can get rid of birth and death and realize the nirvana without remainder soon. If the great bodhisattvas cultivate and learn diligently and attentively this fathomless prajna paramita, they will attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi and

enter nirvana without remainder quickly. World-Honored One, as various voice-hearers, self-enlightened ones, and bodhisattvas cultivate and learn diligently and attentively the fathomless prajna paramita to achieve as far as possible in each vehicle, prajna paramita itself will not gain or lose anything."

At that time, the heavenly beings from the realm of desire and the realm of form rejoiced and were excited after hearing what the Buddha said. They danced and jumped, and all immediately developed a deeper belief in prajna paramita and enjoyed it more. They all bowed down on the ground before the Buddha's feet, walked around the Buddha clockwise three times to say goodbye. They left the assembly for their own palaces and disappeared before long.

At that time, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "World-Honored One, if the great bodhisattvas can develop a deep belief in and understanding of prajna paramita immediately upon hearing it, and further write, accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, learn, reflect on, lecture on, make offerings respectfully to esteem and acclaim it, where are these great bodhisattvas from before they are reborn to this world?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "When hearing the fathomless prajna paramita, some great bodhisattvas will instantly develop a deep belief in and understanding of it. They will further write, accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, learn, reflect on, and make offerings respectfully to it. They will always follow the dharma teacher, ask questions about the essential meanings, and never stay away from the teacher no matter if they walk, stand, sit, or lie, just like a newborn baby calf who always stays with mother. They will never stay away from the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita and the dharma teacher until they can thoroughly understand the essential meanings of the fathomless prajna paramita and teach others about them. Well-Appearing One, you must know that these great bodhisattvas had passed away from human world before they were reborn to present human world. Why? Well-Appearing One, these great bodhisattvas had in their previous lives heard the fathomless prajna paramita, and further accepted, embraced, read, recited, cultivated, learned, reflected reasonably on it. They had written it and adorned the writing with various treasures. They had also made the most wonderful flower wreaths and ornaments, spreading fragrances, powdered incenses, clothes, jewel necklaces, treasure banners, canopies, music and entertainments, and lamps as offerings to

esteem and acclaim it. Because of these virtuous roots, they got rid of the eight difficult situations of cultivation and were reborn to the human world again. Therefore, when hearing the fathomless prajna paramita, they can immediately form a deep belief in and good understanding of it. They also love to write, accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, learn, reflect on, lecture on, make offerings respectfully to esteem and acclaim it."

In the meantime, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, "World-Honored One, some great bodhisattvas made offerings to and served the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones in other worlds and achieved superior merits and virtues, so that they could be reborn into this world. Will these great bodhisattvas form a deep belief in and good understanding of prajna paramita when they hear it, and further accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, learn, reflect on, lecture on, make offerings respectfully to esteem and acclaim it tirelessly in their present life?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "Yes, if the great bodhisattvas made offerings to and served the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones in other worlds, and had achieved superior merits and virtues, then when they are reborn into this world, they will form a deep belief in and good understanding of the fathomless prajna paramita upon hearing it. They will further accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, learn, reflect on, lecture on, make offerings respectfully to esteem and acclaim it tirelessly. Why? These great bodhisattvas had in previous lives developed deep belief in and good understanding of the fathomless prajna paramita; they had also written, accepted, embraced, read, recited, cultivated, learned, reflected on, lectured on, made offerings respectfully to esteem and acclaim it tirelessly when they heard the fathomless prajna paramita in numberless Buddhas lands. Because of the powers of their virtuous roots, they can be reborn in this world.

(In these paragraphs the Buddha explained why some great bodhisattvas can immediately develop deep belief in and understanding of prajna paramita when hearing it, and further write, accept, and so forth, and make offerings respectfully to esteem and acclaim it.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, some great bodhisattvas have been reborn into this human world from the Heaven of Tusita under similar circumstances and conditions as described above. They have also achieved similar merits and virtues. Why? In their previous lives in the

Heaven of Tusita, they resided in the abode of Maitreya Great Bodhisattva and inquired about the essential meanings of the fathomless prajna paramita; then they were reborn into this human world by riding on their own virtuous roots. Upon hearing the fathomless prajna paramita in their present life, they can instantly develop a deep belief in and good understanding of prajna paramita, and further write, accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, learn, reflect on, lecture on, make offerings respectfully to esteem and acclaim it tirelessly.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, some great bodhisattvas heard prajna paramita, meditation paramita, and so forth, and giving paramita, but they did not inquire about the profound essential meanings of them. Therefore, when hearing the fathomless prajna paramita in their present life, they are confused, hesitated, and scared; they might have deviated understanding, and cannot attain insightful understanding.

(In these paragraphs the Buddha explained why some great bodhisattvas reborn in this world could not develop correct understanding and belief of prajna paramita.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, some good gentlemen and gentlewomen of the bodhisattva vehicle in their previous lives had heard internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature, but they did not inquire about the profound essential meanings of them. They had heard realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable in their previous lives, but they did not inquire about the profound essential meanings of them. They had heard the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering in previous lives, but they did not inquire about the profound essential meanings of them. So, when hearing the fathomless prajna paramita in their present life, they are confused, hesitated, and scared; they might deviate from correct understanding and fail to grasp its insights.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, some good gentlemen and gentlewomen of the bodhisattva vehicle had heard the four meditation, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations in their previous lives, but they did not inquire about their profound essential meanings. They had heard the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations in their previous lives, but they did not inquire about their profound essential meanings. They had heard the four bases of

mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path in their previous lives, but they did not inquire about their profound essential meanings. They had heard the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration in their previous lives, but they did not inquire about their profound essential meanings. They had heard the ten stages of the three vehicles and the ten stages of bodhisattva in their previous lives, but they did not inquire about their profound essential meanings. Consequently, when hearing the fathomless prajna paramita in their present life, they are confused, hesitated, and scared; they might deviate from correct understanding and fail to grasp their insights.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, some good gentlemen and gentlewomen of the bodhisattva vehicle had heard the five eyes and six supernatural powers in their previous lives, but they did not inquire about their profound essential meanings. They had heard the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power in their previous lives, but they did not inquire about their profound essential meanings. They had heard the thirty-two perfect marks and eighty distinguishing minor features in their previous lives, but they did not inquire about their profound essential meanings. They had heard staying in correct mindfulness and dwelling in equanimity at all times in their previous lives, but they did not inquire about their profound essential meanings. They had heard the dharani gates and samdhi gates in their previous lives, but they did not inquire about their profound essential meanings. They had heard the great bodhisattva actions and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas in their previous lives, but they did not inquire about their profound essential meanings. They had heard the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena in their previous lives, but they did not inquire about their profound essential meanings. Consequently, when hearing the fathomless prajna paramita in their present life, they are confused, hesitated, and scared; they might deviate from correct understanding and fail to grasp their insights.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, some good gentlemen and gentlewomen of the bodhisattva vehicle had heard prajna paramita in their previous lives and inquired about its profound essential meanings for one, two, three, four, or five days, but they did not practice as they were taught. Now in their present life, they have heard the fathomless prajna paramita for one, two, three, four, or five days. Within these days, their minds are solid, and their beliefs are

indestructible, but once they stay away from the fathomless prajna paramita, their beliefs will regress immediately, and hesitations appear. Why? Well-Appearing One, these good gentlemen and gentlewomen had heard prajna paramita in their previous lives and inquired about its profound essential meanings, but they did not practice diligently as they were taught. If in their present life they are fortunate enough to meet and are encouraged by virtuous friends, they will love to hear and accept the fathomless prajna paramita. If they do not meet the virtuous friends, they will not hear and accept the sutras of the fathomless prajna paramita. Their interests in the fathomless prajna paramita will waver like feathers in the air. You must know that these good gentlemen and gentlewomen have not aspired to the great vehicle long enough. They have not stayed close to real virtuous friends; made offerings respectfully to the Buddhas, the World-Honored Ones; and accepted, embraced, read, recited, written, reflected on, and lectured on the fathomless prajna paramita enough.

"Well-Appearing One, you must know that these good gentlemen and gentlewomen of the bodhisattva vehicle have not learned prajna paramita, meditation paramita, and so forth, and giving paramita. They have not learned internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature. They have not learned realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable. They have not learned the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering. They have not learned the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations. They have not learned the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations. They have not learned the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path. They have not learned the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration. They have not learned the ten stages of the three vehicles and the ten stages of bodhisattva. They have not learned the five eyes and six supernatural powers. They have not learned the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power. They have not learned the thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features. They have not learned to stay in correct mindfulness and dwell in equanimity. They have not learned all dharani gates and all samadhi gates. They have not learned all great bodhisattva actions and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas.

They have not learned the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena. Well-Appearing One, you must know that these novice great-vehicle good gentlemen and gentlewomen have only developed a little bit of belief in and respect for the dharma of the great vehicle, and are unable to write, accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, learn, reflect on, and lecture on the fathomless prajna paramita.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, if the good gentlemen and gentlewomen dwelling in the bodhisattva vehicle do not write, accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, learn, reflect on, and lecture on the fathomless prajna paramita; if they do not absorb the sentient beings based on prajna paramita, meditation paramita, and so forth, and giving paramita; and if they do not absorb the sentient beings by means of the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena, then these good gentlemen and gentlewomen will not be protected by prajna paramita, meditation paramia, and so forth, and giving paramita, or by the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena. They will not be able to smoothly and easily cultivate prajna paramita, meditation paramita, and so forth, and giving paramita, or the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena. They will rather fall into the stage of voice-hearer or the stage of self-enlightened one. Why? Because these good gentlemen and gentlewomen of the bodhisattva vehicle cannot write, accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, learn, reflect on, and lecture on the fathomless prajna paramita. They cannot adopt the fathomless prajna paramita, meditation paramita, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena to absorb the sentient beings, nor can they smoothly and easily cultivate prajna paramita, meditation paramita, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena. They thus will not be protected by prajna paramita, meditation paramita, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena. Because of this cause and condition; they rather will fall into the stage of voice-hearer or the stage of self-enlightened one."

Chapter 49

The Similes of the Ships and Others

Section 1

(In the Second Assembly)

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, “Some people suffered a shipwreck and tried to grab pieces of wood, utensils, floating bags, boards, or even dead bodies for aid. Some would survive and get to the shore safely, but some did not. Well-Appearing One, some good gentlemen and gentlewomen of the bodhisattva vehicle have very little belief in and respect, love, and joy for the great vehicle, so they do not write, accept, embrace, read, recite, reflect on, cultivate, learn, and lecture on the fathomless prajna paramita, and cannot attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. They thus will fall into the stage of voice-hearer or the stage of self-enlightened one. If the good gentlemen and gentlewomen can develop perfect belief in and respect, love, and joy for the great vehicle, and write, accept, embrace, read, recite, reflect on, cultivate, learn, and lecture on the fathomless prajna paramita, they will not regress to the stage of voice-hearer or the stage of self-enlightened one; they rather will realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, a traveler in a perilous wilderness without sufficient food, water, and other supplies will suffer from hunger and thirst, and even lose life before reaching the destination. Similarly, the good gentlemen and gentlewomen of the bodhisattva vehicle have developed deep belief, forbearance, pure mind, superior enjoyment, strong motive for understanding, and diligence with equanimity in the pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, but they do not absorb the fathomless prajna paramita and other merits and virtues, then they will regress to the stage of voice-hearer or the stage of self-enlightened one and cannot attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. Well-Appearing One, a traveler in a perilous wilderness with sufficient supplies and equipment will easily reach the destination. Similarly, the good gentlemen and gentlewomen of the bodhisattva vehicle have developed a deep belief, forbearance, pure mind, superior enjoyment, strong motive for understanding, and diligence with equanimity in the pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. If they

can further absorb the fathomless prajna paramita and other merits and virtues, they will not regress to the stage of voice-hearer or the stage of self-enlightened one; they will rather transcend these two stages to assist the sentient beings to mature, dignify and purify the Buddha lands, and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, some men and women are holding semi-finished vases to draw water from rivers, ponds, wells, springs, or ditches. You must know that the vases will be worn out soon. Why? It is because they are not finished products and cannot carry water for long; they will be broken soon and return to dust again. Therefore, Well-Appearing One, if the good gentlemen and gentlewomen have developed a deep belief, forbearance, pure mind, superior enjoyment, strong motive for understanding, and diligence with equanimity in the pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, but do not absorb the expedient skillfulness of the fathomless prajna paramita, then they will stay far away from prajna, meditation, diligence, forbearance, pure precept, and giving paramitas. They will stay far away from internal emptiness, external emptiness, internal-external emptiness, emptiness of emptiness, emptiness of space, emptiness of ultimate truth, emptiness of conditioned phenomena, emptiness of unconditioned reality, emptiness in the final analysis, emptiness of nontemporality, emptiness of deconstruction and nondeconstruction, emptiness of original nature, emptiness of particular and common characteristics, emptiness of all dharmas, emptiness of nonattainment, emptiness of selflessness, emptiness of self-nature, and emptiness of selfless self-nature. They will stay far away from realness, dharma realm, dharma nature, the nature of nonillusion, nature of changelessness, nature of equality, nature of nonarising, dharma concentration, dharma dwelling, reality, the realm of empty space, and the realm of the inconceivable. They will stay far away from the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering. They will stay far away from the four meditation, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations. They will stay far away from the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations. They will stay far away from the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, four bases of power, five roots, five powers, seven factors for enlightenment, and noble eightfold path. They will stay far away from the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration. They will stay far away from the ten stages of bodhisattva.

They will stay far away from the five eyes and six supernatural powers. They will stay far away from the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, four unhindered understandings, great loving-kindness, great compassion, great joy, great equanimity, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power. They will stay far away from staying in correct mindfulness and dwelling in equanimity at all times. They will stay far away from the dharani gates and samadhi gates. They will stay far away from assisting the sentient beings to mature and dignifying and purifying the Buddha lands. They will stay far away from the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena. They will withdraw from the pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi and fall into the stage of voice-hearer or the stage of self-enlightened one.

"Well-Appearing One, you must know that when the well burnt vases are carried to draw water from the ponds, wells, springs, or ditches, they will not be broken. Why? It is because they are perfectly made and capable of holding water well. Therefore, Well-Appearing One, if the good gentlemen and gentlewomen of the bodhisattva vehicle have developed a deep belief, forbearance, pure mind, superior enjoyment, strong motive for understanding, and diligence with equanimity in the pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, and can further absorb the expedient skillfulness of the fathomless prajna paramita, then they will not stay far away from prajna, meditation, diligence, forbearance, pure precept, and giving paramitas, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena. Because of this cause and condition, they will be always kept in the minds of and protected by the Buddhas and great bodhisattvas. You must know that these good gentlemen and gentlewomen will not regress in the pursuit of the bodhisattva vehicle; rather, they will transcend the stage of voice-hearer and the stage of self-enlightened one, assist the sentient beings to mature, dignify and purify the Buddha lands, and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi soon.

(The Buddha taught with similes in these paragraphs why some great bodhisattvas could attain the unsurpassed bodhi without regressing to the two vehicles and why some could not.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, a merchant without expedient skills and wisdom ignored that the ship was not well maintained when anchoring at the harbor but was in a hurry to

load the ship and launched the journey. Shipwreck happened before long, people and goods scattered around the sea, the merchant thus lost fortune and life because of the lack of expedient wisdom. Well-Appearing One, the good gentlemen and gentlewomen of the bodhisattva vehicle have developed deep belief, forbearance, pure mind, superior enjoyment, strong motive for understanding, and diligence with equanimity in the pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. But if they do not absorb the expedient skillfulness of the fathomless prajna paramita, they will stay far away from prajna, meditation, diligence, forbearance, pure precept, and giving paramitas, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena. They thus will lose lives; namely, they will fall into the stage of voice-hearer or the stage of self-enlightened one. They will also lose treasures and properties; namely, they will lose the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.

"Well-Appearing One, a merchant with expedient and skillful wisdom know that the ship should be maintained well at the dock before being loaded with goods and launched into the water. This ensures that it will be damaged, and all cargo and personnel will be safely transported to the destination. If the good gentlemen and gentlewomen have developed deep belief, forbearance, pure mind, superior enjoyment, strong motive for understanding, and diligence with equanimity in the pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, and can further absorb the expedient skillfulness of the fathomless prajna paramita, then they will not stay far away from prajna, meditation, diligence, forbearance, pure precept, and giving paramitas, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena. They will be always kept in the minds of and protected by the Buddhas and great bodhisattvas. You must know that these good gentlemen and gentlewomen of the bodhisattva vehicle will not fall into the stage of voice-hearer or the stage of self-enlightened one; they rather will assist the sentient beings to mature, dignify and purify the Buddha lands, and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi soon.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, a man is one hundred and twenty years old and is very weak because he has suffered from wind, heat, phlegm, or a mixture of them. What do you think about this? Can this old man get up from bed by himself?"

Well-Appearing One replied, “No, World-Honored One. No, Well-Gone One.”

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, “Owing to old age and severe illness, this old man is unable to walk one krosa, two krosas, or three krosas, even with assistance. Therefore, Well-Appearing One, if the good gentlemen and gentlewomen have developed deep belief, forbearance, pure mind, superior enjoyment, strong motive for understanding, and diligence with equanimity in the pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, but do not absorb the expedient skillfulness, then they will stay far away from prajna, meditation, diligence, forbearance, pure precept, and giving paramitas, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena. You must know that they will fall into the stage of voice-hearer or the stage of self-enlightened one on the way toward the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi and never reach the destination. Why? Without absorbing the expedient skillfulness of the fathomless prajna paramita, they will lose merits and virtues and will not be protected by the Buddhas and great bodhisattvas.

“Well-Appearing One, a man is one hundred and twenty years old and is very weak because he has suffered from wind, heat, phlegm, or a mixture of them. He needs assistance from two powerful men supporting him under his armpits on each side. These two men will say to him, ‘Don’t be worried. You may go anywhere you like. We will stay with you all the time and assure you that you can go anywhere in safety and comfort.’ Therefore, Well-Appearing One, if the good gentlemen and gentlewomen have developed deep belief, forbearance, pure mind, superior enjoyment, strong motive for understanding, and diligence with equanimity in the pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, and further absorb the expedient skillfulness of the fathomless prajna paramita, they will not stay far away from prajna, meditation, diligence, forbearance, pure precept, and giving paramitas, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena. You must know that these good gentlemen and gentlewomen will not regress in the pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi; they rather will transcend the stage of voice-hearer or the stage of self-enlightened one, assist the sentient beings to mature, dignify and purify the Buddha lands, and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi soon. Why? Because they can absorb the expedient skillfulness of the fathomless prajna

paramita; they will gain the merits and virtues and be protected by the Buddhas and great bodhisattvas."

At that time, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "World-Honored One, why will the good gentlemen and gentlewomen of bodhisattva vehicle stay away from merits and virtues, fall into the stage of voice-hearer or the stage of self-enlightened one, and not attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi only because they do not absorb the expedient skillfulness of the fathomless prajna paramita?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "You are asking a good question, which will bring benefits and happiness to the good gentlemen and gentlewomen dwelling in the bodhisattva vehicle. I am going to tell you why, and please listen to me carefully. You must know, Well-Appearing One, some good gentlemen and gentlewomen have been attached to the 'I' and the associated images since the time of beginning to aspire to the cultivation of giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita. When cultivating giving, they will think, 'I can practice giving. These are the things given by me. This is the receiver.' When cultivating pure precept, they will think, 'I can observe the precept. I am observing this precept. I have possessed this precept.' When cultivating forbearance, they will think, 'I can cultivate forbearance. I have refrained from doing this. I have possessed this forbearance.' When cultivating diligence, they will think, 'I can practice diligence. I have worked diligently for this purpose. I am diligent.' When cultivating meditation, they will think, 'I can cultivate concentration. I am cultivating concentration for this purpose. I have possessed this concentration.' When cultivating prajna, they will think, 'I can cultivate wisdom. I am cultivating wisdom for this purpose. I have possessed wisdom.'

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, when cultivating giving, these good gentlemen and gentlewomen insist the existence of giving, the effects of practicing giving, and its association with the 'I.' When cultivating pure precept, they insist the existence of pure precept, the effects of observing pure precept, and its association with the 'I.' When cultivating forbearance, they insist the existence of forbearance, the effects of practicing forbearance, and its association with the 'I.' When cultivating diligence, they insist the existence of diligence, the effects of practicing diligence, and its association with the 'I.' When cultivating meditation, they insist the existence

of meditation, the effects of practicing meditation, and its association with the ‘I.’ When cultivating prajna, they insist the existence of prajna, the effects of practicing prajna, and its association with the ‘I.’ Because these good gentlemen and gentlewomen are always attached to the ‘I’ and the associated images, their practice of giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita will increase instead of decreasing the suffering of birth and death. Why? In giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita, there is no differentiation and the attachment. Why? The forms of giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita are far away from the difference between this shore and the other shore.

“Well-Appearing One, because the good gentlemen and gentlewomen of the bodhisattva vehicle do not understand the forms of this shore and the other shore, they are unable to absorb giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, prajna paramitas, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena. Because of this cause and condition, these good gentlemen and gentlewomen of the bodhisattva vehicle will fall into the stage of voice-hearer or the stage of self-enlightened one and cannot attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.”

(The Buddha explained why bodhisattva-vehicle practitioners will fall into the two vehicles and cannot attain the unsurpassed bodhi due to the lack of the expedient skillfulness that features the fathomless prajna paramita.)

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Chapter 49

"The Similes of the Ships and Others"

Section 2

(In the Second Assembly)

At that time, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One said to the Buddha, "World-Honored One, why will the good gentlemen and gentlewomen dwelling in the bodhisattva vehicle fall into the stage of voice-hearer or the stage of self-enlightened one and not realize the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi if they cultivate the six paramitas without expedient skillfulness?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “Some good gentlemen and gentlewomen dwelling in the bodhisattva vehicle do not have expedient skillfulness. When cultivating giving, they think, ‘I can practice giving. These are the things given by me. This is the almsgiving receiver.’ When cultivating pure precept, they think, ‘I can observe the precept. This is the precept I practice. I have succeeded in observing this precept.’ When cultivating forbearance, they think, ‘I can cultivate forbearance. I have refrained from doing this. I have fulfilled this forbearance.’ When cultivating diligence, they think, ‘I work diligently. I have worked hard for this purpose. I have fulfilled this diligence.’ When cultivating meditation, they think, ‘I can cultivate concentration. I have cultivated concentration for this purpose. I have fulfilled this meditation.’ When cultivating prajna, they think, ‘I can cultivate wisdom. I have cultivated wisdom for this purpose. I have fulfilled this wisdom.’

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, when cultivating giving, the good gentlemen and gentlewomen dwelling in the bodhisattva vehicle will insist that giving is existent, some effects will result from practicing giving, and giving is associated with my thinking. Because of this attachment, they will become arrogant. When cultivating pure precept, they insist that pure precept is existent, some effects will result from observing pure precept, and pure precept is associated with my thinking. Because of this attachment, they will become arrogant. When cultivating forbearance, they insist that forbearance is existent, some effects will result from practicing forbearance, and this forbearance is associated with my thinking. Because of this attachment, they will become arrogant. When cultivating diligence, they insist that diligence is existent, some effects will result from diligence, and diligence is associated with my thinking. Because of this attachment, they will become arrogant. When cultivating meditation, they insist that meditation is existent, some effects will result from meditation, and meditation is associated with my thinking. Because of this attachment, they will become arrogant. When cultivating prajna, they insist that prajna is existent, some effects will result from prajna, and prajna is associated with my thinking. Because of this attachment, they will become arrogant. Since these good gentlemen and gentlewomen dwelling in the bodhisattva vehicle are attached to the ‘I’ and the associated images, their cultivation of giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita will not liberate them from suffering in birth and death; instead, it will increase their suffering. Why? In giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and

prajna paramita, there is no difference between this shore and other shore. Why? The difference between this shore and other shore is not the form of giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita.

"You must know, Well-Appearing One, since these good gentlemen and gentlewomen dwelling in the bodhisattva vehicle do not know the form of this shore and the other shore, they are unable to absorb giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna paramitas, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena. Because of this cause and condition, these good gentlemen and gentlewomen dwelling in the bodhisattva vehicle will fall into the stage of voice-hearer or the stage of self-enlightened one and will not realize the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. Well-Appearing One, it is because they cannot cultivate the six paramitas expediently and skillfully."

(The Buddha explained why the bodhisattva-vehicle practitioners fall into the stage of voice-hearer or the stage of self-enlightened one and cannot realize the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi if they cultivate the six paramitas without expedient skillfulness.)

At that time, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, "World-Honored One, why will the good gentlemen and gentlewomen dwelling in the bodhisattva vehicle realize the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly without falling into the stage of voice-hearer or the stage of self-enlightened one because they can absorb the fathomless prajna paramita and thus gain various merits and virtues of expedient skillfulness?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "If the good gentlemen and gentlewomen dwelling in the bodhisattva vehicle can cultivate giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita without attachment to the 'I' and the associated images since the time of beginning to aspire to the cultivation, then when cultivating giving, they will not think, 'I can practice giving. I have practiced giving. This person has received my giving.' When cultivating pure precept, they will not think, 'I can observe the precept. I am practicing precept. I have possessed this precept.' When cultivating forbearance, they will not think, 'I can cultivate forbearance. I have refrained from doing this. I have possessed this forbearance.' When cultivating diligence, they will not think, 'I can practice diligence. I have worked diligently for

this purpose. I have possessed diligence.' When cultivating meditation, they will not think, 'I can cultivate concentration. I have cultivated concentration for this purpose. I have possessed this concentration.' When cultivating prajna, they will not think, 'I can cultivate wisdom. I have cultivated wisdom for this purpose. I have possessed wisdom.'

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, when cultivating giving, these good gentlemen and gentlewomen are not attached to the existence of giving, the outcomes of practicing giving, and the thought that giving belongs to them. When cultivating pure precept, they are not attached to the existence of pure precept, the outcomes of observing pure precept, and the thought that pure precept belongs to them. When cultivating forbearance, they are not attached to the existence of forbearance, the outcomes of practicing forbearance, and the thought that forbearance belongs to them. When cultivating diligence, they are not attached to the existence of diligence, the outcomes of practicing diligence, and the thought that diligence belongs to them. When cultivating meditation, they are not attached to the existence of meditation, the outcomes of practicing meditation, and the thought that meditation belongs to them. When cultivating prajna, they are not attached to the existence of prajna, the outcomes of practicing prajna, and the thought that prajna belongs to them. Because these good gentlemen and gentlewomen do not chase or attach to the 'I' and the associated images, their cultivation of giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita will reduce their suffering and liberate them from the birth and death quickly. Why? In giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita, no differentiation will bring about the attachments like these. Why? Staying far away from the difference between this shore and the other shore is the form of giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita.

"You must know, Well-Appearing One, since these good gentlemen and gentlewomen dwelling in the bodhisattva vehicle know very well the form of this shore and the other shore, they are able to absorb giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna paramitas, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena. Because of this cause and condition, these good gentlemen and gentlewomen dwelling in the bodhisattva vehicle will not fall into the stage of voice-hearer or the stage of self-enlightened one. They will realize the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi soon."

(The Buddha taught how great-vehicle practitioners can realize the unsurpassed bodhi quickly without regressing to the vehicle of voice-hearer or the vehicle of self-enlightened one.)

At that time, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, "World-Honored One, how will the good gentlemen and gentlewomen dwelling in the bodhisattva vehicle realize the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly without falling into the stage of voice-hearer or the stage of self-enlightened one because they have expedient skillfulness when cultivating the six paramitas?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "Some good gentlemen and gentlewomen of the bodhisattva vehicle have had expedient skillfulness since the time of beginning to aspire to the cultivation. When cultivating giving, they do not think, 'I can practice giving. These are the things given by me. That person has received my giving.' When cultivating pure precept, they do not think, 'I can observe the precept. I am practicing precept. I have succeeded in observing precept.' When cultivating forbearance, they do not think, 'I can practice forbearance. I have refrained from doing this. I have fulfilled forbearance.' When cultivating diligence, they do not think, 'I can practice diligence. I have worked diligently for this purpose. I have fulfilled diligence.' When cultivating meditation, they do not think, 'I can practice concentration. I have practiced concentration for this purpose. I have fulfilled concentration.' When cultivating prajna, they do not think, 'I can practice wisdom. I have cultivated wisdom for this purpose. I have fulfilled wisdom.'

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, when cultivating giving, these good gentlemen and gentlewomen dwelling in the bodhisattva vehicle are not attached to the existence of giving, the outcomes of practicing giving, and the thought that giving belongs to them, so they will not become arrogant. When cultivating pure precept, they are not attached to the existence of pure precept, the outcomes of observing precept, and the thought that pure precept belongs to them, so they will not become arrogant. When cultivating forbearance, they are not attached to the existence of forbearance, the outcomes of practicing forbearance, and the thought that forbearance belongs to them, so they will not become arrogant. When cultivating diligence, they are not attached to the existence of diligence, the outcomes of practicing diligence, and the thought that diligence belongs to them, so they will not become arrogant. When cultivating

meditation, they are not attached to the existence of meditation, the outcomes of practicing meditation, and the thought that meditation belongs to them, so they will not become arrogant. When cultivating prajna, they are not attached to the existence of prajna, the outcomes of practicing prajna, and the thought that prajna belongs to them, so they will not become arrogant. Because these good gentlemen and gentlewomen dwelling in the bodhisattva vehicle are not attached to the 'I' and the associated images, their cultivation of giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita will diminish their reincarnation in birth and death and liberate them from all kinds of suffering. Why? In the form of giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita, there is no difference between this shore and the other shore. Why? Freedom from the difference between this shore and the other shore is the form of giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita.

"You must know, Well-Appearing One, since these good gentlemen and gentlewomen dwelling in the bodhisattva vehicle know well the form of this shore and the other shore, they are able to absorb giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna paramitas, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena. Because of this cause and condition, these good gentlemen and gentlewomen will not fall into the stage of voice-hearer or the stage of self-enlightened one. They will rather realize the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly. Because these good gentlemen and gentlewomen have expedient skillfulness in cultivating the six paramitas, they will not fall into the stage of voice-hearer or the stage of self-enlightened one. They will rather realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly."

(The Buddha explained how the bodhisattva-vehicle practitioners will realize the unsurpassed bodhi quickly without falling into the stage of voice-hearer or the stage of self-enlightened one because they have expedient skillfulness in cultivating the six paramitas.)

Chapter 50

The Novice Practitioners

Section 1

(In the Second Assembly)

At that time, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, “World-Honored One, how will the novice great bodhisattvas learn prajna, meditation, diligence, forbearance, pure precept, and giving paramitas?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “In order to learn prajna, meditation, diligence, forbearance, pure precept, and giving paramitas, the novice great bodhisattvas should first of all stay close to, offer services, and make offerings to the real and pure virtuous friends who can lecture on prajna, meditation, diligence, forbearance, pure precept, and giving paramitas well. When teaching the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita, these virtuous friends will caution the novice great bodhisattvas, ‘Come here, good gentlemen, you should cultivate giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna paramitas diligently. When cultivating diligently, you should adopt nonattainment as skillful means and transfer the merits and virtues thus derived along with all sentient beings equally toward the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. You should not grasp the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi because of matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness. You should not grasp the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi because of the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and conscious spheres. You should not grasp the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi because of the sight, sound, smell, taste, touch, and mental-image spheres. You should not grasp the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi because of the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and conscious realms. You should not grasp the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi because of the sight, sound, smell, taste, touch, and mental-image realms. You should not grasp the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi because of the eye consciousness realm, ear consciousness realm, nose consciousness realm, tongue consciousness realm, body consciousness realm, and conscious consciousness realm. You should not grasp the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi because of the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and conscious contacts. You should not grasp the unsurpassed, perfect, and

universal bodhi because of the feelings produced by eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and conscious contacts. You should not grasp the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi because of giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna paramitas. You should not grasp the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi because of internal emptiness, external emptiness, internal-external emptiness, emptiness of emptiness, emptiness of space, emptiness of ultimate truth, emptiness of conditioned phenomena, emptiness of unconditioned reality, emptiness in the final analysis, emptiness of nontemporality, emptiness of deconstruction and nondeconstruction, emptiness of original nature, emptiness of particular and common characteristics, emptiness of all dharmas, emptiness of nonattainment, emptiness of selflessness, emptiness of self-nature, and emptiness of selfless self-nature. You should not grasp the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi because of realness, dharma realm, dharma nature, the nature of nonillusion, nature of changelessness, nature of equality, nature of nonarising, dharma concentration, dharma dwelling, reality, the realm of empty space, and the realm of the inconceivable. You should not grasp the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi because of the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering. You should not grasp the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi because of the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations. You should not grasp the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi because of the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations. You should not grasp the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi because of the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, four bases of power, five roots, five powers, seven factors for enlightenment, and noble eightfold path. You should not grasp the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi because of the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration. You should not grasp the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi because of the five eyes and six supernatural powers. You should not grasp the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi because of the Buddha’s ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, four unhindered understandings, great loving-kindness, great compassion, great joy, great equanimity, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha’s wisdom and power. You should not grasp the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi because of the thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features. You should not grasp the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi because of staying in correct mindfulness and dwelling in equanimity at all times. You should not grasp the

unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi because of the dharani gates and samadhi gates. You should not grasp the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi because of the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena. Why? Without grasping matter, feeling, thinking, action, consciousness, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena, one will attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.

"'Good gentlemen, when cultivating the fathomless prajna paramita, you should not crave matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness. Why? Matter, feeling, and so forth, and consciousness cannot be desired. Why? The self-natures of all dharmas are empty. You should not crave the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and conscious spheres. Why? The eye sphere, ear sphere, and so forth, and conscious spheres cannot be desired. Why? The self-natures of all dharmas are empty. You should not crave the sight, sound, smell, taste, touch, and mental-image spheres. Why? The sight sphere, sound sphere, and so forth, and mental-image spheres cannot be desired. Why? The self-natures of all dharmas are empty. You should not crave the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and conscious realms. Why? The eye realm, ear ream, and so forth, and conscious realm cannot be desired. Why? The self-natures of all dharmas are empty. You should not crave the sight, sound, smell, taste, touch, and mental-image realms. Why? The sight realm, sound realm, and so forth, and mental-image realm cannot be desired. Why? The self-natures of all dharmas are empty. You should not crave the eye consciousness realm, ear consciousness realm, nose consciousness realm, tongue consciousness realm, body consciousness realm, and conscious consciousness realm. Why? The eye consciousness realm, ear consciousness realm, and so forth, and conscious consciousness realm cannot be desired. Why? The self-natures of all dharmas are empty. You should not crave the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and conscious contacts. Why? The eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact cannot be desired. Why? The self-natures of all dharmas are empty. You should not crave the feelings produced by eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and conscious contacts. Why? The feelings produced by eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact cannot be desired. Why? The self-natures of all dharmas are empty. You should not crave giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna paramitas. Why? Giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and

so forth, and prajna paramita cannot be desired. Why? The self-natures of all dharmas are empty. You should not crave internal emptiness, external emptiness, internal-external emptiness, emptiness of emptiness, emptiness of space, emptiness of ultimate truth, emptiness of conditioned phenomena, emptiness of unconditioned reality, emptiness in the final analysis, emptiness of nontemporality, emptiness of deconstruction and nondeconstruction, emptiness of original nature, emptiness of particular and common characteristics, emptiness of all dharmas, emptiness of nonattainment, emptiness of selflessness, emptiness of self-nature, and emptiness of selfless self-nature. Why? Internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature cannot be desired. Why? The self-natures of all dharmas are empty. You should not crave realness, dharma realm, dharma nature, the nature of nonillusion, nature of changelessness, nature of equality, nature of nonarising, dharma concentration, dharma dwelling, reality, the realm of empty space, and the realm of the inconceivable. Why? Realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable cannot be desired. Why? The self-natures of all dharmas are empty. You should not crave the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering. Why? The noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering cannot be desired. Why? The self-natures of all dharmas are empty. You should not crave the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations. Why? The four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations cannot be desired. Why? The self-natures of all dharmas are empty. You should not crave the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations. Why? The eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations cannot be desired. Why? The self-natures of all dharmas are empty. You should not crave the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, four bases of power, five roots, five powers, seven factors for enlightenment, and noble eightfold path. Why? The four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path cannot be desired. Why? The self-natures of all dharmas are empty. You should not crave the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration. Why? The liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration cannot be desired. Why? The self-natures of all dharmas are empty. You should not crave the five eyes and six supernatural powers. Why? The five eyes and six supernatural

powers cannot be desired. Why? The self-natures of all dharmas are empty. You should not crave the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, four unhindered understandings, great loving-kindness, great compassion, great joy, great equanimity, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power. Why? The Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power cannot be desired. Why? The self-natures of all dharmas are empty. You should not crave the thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features. Why? The thirty-two perfect marks and eighty minor features cannot be desired. Why? The self-natures of all dharmas are empty. You should not crave staying in correct mindfulness and dwelling in equanimity at all times. Why? Staying in correct mindfulness and dwelling in equanimity at all times cannot be desired. Why? The self-natures of all dharmas are empty. You should not crave the dharani gates and samadhi gates. Why? The dharani gates and samadhi gates cannot be desired. Why? The self-natures of all dharmas are empty. You should not crave the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena. Why? The perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena cannot be desired. Why? The self-natures of all dharmas are empty. You should not crave all great bodhisattva actions and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas. Why? All great bodhisattva actions and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas cannot be desired. Why? The self-natures of all dharmas are empty.'"

(The Buddha instructed the right method and correct perspective of cultivating prajna paramita for novice bodhisattvas.)

At that time, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One said to the Buddha, "World-Honored One, various great bodhisattvas are capable of undertaking very difficult things; they aim to pursue and realize the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi amid the empty self-natures of all dharmas."

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "Yes, it is as you say. Various great bodhisattvas are capable of undertaking very difficult things. They aim to pursue and realize the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi amid the empty self-natures of all dharmas. The great

bodhisattvas are thoroughly aware that the self-natures of all dharmas are like illusions, dreams, echoes, images, shadows, illusory images of water under sunlight, transformed things, and mirages, but they still aspire to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi to bring justice and benefits to the world. They aspire to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi to bring peace, happiness, and other beneficial things to the world. They would like to bring relief to the world and serve as refuge and houses for the sentient beings of the world. They would like to show the ultimate path and serve as isles, sun, moon, lamps, candles, mentors, and leaders for the sentient beings. They have aspired to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi to guide sentient beings to approach right destinations, relieving them from the suffering of the birth and death with great compassion.

(The Buddha elaborated how the great bodhisattvas undertake very difficult things amid the empty self-natures of all dharmas to benefit the world.)

"Well-Appearing One, how will the great bodhisattvas aspire to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi to bring justice and benefits to the world? Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas will aim to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi to cultivate giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna paramitas expediently with an attempt to relieve sentient beings from all kinds of suffering and vexations. Well-Appearing One, this is how the great bodhisattvas aim to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi to bring justice and benefits to the world.

"Well-Appearing One, how will the great bodhisattvas aim to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi to do beneficial things for the world? Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas will dwell in the six paramitas themselves and expediently encourage various sentient beings to do so. Well-Appearing One, this is how the great bodhisattvas aim to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi to do beneficial things for the world.

"Well-Appearing One, how will the great bodhisattvas aim to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi to bring peace and happiness to the world? Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas will dwell in the path of the ten virtuous karmas themselves and expediently encourage various sentient beings to do so. Well-Appearing One, this is how the great

bodhisattvas aim to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi to bring peace and happiness to the world.

"Well-Appearing One, how will the great bodhisattvas aim to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi to bring relief to the world? Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas have seen that various sentient beings are falling into the three negative destinies. They thus aim to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi to relieve them from suffering and guide them to cultivate various virtuous karmas so as to dwell in peace, stability, and freedom from afflictions. Well-Appearing One, this is how the great bodhisattvas aspire to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi to bring relief to the world.

"Well-Appearing One, how will the great bodhisattvas aim to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi to serve as the refuge for the world? Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas will teach sentient beings the dharma of no reliance. Namely, they will teach that matter, feeling, thinking, action, consciousness, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena are without reliance. After hearing the teaching, the sentient beings will be liberated from birth, old age, death, worry, sorrow, misery, anxiety, and upset. It is based on this cause and condition that the great bodhisattvas have aimed to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. Well-Appearing One, this is how the great bodhisattvas aimed to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi to serve as the refuge for the world.

"Well-Appearing One, how will the great bodhisattvas aim to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi to serve as the house for the world? Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas will aspire to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi to provide the places where the sentient beings can really rest; they even will provide a great palace of nirvana where the sentient beings will be free from fears and terrors. Well-Appearing One, this is how the great bodhisattvas aim to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi to serve as the house for the world.

"Well-Appearing One, how will the great bodhisattvas strive toward the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi to demonstrate the ultimate path for the world? Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas have observed that the sentient beings do not really know the true

nature of the path, which is formlessness. Consequently, they keep wandering on the path of desires. Therefore, the great bodhisattvas will dedicate themselves to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi to teach them the essential meanings of the dharma, enabling them to comprehend the ultimate path. What essential meanings will be conveyed to the sentient beings? They include the ultimate matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness, which are inherently without fears and terrors, among other attributes, as well as the ultimate perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena, which are inherently without fears and terrors. They will teach that ultimate matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness are not matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness; ultimate perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena are not the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena. Well-Appearing One, so are the ultimate forms of all dharmas."

(The Buddha elaborated how great bodhisattvas aimed to the unsurpassed bodhi to bring justice, peace, happiness, and relief to the world; serve as the refuge and house for the world; and demonstrate the ultimate path for the world.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "World-Honored One, if the forms of all dharmas are like the ultimate forms, then why should the great bodhisattvas be awakened to all dharmas perfectly and universally? World-Honored One, in the ultimate matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness, there is no differentiation to say that this is matter, and that is feeling, thinking, action, or consciousness. In the ultimate perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena, there is no differentiation to say that this is the perfect knowledge of everything and that is the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths or the perfect knowledge of all phenomena."

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "Yes, it is as you say. There is no differentiation in the ultimate matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness to say that this is matter and that is feeling, thinking, action, or consciousness. There is no differentiation in the ultimate perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and

perfect knowledge of all phenomena to say that this is the perfect knowledge of everything and that is the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths or the perfect knowledge of all phenomena. It is because the original nature of all dharmas is empty. Well-Appearing One, the most difficult thing that challenges the great bodhisattvas is that although they have contemplated and understood that all dharmas are tranquil, subtle, and fathomless, they are not overwhelmed or drowned. After awakening to all dharmas and realizing the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, they still teach and explain such tranquil and fathomless dharma for all sentient beings. Well-Appearing One, this is how the great bodhisattvas aspire to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi to show the ultimate path for the world.

(The Buddha further elucidated how the great bodhisattvas demonstrated the ultimate reality of all dharmas for the world.)

"Well-Appearing One, how will the great bodhisattvas aspire to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi to serve as the isles for the world? Well-Appearing One, there are islets in seas, rivers, or ponds to stop or change the flow of water. Well-Appearing One, similarly, in the flow of time, matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena are not successive. As all dharmas are not successive in the flow of time, they are tranquil, subtle, and real. This means that the path of emptiness and nonattainment will let all kinds of craving extinguish. As all contaminations extinguish permanently, there is ultimate nirvana. Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas have aspired to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi to teach and explain such tranquil, fathomless, and subtle reality of dharmas for all sentient beings. Well-Appearing One, this is how the great bodhisattvas aspire to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi to serve as the isles for the world.

(The Buddha elucidated the meaning of serving as the islets for the world: the great bodhisattvas will assist and lead sentient beings to terminate all contaminated cravings and enter nirvana.)

"Well-Appearing One, how will great bodhisattvas aspire to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi to serve as sun, moon, candles, and lamps for the world? Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas have aspired to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi to teach sentient beings the six paramitas and the essential meanings of the sutras correspondent with the

four approaches of absorption. This expediently guides them to cultivate and learn diligently to overcome all kinds of darkness caused by ignorance. Well-Appearing One, this is how the great bodhisattvas aspire to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi to serve as sun, moon, candles, and lamps for the world.

(The Buddha explained the meaning of serving as the sun, moon, and so forth for the world as great bodhisattvas aspire to the unsurpassed bodhi.)

"Well-Appearing One, how will great bodhisattvas aspire to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi to serve as the mentors and leaders for the world? Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas have aspired to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi intending to guide those going astray to return on right track by teaching them one correct path, so they will stay far away from where they should not go. They will make the contaminated ones pure, painful and annoyed ones happy, unreasonable ones calm, and ones drifting in birth and death enter nirvana.

"Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas have aspired to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi with an attempt to explain for sentient beings that matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness are without arising and extinction, contamination and purification. The eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and conscious spheres are without arising and extinction, contamination and purification. The sight, sound, smell, taste, touch, and mental-image spheres are without arising and extinction, contamination and purification. The eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and conscious realms are without arising and extinction, contamination and purification. The sight, sound, smell, taste, touch, and mental-image realms are without arising and extinction, contamination and purification. The eye consciousness realm, ear consciousness realm, nose consciousness realm, tongue consciousness realm, body consciousness realm, and conscious consciousness realm are without arising and extinction, contamination and purification. The eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and conscious contacts are without arising and extinction, contamination and purification. The feelings produced by eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and conscious contacts are without arising and extinction, contamination and purification. Giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna paramitas are without arising and extinction, contamination and purification. Internal emptiness, external emptiness, internal-external emptiness, emptiness of emptiness, emptiness of space, emptiness of ultimate truth, emptiness of

conditioned phenomena, emptiness of unconditioned reality, emptiness in the final analysis, emptiness of nontemporality, emptiness of deconstruction and nondeconstruction, emptiness of original nature, emptiness of particular and common characteristics, emptiness of all dharmas, emptiness of nonattainment, emptiness of selflessness, emptiness of self-nature, and emptiness of selfless self-nature are without arising and extinction, contamination and purification. Realness, dharma realm, dharma nature, the nature of nonillusion, nature of changelessness, nature of equality, nature of nonarising, dharma concentration, dharma dwelling, reality, the realm of empty space, and the realm of the inconceivable are without arising and extinction, contamination and purification. The noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering are without arising and extinction, contamination and purification. The four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations are without arising and extinction, contamination and purification. The eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations are without arising and extinction, contamination and purification. The four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, four bases of power, five roots, five powers, seven factors for enlightenment, and noble eightfold path are without arising and extinction, contamination and purification. The liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration are without arising and extinction, contamination and purification. The stages of pure contemplation, embryonic Buddha nature, eight-forbearance, insight, slight vexation, freedom from desires, arhat, self-enlightened one, bodhisattva, and Thus-Comer are without arising and extinction, contamination and purification. The stages of ecstasy, freedom from defilements, emitting lights, flaming wisdom, being extremely difficult to surpass, realness manifestation, going far away, the unmovable, expedient wisdom, and dharma cloud are without arising and extinction, contamination and purification. The five eyes and six supernatural powers are without arising and extinction, contamination and purification. Stream-entry effect, once-return effect, nonreturn effect, arhat effect, and self-enlightenment bodhi are without arising and extinction, contamination and purification. The Buddha’s ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, four unhindered understandings, great loving-kindness, great compassion, great joy, great equanimity, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha’s wisdom and power are without arising and extinction, contamination and purification. The thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features are without arising and extinction, contamination and purification.

Staying in correct mindfulness and dwelling in equanimity at all times are without arising and extinction, contamination and purification. All dharani gates and all samadhi gates are without arising and extinction, contamination and purification. The perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena are without arising and extinction, contamination and purification. Well-Appearing One, this is how great bodhisattvas aspire to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi to serve as the mentors and leaders for the world.

(The Buddha instructed how great bodhisattvas would aspire to the unsurpassed bodhi to serve as the mentors for the world by guiding sentient beings to have right thinking and walk on right path.)

"Well-Appearing One, how will the great bodhisattvas aspire to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi to serve as the destinations for the world? Well-Appearing One, when aspiring to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi and cultivating all great bodhisattva actions, the great bodhisattvas will absorb all sentient beings by means of the four approaches, namely, the unconditioned giving, speaking good and kind words, doing things beneficial for others, and getting along with others in harmony and empathy. They will teach all sentient beings that empty space is the destination of matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness, and so forth, and perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena. They will teach that emptiness is the destination of matter in the future, so it comes from nowhere; emptiness is the destination of matter in the past, so it goes nowhere; and emptiness is the destination of matter in the present, so it dwells nowhere. They will teach that emptiness is the destination of feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness in the future, so they come from nowhere; emptiness is the destination of feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness in the past, so they go nowhere; emptiness is the destination of feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness in the present, so they dwell nowhere. They will teach that emptiness is the destination of the perfect knowledge of everything in the future, so it comes from nowhere; emptiness is the destination of the perfect knowledge of everything in the past, so it goes nowhere; and emptiness is the destination of the perfect knowledge of everything in the present, so it dwells nowhere. They will teach that emptiness is the destination of the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena in the

future, so they come from nowhere; emptiness is the destination of the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena in the past, so they go nowhere; emptiness is the destination of the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena, so they dwell nowhere. They will teach that matter has neither destination nor nondestination. Why? The nature of matter is empty, and in emptiness, there is nothing to do with destination or nondestination. They will teach that feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness have neither destination nor nondestination. Why? The natures of feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness are empty, and in emptiness, there is nothing to do with destination or nondestination. And so on, they will teach that the perfect knowledge of everything has neither destination nor nondestination. Why? The nature of the perfect knowledge of everything is empty, and in emptiness, there is nothing to do with destination or nondestination. They will also teach that the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena have neither destination nor nondestination. Why? The natures of the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena are empty, and in emptiness, there is nothing to do with destination or nondestination. Well-Appearing One, this is how the great bodhisattvas aspire to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi to serve as the destinations for the world."

(The Buddha elucidated how the great bodhisattvas aspiring to the unsurpassed bodhi would serve as the destination for the world to teach sentient beings the ultimate real nature of all dharmas: in emptiness of all dharmas, there is neither destination nor nondestination.)

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Chapter 50

The Novice Practitioners

Section 2

(In the Second Assembly)

"Why? Well-Appearing One, all dharmas have adopted emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration as destinations. The great bodhisattvas should not go beyond these destinations. Why? In emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration, both destination and nondestination are unattainable.

"Well-Appearing One, all dharmas have adopted noninitiation and nonaction as destinations. The great bodhisattvas should not go beyond these destinations. Why? In noninitiation and nonaction, both destination and nondestination are unattainable.

"Well-Appearing One, all dharmas have adopted nonarising and nonextinction as destinations. The great bodhisattvas should not go beyond these destinations. Why? In nonarising and nonextinction, both destination and nondestination are unattainable.

"Well-Appearing One, all dharmas have adopted noncontamination and nonpurification as destinations. The great bodhisattvas should not go beyond these destinations. Why? In noncontamination and nonpurification, both destination and nondestination are unattainable.

"Well-Appearing One, all dharmas have adopted nonexistence as destination. The great bodhisattvas should not go beyond this destination. Why? In nonexistence, both destination and nondestination are unattainable.

"Well-Appearing One, all dharmas have adopted illusions, dreams, echoes, images, shadows, illusory images of water under sunlight, transformed things, and mirages as destinations. The great bodhisattvas should not go beyond these destinations. Why? In illusions, dreams, echoes, images, shadows, illusory images of water under sunlight, transformed things, and mirages, both destination and nondestination are unattainable.

"Well-Appearing One, all dharmas have adopted immeasurability and boundlessness as destinations. The great bodhisattvas should not go beyond these destinations. Why? In immeasurability and boundlessness, both destination and nondestination are unattainable.

"Well-Appearing One, all dharmas have adopted no giving and no taking as destinations. The great bodhisattvas should not go beyond these destinations. Why? In no giving and no taking, both destination and nondestination are unattainable.

"Well-Appearing One, all dharmas have adopted no lifting and no lowering as destinations. The great bodhisattvas should not go beyond these destinations. Why? In no lifting and no lowering, both destination and nondestination are unattainable.

"Well-Appearing One, all dharmas have adopted no going and no coming as destinations. The great bodhisattvas should not go beyond these destinations. Why? In no going and no coming, both destination and nondestination are unattainable.

"Well-Appearing One, all dharmas have adopted no addition and no subtraction as destinations. The great bodhisattvas should not go beyond these destinations. Why? In no addition and no subtraction, both destination and nondestination are unattainable.

"Well-Appearing One, all dharmas have adopted no entering and no getting out as destinations. The great bodhisattvas should not go beyond these destinations. Why? In no entering and no getting out, both destination and nondestination are unattainable.

"Well-Appearing One, all dharmas have adopted no gathering and no dispersing as destinations. The great bodhisattvas should not go beyond these destinations. Why? In no gathering and no dispersing, both destination and nondestination are unattainable.

"Well-Appearing One, all dharmas have adopted no combination and no separation as destinations. The great bodhisattvas should not go beyond these destinations. Why? In no combination and no separation, both destination and nondestination are unattainable.

"Well-Appearing One, all dharmas have adopted the 'I,' the sentient being, the living one, the one who gives birth, the one who raises others, the gentleperson, the individual in reincarnation, the mentally born one, the learned child, the maker, the one who makes others make, the initiator, the one who makes others initiate, the receiver, the one who makes others receive, the knower, and the viewer as destinations. The great bodhisattvas should not go beyond these destinations. Why? As the 'I,' the sentient being, and so forth, and the knower and the viewer are in the final analysis nonexistent and unattainable, how can we say that destination and nondestination are attainable?

"Well-Appearing One, all dharmas have adopted not 'I,' not sentient being, not living one, not one who give births to others, not one who raises others, not gentleperson, not individual in reincarnation, not mentally born one, not learned child, not maker, not one who makes others make, not initiator, not one who makes others initiate, not receiver, not one who makes others receive, not knower, and not viewer as destinations. The great bodhisattvas cannot go beyond

these destinations. Why? As not 'I,", not sentient being, and so forth, and not knower and not viewer are in the final analysis nonexistent and unattainable, how can we say that destination and nondestination are attainable?

"Well-Appearing One, all dharmas have adopted permanence, happiness, selfness, and purity as destinations. The great bodhisattvas cannot go beyond these destinations. Why? As permanence, happiness, selfness, and purity are in the final analysis nonexistent and unattainable, how can we say that destination and nondestination are attainable?

"Well-Appearing One, all dharmas have adopted impermanence, non-happiness, selflessness, and non-purity as destinations. The great bodhisattvas cannot go beyond these destinations. Why? As impermanence, non-happiness, selflessness, and non-purity are in the final analysis nonexistent and unattainable, how can we say that destination and nondestination are attainable?

"Well-Appearing One, all dharmas have adopted greed, anger, and ignorance as destinations. The great bodhisattvas cannot go beyond these destinations. Why? As greed, anger, and ignorance are in the final analysis nonexistent and unattainable, how can we say that destination and nondestination are attainable?

"Well-Appearing One, all dharmas have adopted various incorrect views as destinations. The great bodhisattvas cannot go beyond these destinations. Why? As the incorrect views are in the final analysis nonexistent and unattainable, how can we say that destination and nondestination are attainable?

"Well-Appearing One, all dharmas have adopted realness, dharma realm, dharma nature, the nature of nonillusion, nature of changelessness, nature of equality, nature of nonarising, dharma concentration, dharma dwelling, reality, the realm of empty space, and the realm of the inconceivable as destinations. The great bodhisattvas cannot go beyond these destinations. Why? As realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable are in the final analysis nonexistent and unattainable, how can we say that destination and nondestination are attainable?

“Well-Appearing One, all dharmas have adopted the nature of motionlessness as destination. The great bodhisattvas cannot go beyond this destination. Why? As the nature of motionlessness is in the final analysis nonexistent and unattainable, how can we say that destination and nondestination are attainable?

“Well-Appearing One, all dharmas have adopted matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness as destinations. The great bodhisattvas cannot go beyond these destinations. Why? As matter, feeling, and so forth, and consciousness are in the final analysis nonexistent and unattainable, how can we say that destination and nondestination are attainable?

“Well-Appearing One, all dharmas have adopted eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and conscious spheres as destinations. The great bodhisattvas cannot go beyond these destinations. Why? As the eye sphere, ear sphere, and so forth, and conscious sphere are in the final analysis nonexistent and unattainable, how can we say that destination and nondestination are attainable?

“Well-Appearing One, all dharmas have adopted sight, sound, smell, taste, touch, and mental-image spheres as destinations. The great bodhisattvas cannot go beyond these destinations. Why? As the sight sphere, ear sphere, and so forth, and mental-image sphere are in the final analysis nonexistent and unattainable, how can we say that destination and nondestination are attainable?

“Well-Appearing One, all dharmas have adopted eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and conscious realms as destinations. The great bodhisattvas cannot go beyond these destinations. Why? As the eye realm, ear realm, and so forth, and conscious realm are in the final analysis nonexistent and unattainable, how can we say that destination and nondestination are attainable?

“Well-Appearing One, all dharmas have adopted sight, sound, smell, taste, touch, and mental-image realms as destinations. The great bodhisattvas cannot go beyond these destinations. Why? As the sight realm, sound realm, and so forth, and mental-image realm are in the final analysis nonexistent and unattainable, how can we say that destination and nondestination are attainable?

“Well-Appearing One, all dharmas have adopted eye consciousness realm, ear consciousness realm, nose consciousness realm, tongue consciousness realm, body

consciousness realm, and conscious consciousness realm as destinations. The great bodhisattvas cannot go beyond these destinations. Why? As the eye consciousness realm, ear consciousness realm, and so forth, and the conscious consciousness realm are nonexistent and unattainable in the final analysis, how can we say that destination and nondestination are attainable?

"Well-Appearing One, all dharmas have adopted eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and conscious contacts as destinations. The great bodhisattvas cannot go beyond these destinations. Why? As the eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact are in the final analysis nonexistent and unattainable, how can we say that destination and nondestination are attainable?

"Well-Appearing One, all dharmas have adopted the feelings produced by eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and conscious contacts as destinations. The great bodhisattvas cannot go beyond these destinations. Why? As the feelings produced by eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact are in the final analysis nonexistent and unattainable, how can we say that destination and nondestination are attainable?

"Well-Appearing One, all dharmas have adopted giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna paramitas as destinations. The great bodhisattvas cannot go beyond these destinations. Why? As giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita are in the final analysis nonexistent and unattainable, how can we say that destination and nondestination are attainable?

"Well-Appearing One, all dharmas have adopted internal emptiness, external emptiness, internal-external emptiness, emptiness of emptiness, emptiness of space, emptiness of ultimate truth, emptiness of conditioned phenomena, emptiness of unconditioned reality, emptiness in the final analysis, emptiness of nontemporality, emptiness of deconstruction and nondeconstruction, emptiness of original nature, emptiness of particular and common characteristics, emptiness of all dharmas, emptiness of nonattainment, emptiness of selflessness, emptiness of self-nature, and emptiness of selfless self-nature as destinations. The great bodhisattvas cannot go beyond these destinations. Why? As internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature are in the final analysis nonexistent and unattainable, how can we say that destination and nondestination are attainable?

"Well-Appearing One, all dharmas have adopted four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, four bases of power, five roots, five powers, seven factors for enlightenment, and noble eightfold path as destinations. The great bodhisattvas cannot go beyond these destinations. Why? As the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path are in the final analysis nonexistent and unattainable, how can we say that destination and nondestination are attainable?

"Well-Appearing One, all dharmas have adopted the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering as destinations. The great bodhisattvas cannot go beyond these destinations. Why? As the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering are in the final analysis nonexistent and unattainable, how can we say that destination and nondestination are attainable?

"Well-Appearing One, all dharmas have adopted four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations as destinations. The great bodhisattvas cannot go beyond these destinations. Why? As the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations are in the final analysis nonexistent and unattainable, how can we say that destination and nondestination are attainable?

"Well-Appearing One, all dharmas have adopted eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations as destinations. The great bodhisattvas cannot go beyond these destinations. Why? As the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations are in the final analysis nonexistent and unattainable, how can we say that destination and nondestination are attainable?

"Well-Appearing One, all dharmas have adopted the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration as destinations. The great bodhisattvas cannot go beyond these destinations. Why? As the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration are in the final analysis nonexistent and unattainable, how can we say that destination and nondestination are attainable?

"Well-Appearing One, all dharmas have adopted the three vehicles and ten stages of bodhisattva as destinations. The great bodhisattvas cannot go beyond these destinations. Why? As the three vehicles and ten stages of bodhisattva are in the final analysis nonexistent and unattainable, how can we say that destination and nondestination are attainable?

"Well-Appearing One, all dharmas have adopted five eyes and six supernatural powers as destinations. The great bodhisattvas cannot go beyond these destinations. Why? As the five eyes and six supernatural powers are in the final analysis nonexistent and unattainable, how can we say that destination and nondestination are attainable?

"Well-Appearing One, all dharmas have adopted dharani gates and samadhi gates as destinations. The great bodhisattvas cannot go beyond these destinations. Why? As the dharani gates and samadhi gates are in the final analysis nonexistent and unattainable, how can we say that destination and nondestination are attainable?

"Well-Appearing One, all dharmas have adopted Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, four unhindered understandings, great loving-kindness, great compassion, great joy, great equanimity, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power as destinations. The great bodhisattvas cannot go beyond these destinations. Why? As the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power are in the final analysis nonexistent and unattainable, how can we say that destination and nondestination are attainable?

"Well-Appearing One, all dharmas have adopted thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features as destinations. The great bodhisattvas cannot go beyond these destinations. Why? As the thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features are in the final analysis nonexistent and unattainable, how can we say that destination and nondestination are attainable?

"Well-Appearing One, all dharmas have adopted staying in correct mindfulness and dwelling in equanimity at all times as destinations. The great bodhisattvas cannot go beyond these destinations. Why? As staying in correct mindfulness and dwelling in equanimity at all

times are in the final analysis nonexistent and unattainable, how can we say that destination and nondestination are attainable?

"Well-Appearing One, all dharmas have adopted perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena as destinations. The great bodhisattvas cannot go beyond these destinations. Why? As the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena are in the final analysis nonexistent and unattainable, how can we say that destination and nondestination are attainable?

"Well-Appearing One, all dharmas have adopted stream-entry effect, once-return effect, nonreturn effect, arhat effect, and self-enlightenment bodhi as destinations. The great bodhisattvas cannot go beyond these destinations. Why? As stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi are in the final analysis nonexistent and unattainable, how can we say that destination and nondestination are attainable?

"Well-Appearing One, all dharmas have adopted all great bodhisattva actions and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi as destinations. The great bodhisattvas cannot go beyond these destinations. Why? As all great bodhisattva actions and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi are in the final analysis inexistent and unattainable, how can we say that destination and nondestination are attainable?

"Well-Appearing One, all dharmas have adopted stream-enterers, once-returners, nonreturners, arhats, self-enlightened ones, bodhisattvas, and Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones as destinations. The great bodhisattvas cannot go beyond these destinations. Why? As stream-enterers, once-returners, and so forth, and Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones are in the final analysis nonexistent and unattainable, how can we say that destination and nondestination are attainable? Well-Appearing One, this is how the great bodhisattvas aspire to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi to serve as destinations for the world.

(The Buddha elucidated the real meaning of destination. As all dharmas have adopted various dharmas as destinations, which are nonexistent and unattainable, how can we say that destination or nondestination is attainable?)

"Well-Appearing One, how will the great bodhisattvas with great compassion aspire to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi to relieve sentient beings from the suffering of birth and death? Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas have aspired to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi to attain unhindered supernatural powers so that they can relieve sentient beings from the suffering of birth and death. Well-Appearing One, this is how the great bodhisattvas with great compassion aspire to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi to relieve the sentient beings from the suffering of birth and death."

(The Buddha explained how the great bodhisattvas with great compassion aspire to the unsurpassed bodhi to relief sentient beings from the suffering of birth and death.)

Chapter 51

Taming Greed and So Forth

In

The Second Assembly

At that time, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "World-Honored One, who are able to develop a pure belief in and superior understanding of the fathomless prajna paramita?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "If the great bodhisattvas have aspired to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi and cultivated and learned giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna paramitas diligently and attentively for a long

time; if they have made offerings to hundreds of thousands of koti nayuta Buddhas and cultivated celibacy in various Buddhas' places for a long time; if they have taken great vows and their virtuous roots have become ripe; and if they have also been absorbed by innumerable virtuous friends, then they will be able to develop a pure belief in and superior understanding of the fathomless prajna paramita."

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, "World-Honored One, what are the natures, forms, conditions, and appearances of the minds of the great bodhisattvas who are able to develop a pure belief in and superior understanding of the fathomless prajna paramita?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "The minds of the great bodhisattvas who can develop a pure belief in and superior understanding of the fathomless prajna paramita will tame greed, anger, and ignorance and stay far away from greed, anger, and ignorance. These are the natures, forms, conditions, and appearances of the great bodhisattvas who can develop a pure belief in and superior understanding of the fathomless prajna paramita.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, their minds will tame greed, anger, and ignorance and no greed, no anger, and no ignorance and stay far away from greed, anger, and ignorance and no greed, no anger, and no ignorance. These are the natures, forms, conditions, and appearances of the great bodhisattvas who can develop a pure belief in and superior understanding of the fathomless prajna paramita."

Meanwhile, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "World-Honored One, if the great bodhisattvas are able to develop a pure belief in and superior understanding of the fathomless prajna paramita, what will they approach?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "The great bodhisattvas will approach the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge."

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One said to the Buddha again, "World-Honored One, when these great bodhisattvas approach the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, they will approach this destination along with all sentient beings."

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, “Yes, it is as you say. If the great bodhisattvas can develop a pure belief in and superior understanding of the fathomless prajna paramita, they will adopt the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge as destination. They will approach this destination along with all sentient beings.”

(The Buddha said that the great bodhisattva will approach the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge for the benefits of all sentient beings, not for self-interest.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One said to the Buddha again, “World-Honored One, these great bodhisattvas can do very difficult things. They put on solid armor and say, ‘I will deliver all sentient beings and let them attain ultimate nirvana. Although I undertake this for sentient beings, I do not see the establishments for the sentient beings.’’’

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, “Yes, it is as you say. Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the armor that the great bodhisattvas wear does not belong to matter, or to feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness. Why? Matter, feeling, and so forth, and consciousness are in the final analysis nonexistent. They are neither bodhisattva nor armor; therefore, the armor does not belong to matter, or to feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness. The armor that the great bodhisattvas wear does not belong to the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, or perfect knowledge of all phenomena either. Why? The perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena are in the final analysis nonexistent. They are neither bodhisattva nor armor. Therefore, armor does not belong to the perfect knowledge of everything, the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, or the perfect knowledge of all phenomena. The armor that the great bodhisattvas wear does not belong to all dharmas. Why? All dharmas are in the final analysis nonexistent. They are neither bodhisattva nor armor. Therefore, the armor does not belong to all dharmas.

(The Buddha emphasized that all dharmas are, in the final analysis, nonexistent. One should not be attached to the thinking that armor belongs to the bodhisattva or to others.)

"Well-Appearing One, when cultivating the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas can wear the armor of the merits and virtues caused by making great vows to deliver all sentient beings, helping them to realize and attain the ultimate nirvana."

In the meantime, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One said to the Buddha, "World-Honored One, if the great bodhisattvas can wear solid armor, vow to deliver all sentient beings, and help them attain the ultimate nirvana, they will not fall into the stage of voice-hearer or the stage of self-enlightened one. Why? World-Honored One, these great bodhisattvas will not set limits on helping sentient beings when wearing the solid armor."

The Buddha asked Well-Appearing One, "Why do you say that if the great bodhisattvas can wear the solid armor, they will not fall into the stage of voice-hearer or the stage of self-enlightened one?"

Well-Appearing One replied, "World-Honored One, these great bodhisattvas wear the solid armor not for a few sentient beings or incomplete knowledge. Why? These great bodhisattvas wear the solid armor with an attempt to universally assist all sentient beings to attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. Because of this cause and condition, they will not fall into the stage of voice-hearer or the stage of self-enlightened one."

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, "Yes, it is as you say."

At that time, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One said to the Buddha, "World-Honored One, prajna paramits is so fathomless that no one can cultivate it, no dharma can be cultivated, nowhere the cultivation will occur, and no attainment will be caused. Why? World-Honored One, in the fathomless meanings of prajna paramita, no dharma is named cultivator, no dharma can be cultivated, no place in which the cultivation and learning will occur, and no attainment exists.

"World-Honored One, to cultivate prajna paramita is cultivating empty space. To cultivate prajna paramita is cultivating all dharmas. To cultivate prajna paramita is cultivating unreal dharmas. To cultivate prajna paramita is cultivating nonexistent dharmas. To cultivate prajna paramita is cultivating the dharmas without absorption. To cultivate prajna paramita is driving dharmas away."

The Buddha asked Well-Appearing One, “What dharmas are driven away when cultivating prajna paramita?”

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One replied, “World-Honored One, when cultivating prajna paramita, matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness are driven away; the six internal spheres, six external spheres, six internal realms, six external realms, and six consciousness realms are driven away. When cultivating prajna paramita, the ‘I,’ the sentient being, the living one, the one who gives birth, the one who raises others, the gentleperson, the individual in reincarnation, the mentally born one, the learned child, the maker, the receiver, the knower, and the viewer are driven away. When cultivating prajna paramita, giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna paramitas are driven away; internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature are driven away; realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable are driven; the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering are driven; the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and eightfold path are driven away; the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations are driven away; the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations are driven away; the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration are driven away; the stages of pure contemplation, eight-forbearance, and so forth, and Thus-Comer are driven away; the stages of ecstasy, freedom from defilements, and so forth, and dharma cloud are driven away; the five eyes and six supernatural powers are driven away; the Buddha’s ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha’s wisdom and power are driven away; the thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features are driven away; staying in correct mindfulness and dwelling in equanimity at all times are driven away; the dharani gates and samadhi gates are driven away; the stream-entry effect, once-return effect, nonreturn effect, arhat effect, and self-enlightenment bodhi are driven away; all great bodhisattva actions and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi are driven away; the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena are driven away.

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, “Yes, it is as you say. Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, we may identify the great bodhisattvas based on prajna paramita to determine if they are bodhisattvas without regression. If the great bodhisattvas practice prajna paramita without attachment, they are the great bodhisattvas without regression. If they practice meditation, diligence, forbearance, pure precept, and giving paramitas without attachment, they are the great bodhisattvas without regression. If they practice internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature without attachment, they are the great bodhisattvas without regression. If they practice realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable without attachment, they are the great bodhisattvas without regression. If they practice the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering without attachment, they are the great bodhisattvas without regression. If they practice the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena without attachment, they are the great bodhisattvas without regression.

(After confirming Well-Appearing One’s statement that to drive away various dharmas is cultivating prajna paramita, the Buddha further taught that the great bodhisattvas, who cultivate various superior holy dharmas without attachment, do not regress.)

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas without regression do not regard the words, teachings, and cautions as real and important except they are based on prajna paramita. They are not influenced and contaminated by greedy desires, hatred, anger, ignorance, arrogance, and so forth. The great bodhisattvas without regression do not stay away from giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita. They are not frightened, terrified, scared, sunk, or drowned. They do not withdraw from the pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. They like to listen to, accept, embrace, read, and recite the fathomless prajna paramita. They can thoroughly reflect on and insightfully understand the fathomless prajna paramita; they are mindful of it and practice it tirelessly as they are taught. You must know that these great bodhisattvas without regression must have heard the essential meanings of the fathomless prajna paramita, and accepted, embraced, read, recited, reflected reasonably on, and cultivated it diligently and tirelessly in their previous lives. Why? Because these great bodhisattvas are not frightened, terrified, scared, sunk,

or drowned, nor do they withdraw from the pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi when hearing the teaching of the fathomless prajna paramita. They rather love to listen to, accept, embrace, read, recite, insightfully and thoroughly understand, reasonably reflect on, and diligently and tirelessly practice prajna paramita."

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "World-Honored One, the great bodhisattvas are not frightened, terrified, scared, sunk, or drowned when hearing the teaching of the fathomless prajna paramita; they do not withdraw from the pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi; and they really love to listen to, accept, embrace, read, recite, insightfully and thoroughly understand, reasonably reflect on, and diligently and tirelessly practice the fathomless prajna paramita. What further steps should these great bodhisattvas take to cultivate the fathomless prajna paramita?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "These great bodhisattvas should proceed to attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge in accordance with the conditions."

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "World-Honored One, how should the great bodhisattvas practice the fathomless prajna paramita and proceed to attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge in accordance with the conditions?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "The great bodhisattvas should proceed to approach and enter emptiness, formlessness, nonaspiration, empty space, nonexistence, nonarising, nonextinction, noncontamination, nonpurification, realness, dharma realm, dharma nature, nature of nonillusion, nature of changelessness, nature of equality, nature of nonarising, dharma concentration, dharma dwelling, reality, the realm of empty space, the realm of the inconceivable, nonmaking, nonaction, illusions, dreams, echoes, images, shadows, illusory images of water, transformed things, and mirages when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita. This is how the great bodhisattvas proceed to approach and attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge in practicing the fathomless prajna paramita in accordance with the conditions."

(The Buddha taught that after the great bodhisattvas have achieved the stage of nonregression, how they should proceed to approach and attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge according to the conditions.)

Meanwhile, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "World-Honored One, as the Buddha says, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas should proceed to approach and enter emptiness, formlessness, nonaspiration, and so forth, and mirages in compliance with the conditions. When practicing the fathomless prajna paramita this way, do the great bodhisattvas practice matter? Do they practice feeling, thinking, action, consciousness, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "When practicing the fathomless prajna paramita this way, the great bodhisattvas will not practice matter, feeling, thinking, action, consciousness, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena. Why? As the great bodhisattvas approach and attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge in accordance with the conditions, there are no maker, no destroyer, nowhere to originate or depart, no dwelling, no direction, no area, no number, no quantity, no going, and no coming. All these are unattainable and cannot be realized.

"Well-Appearing One, the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge cannot be realized with matter, feeling, thinking, action, consciousness, and so on, and the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena. Why? Matter is the nature of the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge; feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness are the natures of the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge; the perfect knowledge of everything is the nature of the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, and the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena are the natures of the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. Why? The realness of matter, the realness of the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, and the realness of all dharmas are the same realness. They are not different or separate. The realness of feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness; the realness of the perfect knowledge of all

perfect knowledge; and the realness of all dharmas are the same realness. They are not different or separate. And so on, the realness of the perfect knowledge of everything, the realness of the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, and the realness of all dharmas are the same realness. They are not different or separate. The realness of the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena, the realness of the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, and the realness of all dharmas are the same realness. They are not different or separate. Therefore, the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge cannot be realized with matter, or with feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness. It cannot be realized with the perfect knowledge of everything, the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, or the perfect knowledge of all phenomena either."

(The Buddha concluded that the realness of the five aggregates, and so forth, and the three kinds of perfect knowledge; the realness of the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge; and the realness of all dharmas are the same realness. They are not different or separate.)

Chapter 52

Realness

Section 1

(In the Second Assembly)

At that time, the heavenly beings from the realm of desire and the realm of form carried the heavenly powdered fragrances made of sandalwood, tagara, and tamālapatra along with utpala (blue lotuses), padma (yellow lotuses), kumuda (red lotuses), and pundarika (snow white lotuses), and spread them all on the Buddha from far away as offerings to him. As they arrived at the Buddha's place, they bowed down on the ground before the Buddha's feet and stood to one side. They joined their palms together and said to the Buddha, "World-Honored One, prajna

paramita is very profound and difficult to perceive and attain enlightenment. It is beyond one's imagination and reflection. It is so subtle, wonderful, empty, and tranquil that only the intelligent and wise ones can understand. The ordinary beings cannot believe and accept that prajna paramita is the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddha. In the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita, all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones have taught that matter is the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, and the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge is matter; feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness are the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, and the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge is feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness. And so on, the perfect knowledge of everything is the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, and the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge is the perfect knowledge of everything; the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena are the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, and the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge is the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena. Why? The realness of matter, the realness of the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, and the realness of all dharmas are the same realness. They are not different or separate, while they are inexhaustible. The realness of feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness, the realness of the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, and the realness of all dharmas are the same realness. They are not different or separate, while they are inexhaustible. The realness of the perfect knowledge of everything, the realness of the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, and the realness of all dharmas are the same realness. They are not different or separate, while they are inexhaustible. The realness of the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena, the realness of the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, and the realness of all dharmas are the same realness. They are not different or separate, while they are inexhaustible."

The Buddha stated to the heavenly beings from the realm of desire and the realm of form, "Yes, it is as you say. You must know, as I contemplate the meaning of prajna paramita, I am always reluctant to lecture on this dharma. Why? It is very profound and difficult to perceive and attain enlightenment. It is beyond one's reflection; it is so subtle, wonderful, empty, and tranquil that only the intelligent and wise ones can understand. The ordinary beings of the world cannot

believe and accept that this fathomless prajna paramita is the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, which is realized and attained by the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones.

"Heavenly beings, you must know that the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi cannot realize and cannot be realized. It cannot be realized anywhere and anytime. You must know that this dharma is fathomless and exquisite. It is not dual and can only be reached intuitively. Nothing in the world compares to it.

(The Buddha described the features of the unsurpassed bodhi.)

"Heavenly beings, you must know that because empty space is fathomless, this dharma is fathomless. Because realness is fathomless, this dharma is fathomless. Because dharma realm, dharma nature, the nature of nonillusion, nature of changelessness, nature of equality, nature of nonarising, dharma concentration, dharma dwelling, reality, the realm of empty space, and the realm of the inconceivable are fathomless, this dharma is fathomless. Because immeasurability and boundlessness are fathomless, this dharma is fathomless. Because noncoming and nongoing are fathomless, this dharma is fathomless. Because nonarising and nonextinction are fathomless, this dharma is fathomless. Because noncontamination and nonpurification are fathomless, this dharma is fathomless. Because nonknowing and nonattainment are fathomless, this dharma is fathomless. Because nonmaking and nonaction are fathomless, this dharma is fathomless. Because the 'I' is fathomless, this dharma is fathomless. Because the sentient being, the living one, the one who gives birth, the one who raises others, the gentleperson, the individual in reincarnation, the mentally born one, the learned child, the maker, the receiver, the knower, and the viewer are fathomless, this dharma is fathomless. Because matter is fathomless, this dharma is fathomless; because feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness are fathomless, this dharma is fathomless. And so on, because the perfect knowledge of everything is fathomless, this dharma is fathomless; because the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths and perfect knowledge of all phenomena are fathomless, this dharma is fathomless. Because all Buddha dharmas are fathomless, this dharma is fathomless."

(The Buddha further elucidated the features of this dharma, the unsurpassed bodhi, or the realness of all dharmas, as fathomless and difficult to understand.)

In the meantime, various heavenly beings said, “World-Honored One, this dharma that you are teaching is so fathomless, subtle, and wonderful that various sentient beings of the world cannot believe and accept. Why? This fathomless and wonderful dharma is not taught for absorbing and renouncing matter, feeling, thinking, action, consciousness, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena. It is not taught for absorbing and renouncing all Buddha dharmas.

“World-Honored One, most sentient beings of the world are used to absorb the ‘I’ and the associated images, insisting that matter, feeling, thinking, action, consciousness, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena belong to the ‘I’ and the associated images.”

At that time, the Buddha said to various heavenly beings, “Yes, it is as you say. This fathomless and wonderful dharma is not taught for absorbing or renouncing matter, feeling, thinking, action, consciousness, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, perfect knowledge of all phenomena, and all Buddha dharmas. But the sentient beings of the world are often attached to the ‘I’ and the associated images, insisting that matter, feeling, thinking, action, consciousness, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena belong to the ‘I’ and the associated images.

(The Buddha confirmed the heavenly beings’ statement about sentient beings who were used to hold incorrect views insisting that the empty dharmas are possessed by the “I” and the associated images.)

“You must know that if the great bodhisattvas practice for the sake of absorbing and renouncing matter, feeling, thinking, action, consciousness, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena, they will not be able to cultivate giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna paramitas, and so forth, as well as the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena.”

(Being attached to absorbing or renouncing dharmas based on one's selfness will keep bodhisattva-path practitioners away from the six paramitas and perfect knowledge.)

At that time, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One said to the Buddha, "World-Honored One, this fathomless dharma can be congruent with all dharmas. World-Honored One, with what dharmas can it be congruent? World-Honored One, this fathomless dharma is congruent with prajna, meditation, diligence, forbearance, pure precept, and giving paramitas. It is congruent with internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature. It is congruent with realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable. It is congruent with the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering. It is congruent with the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path. It is congruent with the four mediations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations. It is congruent with the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations. It is congruent with the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration. It is congruent with the stages of pure contemplation, embryonic Buddha nature, and so forth, and Thus-Comer. It is congruent with the stages of ecstasy, freedom from defilements, and so forth, and dharma cloud. This fathomless dharma is congruent with the five eyes and six supernatural powers; the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power; the thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features; staying in correct mindfulness and dwelling in equanimity at all times; and dharani gates and samadhi gates. This fathomless dharma is congruent with stream-entry effect, once-return effect, nonreturn effect, arhat effect, and self-enlightenment bodhi; all great bodhisattva actions and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi; the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena.

"World-Honored One, this fathomless dharma is always unhindered. World-Honored One, what dharmas do not hinder this fathomless dharma? World-Honored One, matter, feeling, thinking, action, consciousness, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena do not hinder this fathomless dharma.

"World-Honored One, this fathomless dharma adopts nonhindrance as its form. Why? World-Honored One, it is because of the equal nature of empty space, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable. It is because of the equal nature of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration. It is because of the equal nature of nonmaking and nonaction. It is also because of the equal nature of noncontamination and nonpurification.

"World-Honored One, this fathomless dharma does not arise or extinguish. Why? World-Honored One, it is because matter, feeling, thinking, action, consciousness, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena do not arise and extinguish; they are unattainable.

"World-Honored One, this fathomless dharma does not leave footprints behind. Why? World-Honored One, it is because the footprints of matter, feeling, thinking, action, consciousness, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena are unattainable."

(Well-Appearing One stated that the fathomless dharma is congruent with all dharmas; it is always unhindered; and it is without footprints.)

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Chapter 52

Realness

Section 2

(In the Second Assembly)

At that time, the heavenly beings from the realm of desire and the realm of form said to the Buddha again, “World-Honored One, the great virtuous Well-Appearing One is a genuine disciple of the Buddha. He was born by following the Thus-Comer. Why? The great virtuous Well-Appearing One has always lectured on the dharma in accordance with emptiness.”

(The heavenly beings from the realm of desire and realm of form acclaimed Well-Appearing One for his teaching in accordance with emptiness.)

Well-Appearing One said to the heavenly beings from the realm of desire and the realm of form, “You heavenly beings say that I am a genuine disciple of the Buddha, and I was born by following Thus-Comer. What does it mean? It means that I was born by following the realness of Thus-Comer. Why? The realness of Thus-Comer does not have coming and going, and the realness of Well-Appearing One does not have coming and going either. The realness of Thus-Comer is the realness of all dharmas, and the realness of all dharmas is the realness of Thus-Comer. Realness has neither the nature of realness, nor the nonnature of realness. The realness of Well-Appearing One has neither the nature of realness, nor the nonnature of realness. So, it is said that Well-Appearing One was born by following Thus-Comer. The realness of Thus-Comer has adopted permanent dwelling as its form, so does the realness of Well-Appearing One. Therefore, it is said that Well-Appearing One was born by following Thus-Comer. The realness of Thus-Comer does not change or differentiate; it turns along with all dharmas universally. So does the realness of Well-Appearing One. Therefore, it is said that Well-Appearing One was born by following Thus-Comer. The realness of Thus-Comer does not have hindrance, so the realness of all dharmas does not have hindrance either. The realness of Thus-Comer and the realness of all dharmas are the same realness: they are neither dualistic nor separate, neither with making nor with action. Realness is always as it has appeared; there is never an exception. Because the forms of realness always appear the same, they are neither dualistic nor separate. So does the realness of Well-Appearing One. Therefore, it is said that Well-Appearing One was

born by following Thus-Comer. The realness of Thus-Comer does not have memory, mindfulness, and differentiation in all places, so the realness of Well-Appearing One does not have memory, mindfulness, and differentiation. Therefore, it is said that Well-Appearing One was born by following Thus-Comer. The realness of Thus-Comer does not have other realness; it is unattainable, so the realness of Well-Appearing One does not have other realness and is unattainable. Therefore, it is said that Well-Appearing One was born by following Thus-Comer. The realness of Thus-Comer is not apart from the realness of all dharmas, and the realness of all dharmas is not apart from the realness of Thus-Comer. The realness always appears with the same form; it never appears differently, so too is the realness of Well-Appearing One. Therefore, it is said that Well-Appearing One was born by following Thus-Comer. Although it is said that Well-Appearing One was born by following Thus-Comer, Well-Appearing One was not really born by following Thus-Comer because the realness of Well-Appearing One is not different from the Buddha. The realness of Thus-Comer is not in the past, future, or present. The realness of all dharmas and the realness of Well-Appearing One are not in the past, future, or present either. So, it is said that Well-Appearing One was born by following Thus-Comer.

(Well-Appearing One took the opportunity of the heavenly beings' comments on his birth to elucidate the real meaning of realness. To say that Well-Appearing One was born by following Thus-Comer means that Well-Appearing One has the same realness as the Thus-Comer.)

"The realness of the past is the realness of Thus-Comer, and the realness of Thus-Comer is the realness of the past. The realness of the future is the realness of Thus-Comer, and the realness of Thus-Comer is the realness of the future. The realness of the present is the realness of Thus-Comer, and the realness of Thus-Comer is the realness of the present. The realness of the past, the realness of the future, the realness of the present, and the realness of Thus-Comer are the same realness; they are not different or separate.

"The realness of matter is the realness of Thus-Comer, and the realness of Thus-Comer is the realness of matter. The realness of feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness is the realness of Thus-Comer; the realness of Thus-Comer is the realness of feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness. The realness of matter; the realness of feeling, thinking, action, and

consciousness; and the realness of Thus-Comer are the same realness. They are not different or separate.

"The realness of the eye sphere is the realness of Thus-Comer, and the realness of Thus-Comer is the realness of the eye sphere. The realness of the ear, nose, tongue, body, and conscious spheres is the realness of Thus-Comer; the realness of Thus-Comer is the realness of the ear, nose, tongue, body, and conscious spheres. The realness of the eye sphere; the realness of the ear, nose, tongue, body, and conscious spheres; and the realness of Thus-Comer are the same realness. They are not different or separate.

"The realness of the sight sphere is the realness of Thus-Comer, and the realness of Thus-Comer is the realness of the sight sphere. The realness of the sound, smell, taste, touch, and mental-image spheres is the realness of Thus-Comer; the realness of Thus-Comer is the realness of the sound, smell, taste, touch, and mental-image spheres. The realness of the sight sphere; the realness of the sound, smell, taste, touch, and mental-image spheres; and the realness of Thus-Comer are the same realness. They are not different or separate.

"The realness of the eye realm is the realness of Thus-Comer, and the realness of Thus-Comer is the realness of the eye realm. The realness of the ear, nose, tongue, body, and conscious realms is the realness of Thus-Comer; the realness of Thus-Comer is the realness of the ear, nose, tongue, body, and conscious realms. The realness of the eye realm; the realness of the ear, nose, tongue, body, and conscious realms; and the realness of Thus-Comer are the same realness. They are not different or separate.

"The realness of the sight realm is the realness of Thus-Comer, and the realness of Thus-Comer is the realness of the sight realm. The realness of the sound, smell, taste, touch, and mental-image realms is the realness of Thus-Comer; the realness of Thus-Comer is the realness of the sound, smell, taste, touch, and mental-image realms. The realness of the sight realm; the realness of the sound, smell, taste, touch, and mental-image realms; and the realness of Thus-Comer are the same realness. They are not different or separate.

"The realness of the eye consciousness realm is the realness of Thus-Comer, and the realness of Thus-Comer is the realness of the eye consciousness realm. The realness of the ear

consciousness realm, nose consciousness realm, tongue consciousness realm, body consciousness realm, and conscious consciousness realm is the realness of Thus-Comer; the realness of Thus-Comer is the realness of the ear consciousness realm, nose consciousness realm, tongue consciousness realm, body consciousness realm, and conscious consciousness realm. The realness of the eye consciousness realm; the realness of the ear consciousness realm, nose consciousness realm, tongue consciousness realm, body consciousness realm, and conscious consciousness realm; and the realness of Thus-Comer are the same realness. They are not different or separate.

"The realness of the eye contact is the realness of Thus-Comer, and the realness of Thus-Comer is the realness of the eye contact. The realness of the ear, nose, tongue, body, and conscious contacts is the realness of Thus-Comer; the realness of Thus-Comer is the realness of the ear, nose, tongue, body, and conscious contacts. The realness of the eye contact; the realness of the ear, nose, tongue, body, and conscious contacts; and the realness of Thus-Comer are the same realness. They are not different or separate.

"The realness of the feelings produced by eye contact is the realness of Thus-Comer, and the realness of Thus-Comer is the realness of the feelings produced by eye contact. The realness of the feelings produced by ear, nose, tongue, body, and conscious contacts is the realness of Thus-Comer; the realness of Thus-Comer is the realness of the feelings produced by ear, nose, tongue, body, and conscious contacts. The realness of the feelings produced by eye contact; the realness of the feelings produced by ear, nose, tongue, body, and conscious contacts; and the realness of Thus-Comer are the same realness. They are not different or separate.

"The realness of the 'I' is the realness of Thus-Comer, and the realness of Thus-Comer is the realness of the 'I.' The realness of the sentient being, the living one, the one who gives birth, the one who raises others, the gentleperson, the individual in reincarnation, the mentally born one, the learned child, the maker, the receiver, the knower, and the viewer is the realness of Thus-Comer; the realness of Thus-Comer is the realness of the sentient being, the living one, and so forth, and the knower and the viewer. The realness of the 'I'; the realness of the sentient being, the living one, and so forth, and the knower and the viewer; and the realness of Thus-Comer are the same realness. They are not different or separate.

"The realness of giving paramita is the realness of Thus-Comer, and the realness of Thus-Comer is the realness of giving paramita. The realness of pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna paramitas is the realness of Thus-Comer; the realness of Thus-Comer is the realness of pure precept paramita, forbearance paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita. The realness of giving paramita; the realness of pure precept paramita, forbearance paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita; and the realness of Thus-Comer are the same realness. They are not different or separate.

"The realness of internal emptiness is the realness of Thus-Comer, and the realness of Thus-Comer is the realness of internal emptiness. The realness of external emptiness, internal-external emptiness, emptiness of emptiness, emptiness of space, emptiness of ultimate truth, emptiness of conditioned phenomena, emptiness of unconditioned reality, emptiness in the final analysis, emptiness of nontemporality, emptiness of deconstruction and nondeconstruction, emptiness of original nature, emptiness of particular and common characteristics, emptiness of all dharmas, emptiness of nonattainment, emptiness of selflessness, emptiness of self-nature, and emptiness of selfless self-nature is the realness of Thus-Comer; the realness of Thus-Comer is the realness of external emptiness, internal-external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature. The realness of internal emptiness; the realness of external emptiness, internal-external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature; and the realness of Thus-Comer are the same realness. They are not different or separate.

"The realness of realness is the realness of Thus-Comer, and the realness of Thus-Comer is the realness of realness. The realness of dharma realm, dharma nature, the nature of nonillusion, nature of changelessness, nature of equality, nature of nonarising, dharma concentration, dharma dwelling, reality, the realm of empty space, and the realm of the inconceivable is the realness of Thus-Comer; the realness of Thus-Comer is the realness of dharma realm, dharma nature, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable. The realness of realness; the realness of dharma realm, dharma nature, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable; and the realness of Thus-Comer are the same realness. They are not different or separate.

"The realness of the noble truth of suffering is the realness of Thus-Comer, and the realness of Thus-Comer is the realness of the noble truth of suffering. The realness of the noble truths of the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering is the realness of Thus-Comer; the realness of the Thus-Comer is the realness of the noble truths of the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering. The realness of the noble truth of suffering; the realness of the noble truths of the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering; and the realness of Thus-Comer are the same realness. They are not different or separate.

"The realness of the four bases of mindfulness is the realness of Thus-Comer, and the realness of Thus-Comer is the realness of the four bases of mindfulness. The realness of the four correct endeavors, four bases of power, five roots, five powers, seven factors for enlightenment, and noble eightfold path is the realness of Thus-Comer; the realness of Thus-Comer is the realness of the four correct endeavors, four bases of power, and so forth, and noble eightfold path. The realness of the four bases of mindfulness; the realness of the four correct endeavors, four bases of power, and so forth, and noble eightfold path; and the realness of Thus-Comer are the same realness. They are not different or separate.

"The realness of the four meditations is the realness of Thus-Comer, and the realness of Thus-Comer is the realness of the four meditations. The realness of the four immeasurable minds and four formless concentrations is the realness of Thus-Comer, and the realness of Thus-Comer is the realness of the four immeasurable minds and four formless concentrations. The realness of the four meditations, the realness of the four immeasurable minds and four formless concentrations, and the realness of Thus-Comer are the same realness. They are not different or separate.

"The realness of the eight liberations is the realness of Thus-Comer, and the realness of Thus-Comer is the realness of the eight liberations. The realness of the eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations is the realness of Thus-Comer; the realness of Thus-Comer is the realness of the eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations. The realness of the eight liberations; the realness of the eight vexation-overcoming meditation, nine

concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations; and the realness of Thus-Comer are the same realness. They are not different or separate.

"The realness of the liberation gate of emptiness is the realness of Thus-Comer, and the realness of Thus-Comer is the realness of the liberation gate of emptiness. The realness of the liberation gates of formlessness and nonaspiration is the realness of Thus-Comer, and the realness of Thus-Comer is the realness of the liberation gates of formlessness and nonaspiration. The realness of the liberation gate of emptiness, the realness of the liberation gates of formlessness and nonaspiration, and the realness of Thus-Comer are the same realness. They are not different or separate.

"The realness of the ten stages of the three vehicles is the realness of Thus-Comer, and the realness of Thus-Comer is the realness of the ten stages of the three vehicles. The realness of the ten stages of bodhisattva is the realness of Thus-Comer, and the realness of Thus-Comer is the realness of the ten stages of bodhisattva. The realness of the ten stages of the three vehicles, the realness of the ten stages of bodhisattva, and the realness of Thus-Comer are the same realness. They are not different or separate.

"The realness of the five eyes is the realness of Thus-Comer, and the realness of Thus-Comer is the realness of the five eyes. The realness of the six supernatural powers is the realness of Thus-Comer, and the realness of Thus-Comer is the realness of the six supernatural powers. The realness of the five eyes, the realness of the six supernatural powers, and the realness of Thus-Comer are the same realness. They are not different or separate.

"The realness of the Buddha's ten abilities is the realness of Thus-Comer, and the realness of Thus-Comer is the realness of the Buddha's ten abilities. The realness of the four kinds of fearlessness, four unhindered understandings, great lovingness, great compassion, great joy, great equanimity, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power is the realness of Thus-Comer; the realness of Thus-Comer is the realness of the four kinds of fearlessness, four unhindered understandings, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power. The realness of the Buddha's ten abilities; the realness of the four kinds of fearlessness, four unhindered understandings, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive

features of Buddha's wisdom and power; and the realness of Thus-Comer are the same realness. They are not different or separate.

"The realness of the thirty-two perfect major marks is the realness of Thus-Comer, and the realness of Thus-Comer is the realness of the thirty-two perfect major marks. The realness of the eighty distinguishing minor features is the realness of Thus-Comer, and the realness of Thus-Comer is the realness of the eighty distinguishing minor features. The realness of the thirty-two perfect major marks, the realness of the eighty distinguishing minor features, and the realness of Thus-Comer are the same realness. They are not different or separate.

"The realness of staying in correct mindfulness is the realness of Thus-Comer, and the realness of Thus-Comer is the realness of staying in correct mindfulness. The realness of dwelling in equanimity at all times is the realness of Thus-Comer, and the realness of Thus-Comer is the realness of dwelling in equanimity at all times. The realness of staying in correct mindfulness, the realness of dwelling in equanimity at all times, and the realness of Thus-Comer are the same realness. They are not different or separate.

"The realness of the dharani gates is the realness of Thus-Comer, and the realness of Thus-Comer is the realness of the dharani gates. The realness of the samadhi gates is the realness of Thus-Comer, and the realness of Thus-Comer is the realness of the samadhi gates. The realness of the dharani gates, the realness of the samadhi gates, and the realness of Thus-Comer are the same realness. They are not different or separate.

"The realness of stream-entry effect is the realness of Thus-Comer, and the realness of Thus-Comer is the realness of stream-entry effect. The realness of once-return effect, nonreturn effect, arhat effect, and self-enlightenment bodhi is the realness of Thus-Comer; the realness of Thus-Comer is the realness of once-return effect, nonreturn effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi. The realness of stream-entry effect; the realness of once-return effect, nonreturn effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi; and the realness of Thus-Comer are the same realness. They are not different or separate.

"The realness of all great bodhisattva actions is the realness of Thus-Comer, and the realness of Thus-Comer is the realness of all great bodhisattva actions. The realness of the

unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas is the realness of Thus-Comer, and the realness of Thus-Comer is the realness of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas. The realness of all great bodhisattva actions, the realness of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas, and the realness of Thus-Comer are the same realness. They are not different or separate.

"The realness of the perfect knowledge of everything is the realness of Thus-Comer, and the realness of Thus-Comer is the realness of the perfect knowledge of everything. The realness of the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths and perfect knowledge of all phenomena is the realness of Thus-Comer, and the realness of Thus-Comer is the realness of the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths and perfect knowledge of all phenomena. The realness of the perfect knowledge of everything, the realness of the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths and perfect knowledge of all phenomena, and the realness of Thus-Comer are the same realness. They are not different or separate.

"You heavenly beings must know that the great bodhisattvas who have realized intuitively the realness of all dharmas are named the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones. Because I can deeply believe in and understand the realness of all dharmas, it is said that I was born by following Thus-Comer."

(Well-Appearing One elaborated that all dharmas share the same realness. Those who intuitively realize this truth are Thus-Comers. As the unsurpassed bodhi pursuers deeply believe in and understand this truth, they are said "born by following Thus-Comer.")

When the forms of the realness were taught, six types of quakes occurred throughout mountains and vast lands in this large threefold thousand-world. The quakes caused elevations and depressions in different directions: rising in the east and sinking in the west; rising in the west and sinking in the east; rising in the south and sinking in the north; rising in the north and sinking in the south; rising in the middle and sinking at the borders; and rising at the borders and sinking in the middle. At that time, the heavenly beings from the realm of desire and the realm of form again spread the powdered fragrances made of sandalwood, tagara, tamālapatra, blue lotuses, yellow lotuses, red lotuses, and snow-white lotuses as offerings to the Buddha and Well-Appearing One. They said to the Buddha, "It is very unusual, Thus-comer! It has never happened

before! The great virtuous Well-Appearing One was born by following Thus-Comer because of realness."

At that time, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One said to the heavenly beings, "You heavenly beings must know, I was born by following Thus-Comer neither because of matter or its realness, nor apart from matter or its realness; neither because of feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness or their realness, nor apart from feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness or their realness. And so on, I was born by following Thus-Comer neither because of the perfect knowledge of everything or its realness, nor apart from the perfect knowledge of everything or its realness. I was born by following Thus-Comer neither because of the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena or their realness, nor apart from the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena or their realness. I was born by following Thus-Comer neither because of the conditioned dharmas or their realness, nor apart from the conditioned dharmas or their realness. I was born by following Thus-Comer neither because of the unconditioned dharmas or their realness, nor apart from the unconditioned dharmas or their realness. Why? Heavenly beings, all these dharmas are nonexistent. The one who is born by following someone, the one to be followed, the cause of birth, and the time and the place of birth are all nonexistent."

At that time, Sariputra said to the Buddha, "World-Honored One, realness, dharma realm, dharma nature, the nature of nonillusion, nature of changelessness, nature of equality, nature of nonarising, dharma concentration, dharma dwelling, reality, the realm of empty space, and the realm of the inconceivable of all dharmas are very profound. It means that in them, matter and the realness of matter are unattainable. Why? As matter is unattainable, how can we say that the realness of matter is attainable? Feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness and their realness are unattainable. Why? As feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness are unattainable, how can we say that the realness of feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness is attainable? And so on, the perfect knowledge of everything is unattainable, and the realness of the perfect knowledge of everything is unattainable too. Why? As the perfect knowledge of everything is unattainable, how can we say that the realness of the perfect knowledge of everything is attainable? The perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena are unattainable, and the realness of the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths and the perfect

knowledge of all phenomena is unattainable too. Why? As the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena are unattainable, how can we say that the realness of the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena is attainable?"

The Buddha replied, "Sariputra, it is as you say. The realness, dharma realm, dharma nature, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable of all dharmas are very profound. In them, matter is unattainable, and the realness of matter is also unattainable. Why? As matter is unattainable, how can we say that the realness of matter is attainable? And so on, the perfect knowledge of all phenomena is unattainable, and the realness of the perfect knowledge of all phenomena is unattainable too. Why? As the perfect knowledge of all phenomena is unattainable, how can we say that the realness of the perfect knowledge of all phenomena is attainable?"

When the Buddha was teaching the forms of realness, two hundred bhiksus (monks) became arhats by eliminating all flaws and liberating their minds. Five hundred bhiksunīs (nuns) developed pure dharma eyes by staying far away from defilements. Five thousand bodhisattvas were reborn in the heavens and attained the forbearance of nonarising, while six thousand bodhisattvas became arhats by eliminating all flaws and attaining liberation in their minds.

At that time, the Buddha said to Sariputra, "These six thousand bodhisattvas present in the assembly today had stayed close and made offerings to five hundred Buddhas in the past. They had in each Buddha's place vowed to renounce their families to pursue correct belief. They had cultivated giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, and meditation, but had not accepted prajna paramita. They stayed far away from expedient skillfulness, held deviated thinking, and practiced deviated actions. When cultivating giving, they thought, 'This is giving. These are the things given. This is the receiver. I can practice giving.' When cultivating pure precept, they thought, 'This is pure precept. This is guilty karma. This is the area I should protect. I can observe the precept.' When cultivating forbearance, they thought, 'This is forbearance. This is the hindrance for forbearance. This is the state of forbearance. I can practice forbearance.' When cultivating diligence, they thought, 'This is diligence. This is laziness. This is what I have done. I can practice diligence.' When cultivating meditation, they thought, 'This is meditation. This is

restlessness. This is what I have achieved. I can cultivate concentration.' But they did not absorb prajna paramita. They stayed far away from expedient skillfulness, held deviated thoughts, and practiced deviated actions in giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, and meditation. They thus could not attain the bodhisattva way to stay away from the deviated thoughts and actions. Because of this cause and condition, they could not enter onto the bodhisattva path of nonarising. Because they could not enter onto the bodhisattva path of nonarising, they attained stream-entry effect and gradually progressed to achieve arhat effect. Therefore, Sariputra, if the great bodhisattvas walk on the bodhi path and attain the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration without absorbing prajna paramita, and thus stay far away from expedient skillfulness, they will fall into the stage of voice-hearer or the stage of self-enlightened one."

(The Buddha cautioned the bodhi pursuers to cultivate the first five paramitas without absorbing the expedient skillfulness of prajna paramita would regress to the two vehicles and could not attain the unsurpassed bodhi.)

At that time, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "World-Honored One, why do those who cultivate emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration without absorbing prajna paramita and expedient skillfulness fall into the stage of voice-hearer or the stage of self-enlightened one even after realizing the reality? Why do the practitioners of bodhisattva vehicle who have cultivated emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration by absorbing the expedient skillfulness of prajna paramita will progress toward the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi after realizing the reality?"

The Buddha replied, "Sariputra, the practitioners of voice-hearer vehicle or self-enlightened one vehicle who have stayed far away from the mind of the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge are unable to absorb prajna paramita. They stay away from expedient skillfulness when cultivating emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration, and thus fall into the stage of voice-hearer or the stage of self-enlightened one after realizing the reality. While on the other hand, the bodhisattva-vehicle practitioners have always stayed in a mind correspondent with the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. They are able to absorb prajna paramita, and cultivate emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration with expedient skillfulness and great

compassion. They thus definitely will enter onto the bodhisattva path of nonarising after realizing the reality and further realize the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.

"Sariputra, a large bird standing as tall as one hundred yojanas, two hundred yojanas, or three hundred yojanas, yet it lacks wings. As the bird descends from the Heaven of the Thirty-Three Smaller Heavens to the continent of Jambudvipa, it thought, 'I want to return to the Heaven of Thirty-Three Smaller Heavens.' Sariputra, what do you think about this? Is it possible for a wingless bird to return to the Heaven of Thirty-Three Smaller Heavens?"

Sariputra replied, "No, World-Honored One. No, Well-Gone One."

The Buddha said to Sariputra, "The bird thought during the journey, 'I wish to arrive at the continent of Jambudvipa safely and unharmed.' Sariputra, what do you think about this? Is it possible for the bird to fulfill such a wish?"

Sariputra replied, "No, World-Honored One. No, Well-Gone One. As falling from heaven to land on the continent of Jambudvipa, this heavy bird without wings absolutely will be injured or dead."

The Buddha said, "Sariputra, it is as you say. Some bodhisattva-vehicle practitioners have diligently cultivated giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, and meditation for numberless great kalpas. They have also cultivated prajna trying to attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, but they do not absorb prajna paramita. Because they have cultivated emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration without expedient skillfulness, they certainly will fall into the stage of voice-hearer or the stage of self-enlightened one. Why? It is because they have stayed far away from the mind of the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. That's why they fall into the stage of voice-hearer or self-enlightened one.

"Sariputra, these bodhisattva-vehicle individuals have stayed in the mindfulness of the aggregates of precept, concentration, wisdom, liberation, and the knowledge and the views of liberation of the Buddhas in the past, future, and present. They have made offerings respectfully to all these aggregates and undertaken cultivation in accordance with them. But they have been attached to the forms, they thus are unable to correctly understand the perfect merits and virtues of the aggregates of precept, concentration, wisdom, liberation, and the knowledge and the views

of liberation of the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones. They have heard the path of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal enlightenment and the words such as emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration, but they are attached to the forms of the dharma voice when transferring the merits and virtues toward the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. They thus cannot attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi and fall into the stage of voice-hearer or the stage of self-enlightened one. Why? Sariputra, these bodhisattva-vehicle practitioners do not absorb prajna paramita; they stay far away from expedient skillfulness. They have tried to transfer their virtuous roots toward the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, yet cannot accomplish it. They fall into the stage of voice-hearer or the stage of self-enlightened one instead.

(The Buddha further used simile to explain why some bodhi pursuers could not attain the unsurpassed bodhi.)

"On the other hand, some bodhisattva-vehicle practitioners have stayed in a mind correspondent with the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge since the time of beginning to cultivate giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, and meditation diligently. They have also cultivated wonderful wisdom to absorb prajna paramita and never stayed away from expedient skillfulness. They have stayed in the mindfulness of the aggregates of precept, concentration, wisdom, liberation, and the knowledge and the views of liberation of the Buddhas in the past, future, and present without being attached to their forms. They have also cultivated the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration without being attached to their forms. Although they are aware of the merits and virtues caused by themselves and others, they do not grasp their forms when transferring the merits and virtues along with all sentient beings equally toward the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.

"Sariputra, you must know that these bodhisattva-vehicle practitioners will progress directly toward the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi and will not fall into the stage of voice-hearer or the stage of self-enlightened one. Why? Sariputra, these bodhisattva-vehicle practitioners have never been far away from the mind of the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge from the moment they aspired to great bodhi until they finally achieved it. They have always cultivated giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna based on

great compassion, but they do not grasp their phenomena. They have always stayed in the mindfulness of the aggregates of precept, concentration, wisdom, liberation, and the knowledge and the views of liberation, but they do not grasp their phenomena. They have always cultivated the path of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal enlightenment as well as the dharma of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration, but they do not grasp their phenomena either.

"Sariputra, since these bodhisattva-vehicle practitioners have expedient skillfulness, they are able to cultivate giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna paramitas with a mind free from phenomena. They are also able to cultivate the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena with a mind free from phenomena. They definitely will realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi they are pursuing."

At that time, Sariputra said to the Buddha, "World-Honored One, if my understanding of the Buddha's teachings is correct, the great bodhisattvas have absorbed prajna paramita since the time they aspired to the ultimate truth until they finally attained it. They have never been far away from expedient skillfulness; they are very close to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. Why? From the time they aspired to the ultimate truth until they finally attained it, these great bodhisattvas have never seen any dharma attainable: the one who realizes, the object to be realized, the place where the realization occurs, the time when the realization happens, and the cause of the realization are all unattainable. The dharmas such as matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena are all unattainable.

"Furthermore, World-Honored One, some bodhisattva-vehicle practitioners do not absorb prajna paramita; they stay far away from expedient skillfulness in the pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. They are not confident if they can attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi that they are pursuing. Why? These bodhisattva-vehicle practitioners have not absorbed prajna paramita and lack expedient skillfulness. When they cultivate giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna paramitas, they will grasp their phenomena. And so on, when they cultivate the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect

knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena, they will also grasp their forms. Because of this cause and condition, they hesitate and are not confident if they can attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.

"Therefore, World-Honored One, in order to attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, the great bodhisattvas definitely should not stay far away from the expedient skillfulness of prajna paramita; rather, they should adopt nonattainment as skillful means and stay in a mind in accord with formlessness to cultivate giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna paramitas, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena. If the great bodhisattvas can dwell peacefully in the expedient skillfulness of prajna paramita, adopt nonattainment as skillful means, and stay in a mind in accord with formlessness when cultivating all Buddha dharmas, they will attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi."

(Sariputra concluded the right way for bodhisattva-vehicle practitioners to achieve the unsurpassed bodhi.)

At that time, the heavenly beings from the realm of desire and the realm of form said to the Buddha, "The unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas is extremely difficult to believe and understand. It is extremely difficult to realize and attain. Why? The great bodhisattvas should realize and attain the particular and common characteristics of all dharmas before they can attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, and understand that the phenomena of all dharmas are nonexistent and unattainable."

Meanwhile, the Buddha responded to various heavenly beings and said, "Yes, it is as you say. The unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas is extremely difficult to believe and understand. It is extremely difficult to realize and attain. You must know, heavenly beings, I became intuitively awakened to the phenomena of all dharmas before realizing and attaining the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. When I was awakened, I did not attain the phenomena of all dharmas in terms of the superior meanings; that is, I did not attain the one who realizes and attains the bodhi, the bodhi to be realized and attained, the place where the attainment happens, the time when the attainment happens, and the cause of the attainment.

Why? It is because the dharmas are pure in the final analysis, and all the conditioned and unconditioned dharmas are empty in the final analysis. Because of this reason, the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi is extremely difficult to believe and understand, and extremely difficult to realize and attain."

(The Buddha explained for heavenly beings why unsurpassed bodhi is extremely difficult to believe and attain.)

At that time, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One said to the Buddha, "World-Honored One, as the Buddha has said, the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas is extremely difficult to believe and understand, and extremely difficult to realize and attain. But as I reflected on the meanings that the Buddha teaches, the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas is easy to believe and understand, and easy to realize and attain. Why? If one believes and understands that no one can realize and attain, no dharma can be realized and attained, no place for such realization and attainment, no time for such realization and attainment, and no cause for such realization and attainment, then one can believe and understand the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. If one can realize and attain that no one can realize and attain, no dharma can be realized and attained, no place for such realization and attainment, no time for such realization and attainment, and no cause for such realization and attainment, then one can realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. Why? It is because all dharmas are empty in the final analysis, and in the emptiness in the final analysis, no dharma can realize and attain, no dharma can be realized and attained, and there is no place, time, or the cause for such realization and attainment. Why? The natures and the forms of all dharmas are empty. They are without addition or subtraction. They are nonexistent and unattainable. Because of this cause and condition, giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna paramitas that the great bodhisattvas cultivate are nonexistent and unattainable. Furthermore, the perfect knowledge of everything, the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena are also nonexistent and unattainable. The dharmas that the great bodhisattvas contemplate are all nonexistent and unattainable whether they are material or immaterial, visible or invisible, substantial or unsubstantial, flawed or flawless, conditioned or unconditioned. Because of this cause and condition, as I reflected on the meanings that the Buddha teaches, I felt that the unsurpassed,

perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas is very easy to believe and understand, and very easy to realize and attain. The great bodhisattvas should not think that it is extremely difficult to believe, understand, realize, and attain. Why? Matter and the self-nature of matter are empty; feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness and their self-natures are empty. The perfect knowledge of everything and its self-nature are empty; the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena and their self-natures are empty. If the great bodhisattvas can deeply believe in, understand, and correctly realize the meanings of empty self-natures, they will attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi."

(Well-Appearing One explained that the unsurpassed bodhi is very easy to believe in, understand, and attain if one can understand that the dharmas and their self-natures are empty. This assertion contradicts the statements made earlier by heavenly beings and later by Sariputra.)

Meanwhile, Sariputra said to Well-Appearing One, "Because of this cause and condition, the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas is extremely difficult to believe, understand, realize, and attain. Why? The great bodhisattvas have contemplated all dharmas and realized that they are all like empty space which has no self-nature. Like empty space, they do not think they will believe in, understand, realize, and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly. Why? Various dharmas are equivalent to empty space and are empty. The great bodhisattvas should believe in and understand that all dharmas are empty and equivalent to empty space before they can attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. If great bodhisattvas could easily realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, then there would not be so many bodhisattvas as the sands of the Ganges to put on the great armor of merits and virtues to aspire to the unsurpassed bodhi, but finally withdraw from the pursuit. Therefore, the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi is extremely difficult to believe in, understand, realize, and attain."

In the meantime, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked Sariputra, "Sariputra, what do you think about this? Does matter withdraw from the pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddha?"

Sariputra replied, "No, Well-Appearing One."

“Sariputra, what do you think about this? Do feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness withdraw from the pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddha?”

Sariputra replied, “No, Well-Appearing One.”

“Sariputra, what do you think about this? Does the perfect knowledge of everything withdraw from the pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddha?”

Sariputra replied, “No, Well-Appearing One.”

“Sariputra, what do you think about this? Do the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena withdraw from the pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddha?”

Sariputra replied, “No, Well-Appearing One.”

“Sariputra, what do you think about this? Does the realness of matter withdraw from the pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddha?”

Sariputra replied, “No, Well-Appearing One.”

“Sariputra, what do you think about this? Does the realness of feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness withdraw from the pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddha?”

Sariputra replied, “No, Well-Appearing One.”

“Sariputra, what do you think about this? Does the realness of the perfect knowledge of everything withdraw from the pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddha?”

Sariputra replied, “No, Well-Appearing One.”

“Sariputra, what do you think about this? Does the realness of the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena withdraw from the pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddha?”

Sariputra replied, “No, Well-Appearing One.”

“Sariputra, what do you think about this? Does any dharma apart from matter withdraw from the pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddha?”

Sariputra replied, “No, Well-Appearing One.”

“Sariputra, what do you think about this? Does any dharma apart from feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness withdraw from the pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddha?”

Sariputra replied, “No, Well-Appearing One.”

“Sariputra, what do you think about this? Does any dharma apart from the perfect knowledge of everything withdraw from the pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddha?”

Sariputra replied, “No, Well-Appearing One.”

“Sariputra, what do you think about this? Does any dharma apart from the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena withdraw from the pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddha?”

Sariputra replied, “No, Well-Appearing One.”

“Sariputra, what do you think about this? Does any dharma apart from the realness of matter withdraw from the pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddha?”

Sariputra replied, “No, Well-Appearing One.”

“Sariputra, what do you think about this? Does any dharma apart from the realness of feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness withdraw from the pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddha?”

Sariputra replied, “No, Well-Appearing One.”

"Sariputra, what do you think about this? Does any dharma apart from the realness of the perfect knowledge of everything withdraw from the pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddha?"

Sariputra replied, "No, Well-Appearing One."

"Sariputra, what do you think about this? Does any dharma apart from the realness of the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena withdraw from the pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddha?"

Sariputra replied, "No, Well-Appearing One."

"Sariputra, what do you think about this? Does the realness of the dharmas withdraw from the pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddha?"

Sariputra replied, "No, Well-Appearing One."

"Sariputra, what do you think about this? Do dharma realm, dharma nature, the nature of nonillusion, nature of changelessness, nature of equality, nature of nonarising, dharma concentration, dharma dwelling, reality, the realm of empty space, and the realm of the inconceivable of the dharmas withdraw from the pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddha?"

Sariputra replied, "No, Well-Appearing One."

"Sariputra, what do you think about this? Does any dharma apart from the realness of the dharmas withdraw from the pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddha?"

Sariputra replied, "No, Well-Appearing One."

"Sariputra, what do you think about this? Does any dharma apart from dharma realm, dharma nature, the nature of nonillusion, nature of changelessness, nature of equality, nature of nonarising, dharma concentration, dharma dwelling, reality, the realm of empty space, and the realm of the inconceivable of the dharmas withdraw from the pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddha?"

Sariputra replied, “No, Well-Appearing One.”

At that time, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One said to Sariputra, “If all dharmas are nonexistent and unattainable, does it make sense to ask what dharma will withdraw from the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi?”

Meanwhile, Sariputra replied to Well-Appearing One, “As you the benevolent one say, in the forbearance dharma of nonarising, there is no dharma or bodhisattva who can withdraw from the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. If this is the case, then why does the Buddha say that there are three kinds of bodhisattva-vehicle practitioners instead of one? And why do you the benevolent one also say that there is no difference among the three vehicles of bodhisattva but there is only one perfect and universal vehicle?”

In the meantime, Fully Loving-Kind One (Purna) said to Sariputra, “You must ask venerable Well-Appearing One this question first: is only one vehicle of bodhisattva allowed to exist? Then you may challenge him by asking, if there is no difference among the three vehicles, then is there only one vehicle, namely the perfect and universal bodhi vehicle?”

Meanwhile, Sariputra asked Well-Appearing One, “Is only one vehicle of bodhisattva allowed to exist?”

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One replied to Sariputra by asking, “Sariputra, what do you think about this? Are there three different kinds of bodhisattva-vehicle practitioners in the realness of all dharmas; namely, some practitioners will fall into the stage of voice-hearing, some will fall into the stage of self-enlightened one, and some will realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi?”

Sariputra replied, “No, Well-Appearing One.”

“Sariputra, what do you think about this? Are there three different vehicles of bodhisattva in the realness of all dharmas?”

Sariputra replied, “No, Well-Appearing One.”

“Sariputraa, what do you think about this? Is there really a bodhisattva vehicle which will not withdraw in the realness of all dharmas?”

Sariputra replied, “No, Well-Appearing One.”

“Sariputra, what do you think about this? Is there really only one perfect and universal vehicle of bodhisattva in the realness of all dharmas?”

Sariputra replied, “No, Well-Appearing One.”

“Sariputra, what do you think about this? Are there one form, two forms, and three forms in the realness of all dharmas?”

Sariputra replied, “No, Well-Appearing One.”

“Sariputra, what do you think about this? Is there one dharma or one bodhisattva attainable in the realness of all dharmas?”

Sariputra replied, “No, Well-Appearing One.”

Meanwhile, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One said to Sariputra, “If all dharmas are nonexistent and unattainable, why do you think that some bodhisattvas definitely will withdraw from the pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddha; some bodhisattvas definitely will not withdraw; and some bodhisattvas are uncertain whether they will withdraw or not? Why do you think that this is the vehicle of voice-hearer; this is the vehicle of the self-enlightened one; and this is the perfect and universal vehicle? Why do you ask: Are there three vehicles? Will they combine into one vehicle?

“Sariputra, if the great bodhisattvas realize that all dharmas are unattainable, the realness of all dharmas is unattainable, various bodhisattvas are unattainable, and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddha is unattainable, then they are the real great bodhisattvas. Sariputra, if the great bodhisattvas are not frightened, scared, terrified, hesitated, regretful, regressive, and drowned when hearing the unattainable forms of the realness of various dharmas, they will realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi very soon, and will never regress.”

(After the discussion between Well-Appearing One and Sariputra regarding whether the fathomless prajna paramita is very difficult to believe in and understand or not, Well-Appearing One provided such a conclusion.)

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Chapter 52

Realness

Section 3

(In the Second Assembly)

At that time, the World-Honored One praised the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One, “Excellent, excellent! Now you can teach the essential meanings of the dharma for great bodhisattvas although you are with the support of the supernatural powers of Thus-Comer. Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas can develop a deep belief in and understanding of the form of the unattainable realness of the dharma and get to know the form of nondifferentiation of all dharmas, then they will not be frightened, scared, terrified, hesitated, regretful, regressive, or drowned when hearing the form of the unattainable realness of all dharmas. These great bodhisattvas will quickly fulfill the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi that they pursue.”

(The Buddha praised Well-Appearing One’s statement about the form of dharmas.)

The long-lived sage Sariputra asked the Buddha, “World-Honored One, are the great bodhisattvas able to quickly fulfill the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi that they pursue if they can achieve this dharma?”

The Buddha replied to Sariputra, “Yes, the great bodhisattvas will quickly fulfill the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi if they can achieve this dharma.”

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, “If the great bodhisattvas would like to quickly fulfill the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, where and how should they dwell?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “If the great bodhisattvas would like to quickly fulfill the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi that they pursue, they should dwell

in a mind of equality rather than inequality. They should treat all sentient beings with a mind of equality instead of inequality. They should speak with all sentient beings with a mind of equality instead of inequality. They should initiate a mind of great loving-kindness toward all sentient beings rather than hatred. They should speak with all sentient beings with a mind of great loving-kindness rather than hatred. They should initiate a mind of great compassion toward all sentient beings rather than annoyance and harmfulness. They should speak with all sentient beings with a mind of great compassion rather than annoyance and harmfulness. They should initiate a mind of great joy toward all sentient beings rather than jealousy. They should speak with all sentient beings with a mind of great joy rather than jealousy. They should initiate a mind of equanimity toward all sentient beings rather than prejudice. They should speak with all sentient beings with a mind of great equanimity rather than prejudice. They should treat all sentient beings with humility rather than arrogance. They should speak with all sentient beings with humility rather than arrogance. They should initiate a mind of straightforwardness and honesty toward all sentient beings rather than flattery and deception. They should speak with all sentient beings with straightforwardness and honesty rather than flattery and deception. They should initiate a tender mind toward all sentient beings rather than a stubborn mind. They should speak with all sentient beings tenderly rather than stubbornly. They should initiate a mind of bringing benefits to all sentient beings rather than doing harm to them. They should speak with all sentient beings to benefit them rather than doing harm to them. They should initiate a mind of giving peace and happiness to all sentient beings rather than restlessness and agony. They should speak with all sentient beings to bring peace and happiness to them rather than restlessness and agony. They should initiate a mind apart from worry and disgust toward all sentient beings rather than with worry and disgust. They should speak with all sentient beings with a mind apart from worry and disgust rather than with worry and disgust.

“They should initiate a mind of treating all sentient beings as parents, brothers, sisters, men, women, and relatives and speak with them with such a mind. They should initiate a mind of treating all sentient beings as friends and talk to them with such a mind. They should initiate a mind of treating all sentient beings as teachers, mentors, disciples, and classmates and talk to them with such a mind. They should initiate a mind of treating all sentient beings as stream-enterers, once-returners, nonreturners, arhats, self-enlightened ones, great bodhisattvas, and

Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones and talk to them with such a mind. They should initiate a mind of making offerings respectfully to esteem and acclaim all sentient beings and talk to them with such a mind. They should initiate a mind of relieving, pitying, and protecting all sentient beings and talk to them with such a mind. They should initiate a mind of viewing all sentient beings as empty in the final analysis, nonexistent, and unattainable and talk to them with such a mind. They should initiate a mind of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration toward all sentient beings and talk to them with such a mind.

(The Buddha taught how great bodhisattvas should treat sentient beings with loving-kindness, compassion, joy, and equanimity and absorb them with such beneficial approaches. These are the traits of great bodhisattvas for interacting with other sentient beings.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas would like to quickly fulfill the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi that they pursue, they should not kill themselves, encourage others not to kill, always praise publicly the way of no killing and joyfully admire, and celebrate those who do not kill. And so on, they should stay away from incorrect views themselves, encourage others to do so, always praise publicly the way of staying away from incorrect views, and joyfully admire and celebrate those who stay away from incorrect views. They should cultivate the four meditations themselves, encourage others to do so, always praise publicly the way of cultivating the four meditations, and joyfully admire and celebrate those who cultivate the four meditations. They should cultivate the four immeasurable minds themselves, encourage others to do so, always praise publicly the way of cultivating the four immeasurable minds, and joyfully admire and celebrate those who cultivate the four immeasurable minds. They should cultivate the four formless concentrations themselves, encourage others to do so, always praise publicly the way of cultivating the four formless concentrations, and joyfully admire and celebrate those who cultivate the four formless concentrations. They should fulfill the six paramitas themselves, encourage others to do so, always praise publicly the way of fulfilling the six paramitas, and joyfully admire and celebrate those who fulfill the six paramitas. They should dwell in the eighteen kinds of emptiness themselves, encourage others to do so, always praise publicly the way of dwelling in the eighteen kinds of emptiness, and joyfully admire and celebrate those who dwell in the eighteen kinds of emptiness. They should dwell in realness, dharma realm, dharma nature, the nature of nonillusion, nature of changelessness, nature of

equality, nature of nonarising, dharma concentration, dharma dwelling, reality, the realm of empty space, and the realm of the inconceivable themselves; encourage others to do so; always praise publicly the way of dwelling in realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable; and joyfully admire and celebrate those who dwell in realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable. They should dwell in the four noble truths themselves, encourage others to do so, always praise publicly the way of dwelling in the four noble truths, and joyfully admire and celebrate those who dwell in the four noble truths. They should cultivate the thirty-seven aids to enlightenment themselves, encourage others to do so, always praise publicly the way of cultivating the thirty-seven aids to enlightenment, and joyfully admire and celebrate those who cultivate the thirty-seven aids to enlightenment. They should cultivate the three liberation gates themselves, encourage others to do so, always praise publicly the way of cultivating the three liberation gates, and joyfully admire and celebrate those who cultivate the three liberation gates. They should cultivate the eight liberation, eight vexation-overcoming meditation, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations themselves; encourage others to do so; always praise publicly the way of cultivating the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations; and joyfully admire and celebrate those who cultivate the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations. They should fulfill the ten stages of bodhisattva themselves, encourage others to do so, always praise publicly the way of fulfilling the ten stages of bodhisattva, and joyfully admire and celebrate those who have fulfill the ten stages of bodhisattva. They should fulfill the five eyes and the six supernatural powers themselves, encourage others to do so, always praise publicly the way of fulfilling the five eyes and the six supernatural powers, and joyfully admire and celebrate those who have fulfilled the five eyes and the six supernatural powers. They should fulfill the dharani gates and samadhi gates themselves, encourage others to do so, always praise publicly the way of fulfilling the dharani gates and samadhi gates, and joyfully admire and celebrate those who have fulfilled the dharani gates and samadhi gates. They should fulfill the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power themselves; encourage others to do so; always praise publicly the way of fulfilling the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power; and joyfully

admire and celebrate those who have fulfilled the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power. They should fulfill the thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features themselves, encourage others to do so, always praise publicly the way of fulfilling the thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features, and joyfully admire and celebrate those who have fulfilled the thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features. They should stay in correct mindfulness and dwell in equanimity at all times themselves, encourage others to do so, always praise publicly the way of staying in correct mindfulness and dwelling in equanimity, and joyfully admire and celebrate those who have stayed in correct mindfulness and dwelled in equanimity. They should contemplate the twelve chains of dependent origination from cause to effect and through the opposite direction themselves, encourage others to do so, always praise publicly the way of contemplating the twelve chains of dependent origination, and joyfully admire and celebrate those who have contemplated the twelve chains of dependent origination from both directions. They should know suffering, find out the cause of suffering, aspire to cease suffering, and cultivate the path for the cessation of suffering; encourage others to do so; always praise publicly the way of knowing suffering, pinpointing the cause of suffering, aspiring to cease suffering, and cultivating the path for the cessation of suffering; and joyfully admire and celebrate those who have done these. They should realize stream-entry effect but do not actually attain stream-entry effect themselves, encourage others to realize stream-entry effect without attaining it, always praise publicly the way of realizing stream-entry effect without attaining it, and joyfully admire and celebrate those who have realized stream-entry effect without attaining it. They should realize once-return effect, nonreturn effect, arhat effect, and self-enlightenment bodhi themselves without attaining them; encourage others to realize all these effects without attaining them; always praise publicly the way of realizing without attaining all these effects; and joyfully admire and celebrate those who have realized without attaining all these effects. They should enter onto the bodhisattva path of nonarising themselves, encourage others to do so, always praise publicly the way of entering onto the bodhisattva path, and joyfully admire and celebrate those who have entered onto the bodhisattva path of nonarising. They should dignify and purify the Buddha lands and assist the sentient beings to mature, encourage others to do so, always praise publicly the way of dignifying and purifying the Buddha lands and assisting the sentient

beings to mature, and joyfully admire and celebrate those who have dignified and purified the Buddha lands and assisted the sentient beings to mature. They should initiate the supernatural powers of the bodhisattva themselves, encourage others to do so, always praise publicly the way of initiating the supernatural powers of the bodhisattva, and joyfully admire and celebrate those who have initiated the supernatural powers of the bodhisattva. They should initiate the perfect knowledge of everything, the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena themselves; encourage others to do so; always praise publicly the way of initiating the perfect knowledge of everything, the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena; and joyfully admire and celebrate those who have initiated the perfect knowledge of everything, the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena. They should eliminate enduring disposition of vexations themselves, encourage others to do so, always praise publicly the way of eliminating enduring disposition of vexations, and joyfully admire and celebrate those who have eliminated enduring disposition of vexations. They should absorb the perfect lifespan themselves, encourage others to do so, always praise publicly the way of absorbing the perfect lifespan, and joyfully admire and celebrate those who have absorbed the perfect lifespan. They should turn the dharma wheel themselves, encourage others to do so, always praise publicly the way of turning the dharma wheel, and joyfully admire and celebrate those who have turned the dharma wheel. They should absorb and protect the correct dharma themselves, encourage others to do so, always praise publicly the way of absorbing and protecting the correct dharma, and joyfully admire and celebrate those who have absorbed and protected the correct dharma.

(The Buddha taught in this paragraph a great job that bodhisattvas should perform: to cultivate various bodhisattva actions themselves, encourage others to do so, acclaim publicly the right way of undertaking such cultivation, and praise publicly those who can practice these bodhisattva actions.)

"Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas would like to quickly fulfill the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi that they pursue, they should adopt nonattainment as skillful means to dwell in the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas should learn the expedient skillfulness of the fathomless prajna paramita. Through this learning, they can dwell peacefully in the dharmas they should cultivate. By

dwelling peacefully this way, they will encounter no obstacles in matter, feeling, thinking, action, consciousness, and so forth, and turning the dharma wheel and dwelling in the dharma. Why? Sine the time unknown, these great bodhisattvas have not absorbed matter, feeling, thinking, action, consciousness, and so forth, and the turning of the dharma wheel and the dharma dwelling. Why? Well-Appearing One, it is because matter cannot be absorbed. If matter cannot be absorbed, it is not matter. Feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness cannot be absorbed either. If feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness cannot be absorbed, they are not feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness. The turning of the dharma wheel cannot be absorbed. If the turning of the dharma wheel cannot be absorbed, it is not the turning of the dharma wheel. The correct dharma dwelling cannot be absorbed. If the correct dharma dwelling cannot be absorbed, it is not the correct dharma dwelling."

(The Buddha taught how bodhisattvas should dwell in the correct dharma.)

As the Buddha was teaching how bodhisattvas should dwell in the dharma, two thousand bodhisattvas attained forbearance of nonarising.

Chapter 53

Nonregression

(In the Second Assembly)

At that time, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "World-Honored One, what are the distinguishing actions, features, and forms of the great bodhisattvas who have achieved nonregression??"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “The great bodhisattvas who have achieved nonregression know accurately the stages of ordinary sentient being, voice-hearer, self-enlightened one, bodhisattva, and the Thus-Comer as they really are. They understand that although various stages are different, they share the same realness. In terms of realness, they do not change or differentiate; they are not different or separate. Although these great bodhisattvas have attained insightful understanding of the realness of various dharmas, they do not view realness differently because they have adopted nonattainment as skillful means. These great bodhisattvas have developed a deep in and insightful understanding of the realness of the dharmas, so they are not confused or hesitated when hearing that realness and all dharmas are not different or separate. Why? Realness and all dharmas are not the same or different; they are not one or two, or both. So are the dharma realm, dharma nature, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable. Therefore, the great bodhisattvas are very reluctant to talk about this issue unless their statements can really bring justice and benefits to all. The great bodhisattvas teach the dharma based on equality and compassion, rather than preference, dislike, caste, or criticism. They value dharma teachers not because of their origin, caste, or personal bias, but because what the teacher teaches are in accord with the true and pure meanings of the dharma. These are the characteristics of the great bodhisattvas without regression.”

(The Buddha taught about the characteristics of the great bodhisattvas without regression.)

At that time, Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, “What are actions, features, and forms?”

The Buddha replied, “Well-Appearing One, the dharmas do not have actions, features, and forms, and these are the actions, features, and forms of the dharmas.”

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, “If all dharmas do not have actions, features, and forms, what dharmas will the great bodhisattvas turn so they are named nonregressive?”

The Buddha replied, “Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas will turn matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness, so they are named nonregressive. They will turn the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and conscious spheres, so they are named nonregressive. They will

turn the sight, sound, smell, taste, touch, and mental-image spheres, so they are named nonregressive. They will turn the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and conscious realms, so they are named nonregressive. They will turn the sight, sound, smell, taste, touch, and mental-image realms, so they are named nonregressive. They will turn the eye consciousness realm, ear consciousness realm, nose consciousness realm, tongue consciousness realm, body consciousness realm, and conscious consciousness realm, so they are named nonregressive. They will turn the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and conscious contacts, so they are named nonregressive. They will turn the feelings produced by eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and conscious contacts, so they are named nonregressive. They will turn giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna paramitas, so they are named nonregressive. They will turn internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature, so they are named nonregressive. They will turn realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable, so they are named nonregressive. They will turn the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering, so they are named nonregressive. They will turn the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path, so they are named nonregressive. They will turn the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations, so they are named nonregressive. They will turn the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations, so they are named nonregressive. They will turn the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration, so they are named nonregressive. They will turn the ten stages of the three vehicles and the ten stages of bodhisattva, so they are named nonregressive. They will turn the dharani gates and samadhi gates, so they are named nonregressive. They will turn the five eyes and six supernatural powers, so they are named nonregressive. They will turn the Buddha’s ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha’s wisdom and power, so they are named nonregressive. They will turn the thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features, so they are named nonregressive. They will turn staying in correct mindfulness and dwelling in equanimity at all times, so they are named nonregressive. They will turn the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena, so they are named nonregressive. They will turn the stages of ordinary sentient being, voice-hearer, self-enlightened one,

bodhisattva, and Thus-Comer, so they are named nonregressive. They will turn all great bodhisattva actions and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas, so they are named nonregressive. Why?

"Well-Appearing One, the self-natures of matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness are nonexistent. And so on, the self-natures of all great bodhisattva actions and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas are also nonexistent. Because the great bodhisattvas do not dwell in them, they are named turning. Because they are turning, they are named nonregressive. If the great bodhisattvas know this, they are named the great bodhisattvas without regression.

(The Buddha further explained why the great bodhisattvas who turn various dharmas are named nonregressive. Those who understand this truth are also named nonregressive.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, all great bodhisattvas of nonregression are not fond of contemplating the features and speeches of the sramanas and Brahmans of other paths. They do not think that these sramanas and Brahmans have real knowledge and views of the dharmas or can establish any dharma gate based on correct views.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, all great bodhisattvas of nonregression are not skeptical about vinaya, the precepts for the monastics, since they are very well established and taught by the Buddha. They will not develop invalid, erroneous precepts or fall into evil views. They are not attached to the so-called auspicious matters and regard them as pure and valid as viewed by the worldly ordinary people. They do not pay homage to deities as other-path believers do, or make various flower ornaments and wreaths, spreading and powdered fragrances, clothes, jewel necklaces, treasure banners, canopies, music and entertainment, and lamps as offerings to other-path deities and practitioners. Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas will not regress if they can achieve these actions, features, and forms.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, all great bodhisattvas of nonregression will not be reborn in hells, the realm of animals, realm of ghosts, realm of asuras, or inferior castes and families, such as Candāla or Pulkasa. They will not be born without sex organs, with incomplete sex organs, with both male and female sex organs, and so forth. They will not be born blind,

dumb, lame, epileptic, or very short and ugly. They will not be born when or where the Buddha dharma is inaccessible. Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas do not regress if they have such actions, features, and forms.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, all great bodhisattvas of nonregression are always pleased to accept and practice the path of the ten virtuous karmas. They do not kill, encourage others not to kill, always praise publicly the way of no killing, and joyfully acclaim those who do not kill. They do not hold incorrect views themselves, encourage others not to hold incorrect views, always praise publicly the way of staying away from incorrect views, and joyfully acclaim those who have stayed away from incorrect views. These great bodhisattvas will not activate the path of the ten not virtuous karmas even in their dreams, let alone when they are awake. Well-Appearing One, those who have achieved such actions, features, and forms are the great bodhisattvas of nonregression.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, intending to benefit all sentient beings, the great bodhisattvas of nonregression will adopt nonattainment as skillful means to cultivate giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita all the time. Well-Appearing One, those who have achieved such actions, features, and forms are the great bodhisattvas of nonregression.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, all great bodhisattvas of nonregression will accept, embrace, reflect on, read, recite, and understand thoroughly the teachings given by the Buddha in twelve ways: the texts (sutra), short verses (geya), prophecy (vyakarana), long verses (gatha), self-statement (udana), origins (nidana), anecdotes (itivrttaka), past lives (jataka), broad teaching (vaipulya), unusual ways (abdhuta-dharma), similes (avadana), and discourses (upadesa). They enjoy sharing the dharma with all sentient beings. When they do this, they will think, 'How should I do to satisfy all sentient beings in their pursuit of the correct dharma?' By adopting nonattainment as skillful means, they will transfer the virtuous roots caused by practicing dharma giving along with all sentient beings equally toward the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. Well-Appearing One, those who have achieved such actions, features, and forms are the great bodhisattvas of nonregression.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, all great bodhisattvas of nonregression are not skeptical or hesitated about the fathomless dharma gates taught by the Buddha. Why? Well-Appearing One, these great bodhisattvas do not see that the dharmas, including matter, feeling, thinking, action, consciousness, and so forth, and all great bodhisattva actions and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas, will make them hesitant or skeptical. Well-Appearing One, those who have such actions, features, and forms are the great bodhisattvas of nonregression.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, all great bodhisattvas of nonregression will achieve tenderness and compliance in body, speech, and mind. Their minds are always open to all sentient beings without hindrance. They always stay in loving-kindness, compassion, joy, and equanimity in their body, speech, and mind. They are not living with the five covers: desire, anger and hatred, drowsiness and sleepiness, restlessness, and regretting what they have done. All their hidden roots of vexations are conquered. All their bondages of vexations will never rise again. Their minds do not get lost and are not puzzled wherever they go. They always dwell in correct knowledge and correct views. They will watch their demeanors when they walk, stay, sit, and lie, or when they lift or lower their feet. They will observe carefully wherever they travel but walk in peace and comfort with eyes looking ahead. They will not move or speak abruptly. Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas with such actions, features, and forms are not regressive.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, all beds, bedding, and the clothes that the great bodhisattvas of nonregression use are clean and smell good; not dirty or greasy, or occupied by lice and their eggs. These great bodhisattvas love purity, cleanness, and brightness and their health is very good. Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas have such actions, features, and forms, you must know that they are the great bodhisattvas of nonregression.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, all great bodhisattvas of nonregression have pure and clean body and mind. They are not like ordinary human beings who are always occupied and eaten by eighty thousand insects. Why? Because these great bodhisattvas have made their virtuous roots increase at all times and will surpass all sentient beings in the world. Their bodies are clean and pure inside and outside, no worms or insects stay to eat them. As their virtuous roots increase, their bodies and minds become purer and purer. Because of this cause and

condition, their bodies and minds will become as solid as the diamond and will not be annoyed or attacked by undesirable conditions, such as cold and heat, hunger and thirst, mosquitoes and gadflies, wind and sun, poisonous insects, and knives and swords. They will not be troubled by various kinds of bondages and complexes. Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas have such actions, features, and forms, you must know that they are the great bodhisattvas of nonregression."

(The Buddha in these paragraphs listed more traits of the nonregressive great bodhisattvas to share with Well-Appearing One and others present in the assembly.)

At that time, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "World-Honored One, how do these great bodhisattvas without regression always stay in the purity of the body, speech, and mind?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "As the great bodhisattvas have their virtuous roots increase and grow continuously, their bodies, speeches, and minds will become purer and purer. Their virtuous powers will eliminate all negative factors, ensuring purity in body, speech, and mind. Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, there are three wonderful actions of body, four of speech, and three of mind. With such actions, they will transcend the stage of voice-hearer and the stage of self-enlightened one to enter onto the bodhisattva path of nonarising, but they will not stop there. They will further assist sentient beings to mature, dignify and purify the Buddha lands, and thus maintain body, speech, and mind in purity to dwell in the stage of bodhisattva firmly. Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas have such actions, features, and forms, you must know that they are the great bodhisattvas without regression.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas of nonregression do not desire for benefits, offerings, or reputation. They are not attached to drinks, food, clothes, bedding, houses, and properties either. They have received merits and virtues of the twelve kinds of celibacy practice, but they do not rely on them. In their minds no thoughts associated with greed, precept violation, anger, hatred, laziness, restlessness, ignorance, and other bondages and vexations will arise. Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas have such actions, features, and forms, you must know that they are the great bodhisattvas without regression.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, all great bodhisattvas of nonregression have deep, penetrating, and powerful intuitive wisdom of enlightenment. They will believe in and accept correct dharma upon hearing it. They will keep it in mind and reflect on its ultimate meanings. They can always merge the dharmas of and beyond the world they have heard into the fathomless essential meanings of prajna paramita. They can easily merge what they have done in the world into the dharma nature based on prajna paramita, with nothing excluded. If something is not well congruent with dharma nature, they also can expediently combine it with the fathomless essential meanings of prajna paramita. Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas have such actions, features, and forms, you must know that they are the great bodhisattvas without regression.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, an evil demon made eight transformed great hells. In each great hell he made numberless and boundless transformed bodhisattvas who were tortured severely by violently burning fires. This evil demon showed the transformed images to the great bodhisattvas of nonregression, and said to them, 'These bodhisattvas are suffering fierce pains in these great hells because they were conferred by Buddha the prophecy of attaining the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. You have also been conferred the same prophecy. The prophecy you received does not lead to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, but rather suffering in great hells. You must cease the pursuit of the great bodhi and get rid of such great suffering, so you will be reborn in heaven to enjoy all kinds of pleasures and wealth there.' At that time, seeing what was happening to them, the great bodhisattvas of nonregression were not frightened or hesitant. They thought, 'It does not make sense that the great bodhisattvas of nonregression will fall into hells, the realm of animals, the realm of ghosts, or asuras. Why? The great bodhisattvas of nonregression have detached from all kinds of negative karma, while positive karma will not invite negative results. What the Buddhas have taught are not lies. The Thus-Comers always teach to bring benefits and happiness to all sentient beings based on great loving-kindness and compassion. What I have seen and heard must be the illusions created by evil demon.' Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas have such actions, features, and forms, you must know that they are the great bodhisattvas without regression.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, an evil demon disguised as a sramana. He came to a great bodhisattva's place and said, 'You have heard that giving, pure precept, forbearance,

diligence, meditation, prajna paramitas, and so forth, and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi should be fulfilled. But what you heard is not correct, so you should discard them immediately. You have also heard that you should joyfully participate in the merits, virtues, and virtuous roots accumulated by all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones and their disciples in the past, future, and present since the time they began to aspire to until they attained dharma dwelling, and transfer all merits and virtues thus derived along with sentient beings equally toward the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. But what you heard about is not true, so you should discard it immediately too. If you can do this, I will teach you the real Buddha dharma so that you can cultivate to attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly. The incorrect words that you have heard are the white lie created by some writers. Only what I say are the real words taught by the Buddha, and that will enable you to attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly.' Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas are scared and hesitant when hearing these words, you must know that they have not been conferred the prophecy of achieving nonregression. It is currently uncertain whether they will achieve the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi or not, so they are not the great bodhisattvas of nonregression.

"Well-Appearing One, some great bodhisattvas are not scared or hesitant when hearing the demons' words; they remain to dwell in the dharma nature of nonaction, formlessness, and nonarising, and continue to follow the Buddha's words to cultivate giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna paramitas in the pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. You must know that these great bodhisattvas have achieved the state of nonregression.

"Well-Appearing One, like the flawless arhats who do not believe in others' words to realize intuitively the dharma nature; they are free from doubt and hesitation and will not be influenced by demons. So are the great bodhisattvas of nonregression; they are invincible that no voice-hearers, self-enlightened ones, other-path believers, and evil demons can destroy, subjugate, or frighten them, or force them to withdraw from the pursuit of the great bodhi.

"Well-Appearing One, as the great bodhisattvas have dwelled firmly in the state of nonregression, they will reflect carefully before taking actions. They will not believe others

rashly to initiate actions. They even do not hastily accept, believe in, and practice the teachings made by the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones, let alone the words of the voice-hearers, self-enlightened ones, other-path believers, and evil demons. These great bodhisattvas do not act by following others' actions. Why? Well-Appearing One, these great bodhisattvas do not see any dharma that they can believe in and practice. Why? Well-Appearing One, these great bodhisattvas do not see matter that they can believe in and practice, nor do they see feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness that they can believe in and practice. They do not see the realness of matter that they can believe in and practice, nor do they see the realness of feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness that they can believe in and practice. And so on, they do not see the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas that they can believe in and practice, nor do they see the realness of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas that they can believe in and practice. Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas have such actions, features, and forms, you must know that they are the great bodhisattvas without regression.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, an evil demon disguised as a bhiksu (monk) and visited a great bodhisattva of nonregression. The demon said to the bodhisattva, 'What you are practicing is the dharma of birth and death instead of the bodhisattva actions. You cannot attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge through such practice. You must cultivate the path of eliminating suffering to get rid of suffering and attain nirvana.' At that time, the demon lectured on the way to get rid of birth and death or the sort, namely, contemplating bones, bruises, pus, the swelling of the body, the body devoured by insects, blood, and the rotten fleshes; contemplating loving-kindness, compassion, joy, and equanimity; and contemplating the four meditations and the four formless concentrations. The demon said to the bodhisattva, 'These are the real paths for cultivation. Through these paths you will attain stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi. Through these paths you will quickly go beyond birth, old age, illness, and death. So why should you suffer in birth and death for such a long time? You must discard the suffering that you are currently encountering, let alone the suffering that will come up in your next life. You should think about it carefully and give up what you have believed in.'

"Well-Appearing One, when hearing these words, the great bodhisattva was not scared or hesitant, but thought, 'This bhiksu has done something to benefit me because he talked about the pseudo dharma to let me know that the pseudo dharma cannot assist me to attain stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi, not to mention the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.' After having this thought, the bodhisattva was in great joy and thought, 'This bhiksu has really benefitted me so much by expediently telling me what hinderance really is, so I am able to learn freely on the path of the three vehicles.'

"Well-Appearing One, at that time, the evil demon knew that the bodhisattva was in great joy, so said again, 'Hey, gentleman, would you like to see various great bodhisattvas who continuously waste their time to cultivate something in vain? Various great bodhisattvas have made immeasurable kinds of best clothes, drinks, food, bedding, medicines, properties, and flower fragrances as offerings to esteem and acclaim as many Buddhas as the sands of the Ganges for as many kalpas as the sands of the Ganges. They have further cultivated giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna paramitas, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena in as many Buddhas' places as the sands of the Ganges. These great bodhisattvas have also stayed close and offered services to as many Buddhas as the sands of the Ganges. They have inquired about the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi: How do great bodhisattvas dwell peacefully in unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi? How do great bodhisattvas cultivate giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita? How do great bodhisattvas dwell peacefully in internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature? How do great bodhisattvas dwell peacefully in realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable? How do great bodhisattvas dwell peacefully in the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering? How do great bodhisattvas cultivate the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path? How do great bodhisattvas cultivate the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations? How do great bodhisattvas cultivate the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations? How do great bodhisattvas cultivate the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and

nonaspiration? How do great bodhisattvas cultivate the stages of ecstasy, freedom from defilements, and so forth, and dharma cloud? How do great bodhisattvas cultivate the five eyes and six supernatural powers? How do great bodhisattvas cultivate the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power? How do great bodhisattvas cultivate the thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features? How do great bodhisattvas cultivate staying correct mindfulness and dwelling in equanimity at all times? How do great bodhisattvas cultivate dharani gates and samadhi gates? How do great bodhisattvas contemplate the twelve chains of dependent origination from both directions, dignify and purify the Buddha lands, and assist the sentient beings to mature? How do great bodhisattvas cultivate the superior supernatural powers of bodhisattva? How do great bodhisattvas cultivate perfect lifespan and learn turning great dharma-wheel to protect correct dharma and ensure its endurance? How do great bodhisattvas cultivate the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena? And as many Buddhas as the sands of the Ganges will answer all their questions one by one. These great bodhisattvas have dwelled peacefully to cultivate diligently as taught by the Buddhas for immeasurable kalpas, but they still cannot realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi; how can we say that you are able to attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi based on what you have cultivated and learned?'

"Well-Appearing One, this great bodhisattva was not moved, scared, frightened, hesitant, or confused when hearing the demon's words. He rather was delighted and thought, 'This bhiksu has benefitted me a lot; he has taught me expediently about hinderance and let me know why this path hinders one from realizing stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi, not mention the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.'

"Well-Appearing One, at that time, the evil demon knew that this bodhisattva did not retreat, and was not confused or skeptical, so the demon further made numberless transformed images of bhiksu and said to the bodhisattva, 'These bhiksus once had pursued diligently the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi for immeasurable kalpas; they had practiced various difficult and painful actions, but could not attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.

Now they have achieved arhat effect; their flaws are eliminated, and all kinds of suffering cease. So, why are you still attached to the pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi?'

"Well-Appearing One, when hearing the demon's statement, the great bodhisattva thought, 'This must be the demon again. He has transformed these images of bhiksus to harass me. He has said faked dharma to hinder me, trying to convince me that no great bodhisattva can cultivate prajna paramita and successfully attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi to let me regress to the stage of voice-hearer or the stage of self-enlightened one.' The bodhisattva further thought, 'It does not make sense that great bodhisattvas will not be able to attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi after cultivating and fulfilling giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, forbearance paramita, diligence paramita, meditation paramita, prajna paramita, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena.' Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas have such actions, features, and forms, you must know that they are the great bodhisattvas without regression.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, all great bodhisattvas of nonregression will always think, 'If the great bodhisattvas cultivate as they are taught by the Buddha; if they do not stay far away from the mind and actions correspondent with giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna paramitas, as well as the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge; and if they can further expediently encourage various sentient beings to cultivate and learn giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna paramitas diligently and assiduously, then these great bodhisattvas will never withdraw from the practice of the six paramitas and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena. They will realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.' Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas have such actions, features, and forms, you must know that they are the great bodhisattvas without regression.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, all great bodhisattvas of nonregression will always think, 'If the great bodhisattvas are aware of demonic hindrances but do not act in accordance with them; if they are aware of the evil friends but do not act in accordance with them; if they are aware of the changes of the circumstance but do not respond to them, then these great bodhisattvas will never withdraw from the practice of the six paramitas and the perfect

knowledge of all phenomena; they definitely will realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.' If the great bodhisattvas have such actions, features, and forms, you must know that they are the great bodhisattvas without regression.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, when hearing the essential meanings of the dharma taught by the World-Honored One, all great bodhisattvas of nonregression will accept and believe in them with joy and respect. Being able to understand the essential meanings well, their minds will become unmovable and invincible and more solid than a diamond. They will learn and cultivate the six paramitas tirelessly and encourage others to do so. Well-Appearing One, you must know that if the great bodhisattvas have such actions, features, and forms, they are the great bodhisattvas without regression."

(The Buddha instructed Well-Appearing One and others more about the actions, features, and forms of the great bodhisattvas without regression.)

Fascicle 449

Chapter 54

Regression and Nonregression

(In the Second Assembly)

At that time, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, “World-Honored One, as the great bodhisattvas without regression are named nonregressive, can they also be named regressive?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “These great bodhisattvas can be named nonregressive, and can also be named regressive.”

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, “World-Honored One, why the nonregressive great bodhisattvas can also be named regressive?”

The Buddha replied, “Well-Appearing One, these great bodhisattvas definitely will attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi without falling into the stage of voice-hearer or the stage of self-enlightened one, so they are named nonregressive. But on the other hand, they will regress when thinking of the dharmas, so they are also named regressive.”

Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, “What dharmas will make them regress in thinking?”

The Buddha replied, “Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas regress in their thinking of matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness; the six internal spheres; the six external spheres; the six internal realms; the six external realms; the six consciousness realms; the six contacts; the feelings produced by six contacts; greed, anger, and ignorance; the six paramitas; all kinds of emptiness; realness, dharma realm, and so forth; the four noble truths; the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth; the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and so forth; the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, and so forth; the three liberation gates; the ten stages; the five eyes and six supernatural powers;

dharani gates and samadhi gates; the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth; the thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features; staying in correct mindfulness and dwelling in equanimity at all times; stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi; all great bodhisattva actions and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas; the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena; and ordinary sentient beings, voice-hearers, self-enlightened ones, bodhisattvas, and Buddhas. Why? These great bodhisattvas of nonregression have contemplated all dharmas and become aware that the particular characteristics of all dharmas are empty. They have entered onto the bodhisattva path of nonarising and seen that not a dharma is attainable. Because of nonattainment, there is no making or doing. Because of no making and no doing, there is no arising in the final analysis. Because there is no arising in the final analysis, it is named the dharma forbearance of nonarising. Because of attaining the dharma forbearance of nonarising, these great bodhisattvas are named nonregressive. As great bodhisattvas regress in thinking of all dharmas, they become not regressive in attaining dharma forbearance. Well-Appearing One, these are the actions, features, and forms of the great bodhisattvas without regression.

(The Buddha explained why the nonregressive great bodhisattvas are also named regressive. As they contemplate all dharmas as empty and enter onto the bodhisattva path of nonarising, they realize that the dharmas are unattainable and without making and doing, so they are named regressive in thinking of all dharmas. Because of this regression in thinking of all dharmas, they attain the dharma forbearance of nonarising and become the great bodhisattvas without regression.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, an evil demon came to a bodhisattva's place intending to make this bodhisattva disgusted with and thus stay away from the unsurpassed bodhi. The demon said to the bodhisattva, 'The perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge is equivalent to empty space. Its characteristics are inherently empty, and its nature is without nature. So are all dharmas; their characteristics are originally empty, their nature is without nature, and they are equivalent to empty space. In the empty nature and empty characteristics, the dharma to realize, the dharma to be realized, and the place, time, and cause of realization are all nonexistent and unattainable. Given the truth that the nature and characteristics of all dharmas

are empty and equivalent to empty space, why are you still wasting your time to pursue the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi? You heard that bodhisattvas should aspire to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. But this is not taught by the Buddha; it is rather said by demons. Therefore, you should discard such aspiration. It is not right to suffer for a very long time intending to bring benefits and happiness to all sentient beings. As you cannot realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi after so many difficult and painful practices, why do you continue to suffer in vain?' Well-Appearing One, when hearing the slander, the great bodhisattva remained calm and contemplated and investigated deeply and carefully, 'This obviously is the evil demon trying to destroy my aspiration to the great bodhi. I must not believe and accept what the demon says. It is true that all dharmas are equivalent to empty space and their nature and characteristics are empty, but the sentient beings have not been enlightened. They are unaware of the truth. They do not have correct knowledge and views and behave upside down without self-restraint and thus suffer. I should put on the great armor of merits and virtues based on my correct knowledge of the nature and characteristics of all dharmas, work diligently to attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi as soon as possible, and teach sentient beings this truth, so that they can become relieved from the suffering caused by birth and death, realize and attain stream-entry effect, once-return effect, nonreturn effect, arhat effect, self-enlightenment bodhi, or the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.'

"Well-Appearing One, from the moment beginning to aspire to the bodhi, this bodhisattva has heard about this dharma and developed a solid, unmovable, and not regressive determination. With such solid mind, this bodhisattva has constantly and correctly cultivated giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna paramitas and enters onto the bodhisattva path of nonarising. The great bodhisattva has continued to cultivate the six paramitas and then dwells peacefully in the bodhisattva path of nonarising. The evil demon has tried all possible ways to destroy this bodhisattva and failed. Well-Appearing One, this great bodhisattva has exceeded the stage of voice-hearer and the stage of self-enlightened one, and cannot be overcome by any demonic hindrance, so is named nonregressive. In addition, to become free from delusive differentiations and attachments to the dharmas and the two vehicles is also named nonregressive. This bodhisattva deserves this name because he has achieved these two

conditions. Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas have such actions, features, and forms, you must know that they are the great bodhisattvas without regression.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas of nonregression are able to enter the first, second, third, and the fourth meditations freely as they wish. They are also able to enter immeasurable loving-kindness, compassion, joy, and equanimity freely as they wish; enter the concentration of boundless emptiness, boundless consciousness, nothingness, and nonthinking and not nonthinking freely as they wish; enter the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path freely as they wish; enter the first liberation, second liberation, and so forth, and the liberation of the extinction of thinking and feeling freely as they wish; enter the first vexation-overcoming meditation, second vexation-overcoming meditation, and so forth, and the eighth vexation-overcoming meditation freely as they wish; enter the first meditation, the second meditation, and so forth, and the meditation of the extinction of thinking and feeling freely as they wish; enter the first universal contemplation, second universal contemplation, and so forth, and the tenth universal contemplation freely as they wish; enter the three liberation gates freely as they wish; and initiate the five supernatural powers freely as they wish. The great bodhisattvas of nonregression can enter the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and so forth, and the five supernatural powers, but they will not be influenced or guided by their powers in rebirth, nor will they realize and attain the stream-entry effect, once-return effect, nonreturn effect, arhat effect, or self-enlightenment bodhi. They will appear with any physical body as they wish but will always embrace an attempt to bring benefits and happiness to all sentient beings. Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas have such actions, features, and forms, you must know that they are the great bodhisattvas of without regression.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, all great bodhisattvas of nonregression have always stayed in an aspiration to pursue the unsurpassed bodhi and will never stay far away from it. They do not value matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness. They do not value the eye sphere, ear sphere, and so forth, and the conscious sphere. They do not value the sight sphere, sound sphere, and so forth, and the mental-image sphere. They do not value the eye realm, ear realm, and so forth, and the conscious realm. They do not value the sight realm, sound realm, and so forth, and the mental-image realm. They do not value the eye consciousness realm, ear

consciousness realm, and so forth, and the conscious consciousness realm. They do not value the eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and the conscious contact. They do not value the feelings produced by eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact. They do not value various phenomena. They do not value what various dharmas rely on. They do not value the accompanying and correspondent conditions. They do not value giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita. They do not value the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and the four formless concentrations. They do not value the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and the noble eightfold path. They do not value the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations. They do not value the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration. They do not value the four noble truths. They do not value the eighteen kinds of emptiness. They do not value realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable. They do not value the ten stages. They do not value the five eyes and the six supernatural powers. They do not value the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and the eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power. They do not value staying in correct mindfulness and dwelling in equanimity at all times. They do not value the dharani gates and the samadhi gates. They do not value the perfect knowledge of everything, the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena. They do not value the stage of voice-hearer, the stage of self-enlightened one, the stage of bodhisattva, and the stage of the Thus-Comer. They do not value assisting the sentient beings to mature and dignifying and purifying the Buddha lands. They do not value all great bodhisattva actions and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas. They do not value seeing many Buddhas. They do not value planting various virtuous roots. Why? Well-Appearing One, these great bodhisattvas are fully aware that the nature and characteristics of all dharmas are empty, are equivalent to empty space, and are unattainable. They do not see the dharma that makes valuing action arise. They do not see the dharma that gives birth; the dharma that can be born; and the place, time, and cause of the birth. They see that they are all unattainable Why? Well-Appearing One, these dharmas are equivalent to empty space; their characteristics are originally empty, and their nature is without nature.

"Well-Appearing One, these great bodhisattvas have always aspired to the unsurpassed bodhi and will never stay away from it. They walk, stay, sit, and lie with good demeanors. They always concentrate when they come, go, enter, go out, and lift or lower their feet. They always stay in correct mindfulness no matter what they are doing. Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas have such actions, features, and forms, you must know that they are the great bodhisattvas without regression.

(The Buddha elaborated and detailed more qualities of great bodhisattva without regression.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, some nonregressive great bodhisattvas do not renounce family but with a firm determination to benefit sentient beings. They practice great bodhisattva actions in an expedient and skillful way. They show that they receive the pleasures of the five desires, but they are not attached to them. They practice giving expediently to relieve various sentient beings. Namely, they will give food, drinks, clothes, vehicles, and so forth to those in need. Well-Appearing One, these great bodhisattvas will not only practice giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita themselves, but encourage others to do so. They will praise publicly the way of practicing giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita, and delightfully admire and acclaim those who have practiced giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita. Well-Appearing One, when staying at home, they will apply their supernatural powers to absorb as many seven treasures as filling the four continents and the large threefold thousand-world, and make these treasures as offerings to the Buddha, the dharma, and the sangha, and give them to various sentient beings in need. Well-Appearing One, although these great bodhisattvas stay at home, they practice celibacy and do not indulge in desires. Although they absorb treasures, they are not attached to them at all. They will absorb various materials and properties but will not bring others pressure or make them worry and suffer. Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas have such actions, features, and forms, you must know that they are the great bodhisattvas of nonregression.

(The Buddha said that a lay person can be a great bodhisattva without regression.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, all nonregressive great bodhisattvas have been closely guarded by vajrayaksa, the diamond deity, who always think, 'These great bodhisattvas

will before long realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. I would like to always follow and guard them closely until they attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. During this time, the diamond deities from the five tribes will also follow and protect them so no human and nonhuman beings can do harm to them; various heavenly deities, demons, and asuras will not hinder them from pursuing the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.' Because of this cause and condition, these bodhisattvas will stay in peace and stability in body and mind without being harassed or disturbed until attaining the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. Well-Appearing One, these great bodhisattvas have the perfect five sense roots of the world, namely, the eye, ear, nose, tongue, and body roots. They also have the perfect five roots beyond the world, namely, the roots of belief, diligence, mindfulness, concentration, and wisdom. Well-Appearing One, these great bodhisattvas have perfect bodies and limbs; their appearances are solemn, brilliant, and in great dignity. Their merits and virtues of the mind grow and increase in each correct thinking and continue to progress until attaining the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas have such actions, features, and forms, you must know that they are the great bodhisattvas without regression.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, all great bodhisattvas of nonregression always act as superior rather than inferior gentlepersons."

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "World-Honored One, what is meant by saying that the great bodhisattvas always act as superior gentlepersons rather than inferior gentlepersons?"

The Buddha replied, "Well-Appearing One, these great bodhisattvas will have no more vexations. Their merits and virtues will progressively improve and increase until they attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. Their minds always concentrate, not restless or in turbulence. They thus are superior gentlepersons instead of inferior gentlepersons.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas of nonregression are consistently dedicated to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi and never stay far away from it. They will consistently engage in pure livelihood instead of impure livelihood; that is, they will not place curses on people or work as fortune tellers or witch doctors. They will not place curses on ghosts or deities to invite reputation or money, nor will they encourage others to

seek prophecies from them. They do not curse men and women, adults and children, animals, and ghosts to make something strange happen. They do not foretell one's lifespan, property, official position, and the relationship between man and woman; nor do they worry about weather, prosperity, poverty, good or bad luck, and likes or dislikes to confuse sentient beings. They do not make herbal medicine by using spells. They avoid inappropriate methods in medical treatments. They do not flatter or please high-ranking officials, pass on requests to them for others, or pretend as their relatives and friends to gain personal fame and benefits. They do not watch men and women who play, laugh, and talk together with contaminated mind. They do not make offerings respectfully to ghosts and deities. I say these great bodhisattvas are superior gentlepersons rather than inferior ones. Why? They understand well that the nature and forms of the dharmas are empty. In emptiness, the forms cannot be perceived. Because they do not see the forms, they will stay far away from all kinds of evil livelihood and inappropriate practices like spells, medicines, and divinations. What they solely look for is the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi for the benefits of all sentient beings. These are the actions, features, and forms of the great bodhisattvas without regression.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, all great bodhisattvas of nonregression have gained great skills of writhing and other techniques of the world, but they are not much imbued with them. Why? These great bodhisattvas understand that all dharmas are empty in the final analysis; in emptiness, and the writings and techniques of the world are unattainable. Besides, many writings and techniques of the world are defiled by not good livelihood, so they choose not to do them although they are competent in these areas. You must know, Well-Appearing One, these great bodhisattvas also know very well about the other-path books and discourses of the world, but they are not attached to them either. Why? These great bodhisattvas know well that the nature and phenomena of all dharmas are empty, and in emptiness, no books and discourses are attainable. Besides, the books and discourses of the world either speak too much or too little. They are not in accord with the bodhisattva path, and some are defiled and nonsensical, so the great bodhisattvas do not enjoy studying them. These are also the actions, features, and forms of the great bodhisattvas without regression.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, there are other actions, features, and forms of the great bodhisattvas without regression. Let me explain to you now. Please listen carefully and reflect on them well."

Well-Appearing One replied, "Yes, we all look forward to your teaching."

The Buddha said, "Well-Appearing One, when cultivating prajna paramita, all great bodhisattvas of nonregression are fully aware that all dharmas are nonexistent. They will not be far away from the mindfulness of the bodhi, nor will they enjoy contemplating and arguing about various aggregates, spheres, and realms. Why? These great bodhisattvas have reflected on the emptiness of the nature and characteristics of aggregates, spheres, and realms well and understand them thoroughly.

"Well-Appearing One, these great bodhisattvas do not like to contemplate and argue about various sentient beings' affairs. Why? It is because these great bodhisattvas have well reflected on the nature and characteristics of all sentient beings and fully understand that they are all empty.

"Well-Appearing One, these great bodhisattvas do not like to contemplate and argue about kings' affairs. Why? It is because these great bodhisattvas have well dwelled in the emptiness of the original nature and do not see any dharma that belongs to the superior class, inferior class, nobler class, less noble or very low class.

"Well-Appearing One, these great bodhisattvas do not like to contemplate and argue about robbers' affairs. Why? It is because these great bodhisattvas have dwelled in the emptiness of the characteristics of the dharmas and do not see any dharma that has the forms of gain, loss, or robbery.

"Well-Appearing One, these great bodhisattvas do not like to contemplate and argue about military affairs. Why? It is because these great bodhisattvas have dwelled in the emptiness of the original nature and do not see any dharma that has the forms of 'many,' 'few,' 'gathering,' or 'dispersing.'

"Well-Appearing One, these great bodhisattvas do not like to contemplate and argue about wars. Why? It is because these great bodhisattvas have dwelled in the realness of empty dharmas and do not see any dharma that has the forms of strength, weakness, love, or hatred.

"Well-Appearing One, these great bodhisattvas do not like to contemplate and argue about cities. Why? It is because these great bodhisattvas have dwelled in the emptiness of the realm of space and do not see any dharma that has the forms of absorption, nonabsorption, like, or dislike.

"Well-Appearing One, these great bodhisattvas do not like to contemplate and argue about living community. Why? It is because these great bodhisattvas have dwelled in the emptiness of all dharmas and do not see any dharma that has addition, subtraction, combination, or separation.

"Well-Appearing One, these great bodhisattvas do not like to contemplate and argue about country territory. Why? It is because these great bodhisattvas have dwelled peacefully in reality and do not see any dharma that has the forms of belonging or not belonging to this or to that.

"Well-Appearing One, these great bodhisattvas do not like to contemplate and argue about the 'I,' the sentient being, and so forth, and the knower and the viewer. Why? It is because these great bodhisattvas have dwelled in the emptiness in the final analysis and do not see any dharma that has the forms of the 'I,' the sentient being, and so forth, and the knower and the viewer, or the forms of the difference between existence and nonexistence.

"Well-Appearing One, these great bodhisattvas do not like to contemplate and argue about the perfect physical marks. Why? It is because these great bodhisattvas have dwelled in formlessness and do not see any dharma that has the forms of the differences between perfect and imperfect marks.

"Well-Appearing One, these great bodhisattvas do not like to contemplate and argue about all these affairs of the world. They only like to contemplate and argue about prajna paramita. Why? It is because the fathomless prajna paramita is far away from various forms and can assist one to realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal enlightenment.

(The Buddha in these paragraphs taught what the great bodhisattvas of nonregression like and do not like to do.)

"Well-Appearing One, these great bodhisattvas have never been far away from the intention correspondent with the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. When cultivating giving paramita, they stay away from stinginess and greed. When cultivating pure-precept paramita, they stay away from precept violation. When cultivating forbearance paramita, they stay away from hatred and anger. When cultivating diligence, they stay away from laziness and tiredness. When cultivating meditation paramita, they stay away from distraction and restlessness. When cultivating prajna paramita, they stay away from wisdom abuse.

"Well-Appearing One, these great bodhisattvas have practiced the emptiness of all dharmas, but they love and enjoy correct dharma and dislike incorrect dharma. They have always extended their concerns over the things beneficial for all sentient beings.

"Well-Appearing One, these great bodhisattvas have practiced the emptiness of nonattainment, but they always praise the merits and virtues of the triple gems and work to bring peace and happiness to all sentient beings.

"Well-Appearing One, these great bodhisattvas have practiced the one-taste form of realness and dharma realm of all dharmas, but they also love to admire various merits and virtues of realness and dharma realm.

"Well-Appearing One, these great bodhisattvas know that all dharmas are empty in the final analysis, but they love virtuous friends and dislike evil friends. The virtuous friends are the Buddhas, bodhisattvas, and the voice-hearers and self-enlightened ones who can teach and establish well sentient beings and guide them to move toward the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.

(The Buddha defined the meaning of virtuous friends for great bodhisattvas.)

"Well-Appearing One, these great bodhisattvas love to visit Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones. Once knowing that the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones are currently teaching

correct dharma in other worlds, they will seek to be reborn there to make offerings respectfully to esteem and acclaim them and listen to their teaching of the correct dharma.

"Well-Appearing One, these great bodhisattvas have never been far away from the mindfulness of the Buddha and the intention of hearing the dharma day and night. Because of this cause and condition, wherever the Buddhas, the World-Honored Ones, teach correct dharma, they will seek to be reborn there either by riding the powers of aspiration or by riding the supernatural powers. Because of this cause and condition, they will never be far away from the Buddha wherever they are reborn; they can also hear correct dharma all the time without interruption.

"Well-Appearing One, these great bodhisattvas are capable of freely entering the first meditation, second meditation, and so forth, and the concentration of nonthinking and not nonthinking. To bring benefits and happiness to all sentient beings, they will intend to expediently and skillfully teach the sentient beings in the realm of desire about the path of the ten virtuous karmas. They will also vow to be reborn in the realm of desire to make offerings respectfully to esteem and acclaim various Buddhas, the World-Honored Ones, listen to their teaching of the correct dharma, and cultivate various superior actions there. Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas have achieved such actions, features, and forms, you must know that they are the great bodhisattvas without regression.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, all great bodhisattvas of nonregression will consistently cultivate giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita. They will consistently practice internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature; realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable; and the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering. They will consistently cultivate the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path; the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations; the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations; the five eyes and six supernatural powers; all dharani gates and samadhi gates; the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's

wisdom and power; staying in correct mindfulness and dwelling in equanimity at all times; and the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena. They will consistently cultivate all great bodhisattva actions and pursue the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.

"Well-Appearing One, these great bodhisattvas are not skeptical about the stage in which they currently dwell, nor do they think, 'Am I regressive or not regressive?' Why? These great bodhisattvas do not see any dharma that is regressive or not regressive in the pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.

"Well-Appearing One, these great bodhisattvas are not confused or hesitant about the dharma of the stage in which they currently dwell. Why? These great bodhisattvas have thoroughly understood the dharma of the stage in which they currently dwell.

"Well-Appearing One, the stream-enterers dwelling in stream-entry effect are not confused or skeptical about the effect in which they currently dwell. The once-returners, nonreturners, arhats, self-enlightened ones, and various Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones are not confused or skeptical about the stages in which they currently dwell either. Similarly, the great bodhisattvas know and perceive well and are not confused or skeptical about the various dharmas absorbed in the stage of nonregression in which they currently dwell.

"Well-Appearing One, these great bodhisattvas have dwelled in their own stages, assisted sentient beings to mature, dignified and purified Buddha lands, and cultivated various merits and virtues. Once demonic hindrances appear, they will be aware of it immediately, so will not act by following demon's powers. They can destroy various demonic obstacles so the merits and virtues they are cultivating will not be hindered.

"Well-Appearing One, as one creates uninterrupted karmas with his uninterrupted mind, the reciprocal influences between karmas and mind will make one's actions so powerful that no one can subjugate. So are the great bodhisattvas. As they dwell in their own stages motionlessly and without differentiation, no heavenly beings, human beings, asuras, and so forth can influence them. Why? It is because these great bodhisattvas have very solid minds; they have entered onto

the bodhisattva path of nonarising and will not regress. They have transcended the heavenly beings, human beings, demons, Brahmas, and asuras. They have achieved superior supernatural powers of bodhisattva and can assist sentient beings to mature and dignify and purify Buddha lands. They can travel from one Buddha country to the other to make offerings respectfully to esteem and acclaim various Buddhas and their disciples. They will hear correct dharma in various Buddhas' places and plant virtuous roots. They will also ask bodhisattvas about the meanings of the dharma.

"Well-Appearing One, these great bodhisattvas have dwelled in their current stages to cultivate prajna paramita and other virtuous dharmas. Whenever demonic hindrances arise, they promptly recognize them and refuse to satisfy demons' wishes. Rather, they will expediently gather all instances of demonic actions, and with a single powerful attack destroy them all. They are not confused or skeptical about their current stages. Why? These great bodhisattvas know that all dharmas are absorbed by reality. They also fully understand that reality is neither one nor many; in reality, differentiation does not exist. Because they do not have puzzles and doubts about reality, they are not hesitant about their current stages.

"Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas will not regress in reality when they are reborn in different forms. They will not revert to the stage of voice-hearer or self-enlightened one. Why? These great bodhisattvas fully understand that the characteristics of all dharmas are empty, and in emptiness, they do not see any dharma that arises or extinguishes, or any dharma that is contaminated or purified.

"Well-Appearing One, even after being reborn in another body, these great bodhisattvas will not think they should stop pursuing the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. Why? They have fully understood that the emptiness of the characteristics of all dharmas is the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.

"Well-Appearing One, if these great bodhisattvas dwell in their current stages and do not follow other connections, their current stages will not be harmed or destroyed. Why? It is because these great bodhisattvas have achieved the perfect knowledge of motionlessness and nonregression; they cannot be moved by any negative conditions.

"Well-Appearing One, one demon pretended to be the Buddha and came to the great bodhisattvas' places, saying, 'Now you must look for arhat effect, terminate forever various flaws, and enter nirvana. You have not been granted the prophecy of attaining the great bodhi, nor have you realized and attained the dharma forbearance of nonarising. You do not have the actions, features, and forms of the great bodhisattva of nonregression, so the Thus-Comer will not confer on you the prophecy of attaining the great bodhi. No one will be conferred the prophecy by the Buddha unless they have achieved the actions, features, and forms of the great bodhisattva without regression.'

"Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas do not withdraw, nor are frightened, scared, or drowned when hearing these words, they must have already realized this, 'I had been conferred in the past by the Buddha the prophecy of attaining the great bodhi. Why? If the bodhisattvas have achieved such superior dharmas, they certainly will be conferred by the Thus-Comer, One Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened One the prophecy of attaining the great bodhi. I had achieved such superior dharmas in the past, it does not make sense that the Thus-Comer, One Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened One did not confer such prophecy on me. Therefore, I must have been conferred such prophecy in the past at various Buddhas' places."

"Well-Appearing One, one evil demon or demon's messenger pretended to be the Buddha and came to confer on the bodhisattvas the prophecy of attaining the stage of voice-hearer or the stage of self-enlightened one, and said 'Why do you bother to suffer in reincarnation to pursue the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi? You must realize and attain nirvana without remainder quickly to leave birth and death forever and enjoy ultimate peace and blessing.'

"Well-Appearing One, after hearing these words, the bodhisattvas thought, 'This must be a demon or his messenger pretending to be a Buddha to disturb my mind by conferring on me the prophecy of attaining voice-hearer or self-enlightened one to hinder me from the pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. Why? No Buddha will teach bodhisattvas to discard the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi and revert to the stage of voice-hearer or self-enlightened one.'

"Well-Appearing One, if the demon or his messenger pretended to be the Buddha and said to the bodhisattvas of nonregression, 'The sutras of great vehicle you accept and embrace are not taught by the Buddha or his disciples; they are counterfeited by various evil demons or other-path believers. You should not accept, embrace, read, and recite them.' Upon hearing these words, the bodhisattvas thought, 'This must be the evil demon or associates who wanted to hinder me from the pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, so they said that these fathomless sutras are not taught by the Buddha or by his disciples. Why? No one will be able to attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi apart from these sutras.'

"Well-Appearing One, you must know that these great bodhisattvas have dwelled peacefully in the stage of nonregression, and various Buddhas in the past had conferred on them the prophecy of attaining the great bodhi. Why? These great bodhisattvas have possessed various actions, features, and forms the great bodhisattvas of nonregression own. If the bodhisattvas achieve these actions, features, and forms, they must have been conferred by the Buddha the prophecy of attaining the great bodhi. They must have reached the stage of nonregression so they are aware of what the demons are doing. Well-Appearing One, these are the actions, features, and forms of the great bodhisattvas without regression.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, all great bodhisattvas of nonregression will risk their lives to protect and support the correct dharma, not to mention risk their treasures, properties, friends, and family to protect the correct dharma. These great bodhisattvas always think, 'I would rather renounce relatives, friends, treasures, properties, and my own life, but I will never renounce the correct dharma of various Buddhas. Why? The relatives, friends, treasures, properties, and life can be easily obtained in each of one's lives to come, but one can encounter correct dharma of various Buddhas only once in hundreds of thousands of koti nayuta kalpas. Once encountering and attaining the correct dharma, you will gain great benefits and happiness for a very long time. Therefore, I should keep and protect it diligently and assiduously.' Well-Appearing One, when protecting the correct dharma, the great bodhisattvas should think, 'I protect the correct dharma not only for the correct dharma of one Buddha, two Buddhas, or hundreds of thousands of Buddhas, but for the correct dharma of various Buddhas of the ten directions in the past, future, and present so the correct dharma will not be damaged.'"

(The Buddha gave more instances showing the characteristics of great bodhisattva without regression so that the great-vehicle practitioner can easily follow.)

Meanwhile, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, “World-Honored One, what is the correct dharma of various Buddhas? How do great bodhisattvas protect and support the correct dharma at the risk of their lives?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “As all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones teach the emptiness of all dharmas for the bodhisattvas, they are teaching the correct dharma of the Buddhas. The foolish and ignorant ones have criticized, slandered, and argued that this is not the dharma; this is not the vinaya (the laws and precepts for the monastics); this is not the holy teaching given by the teacher of heavenly and human beings; and those who cultivate this dharma cannot attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi or realize the permanent tranquility, peace, and happiness of nirvana. Therefore, these great bodhisattvas are determined to risk their bodies and lives to support and protect this dharma. They always think, ‘The emptiness of all dharmas that the Thus-Comer teaches is a real refuge that various sentient beings should take. If the bodhisattvas cultivate and learn this dharma, they will realize the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly. They will bring relief to all sentient beings to let them get rid of birth, old age, illness, and death and attain ultimate and permanent happiness of nirvana. I should risk my body and even my life to support and protect this dharrma.’ The great bodhisattvas will think again, ‘I also can be considered as a future Buddha. I have been conferred by the Buddha the prophecy of attaining the great bodhi in the future. Because of this cause and condition, the correct dharma of various Buddhas is my dharma; I should risk my body and life to support and protect the dharma. When I become a Buddha in the future, I will also teach the emptiness of all dharmas for various sentient beings.’ Well-Appearing One, these great bodhisattvas have seen the justice and benefits of the dharma, so they will support and protect the correct dharma even if they must sacrifice their bodies and lives. They will do this tirelessly until they attain the bodhi. These are also the actions, features, and forms of the great bodhisattvas without regression.

(The Buddha explained the meaning of the correct dharma of the Buddha and instructed how great bodhisattvas should protect correct dharma.)

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, when hearing the correct dharma taught by the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones, all great bodhisattvas of nonregression will not be skeptical or puzzled. They will retain it in their minds and will not forget it or lose it until attaining the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. Why? These great bodhisattvas have already realized and attained the dharani.”

At that time, Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, “World-Honored One, what kind of dharani have these great bodhisattvas realized and attained so they will not doubt or forget the correct dharma, but will accept and embrace it after hearing the teaching of the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones?

The Buddha replied, “Well-Appearing One, these great bodhisattvas have attained the inexhaustible storage of dharani, the ocean seal of dharani, the lotus storage of dharani, and so forth, so they are not puzzled or skeptical when hearing the correct dharma taught by the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones. They will further accept and embrace the correct dharma and never forget it.”

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, “The great bodhisattvas are not puzzled and skeptical about the correct dharma taught by the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones; they accept and embrace it and never forget it. Can they also do so when hearing the correct dharma taught by the bodhisattvas, self-enlightened ones, voice-hearers, deities, dragons, yaksas, asuras, and so forth?”

The Buddha replied, “Well-Appearing One, these great bodhisattvas can understand the spoken and written languages along with their meanings without puzzle and doubt given by all kinds of sentient beings and will never forget them in endless future. Why? It is because these great bodhisattvas have attained the inexhaustible storage of dharani, the ocean seal of dharani, and so forth. They can remember all such teachings and never forget. Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas have achieved such actions, features, and forms, you must know that they are the great bodhisattvas without regression.”

Chapter 55

The Fathomless Meaning

Section 1

(In the Second Assembly)

At that time, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, “World-Honored One, the great bodhisattvas of nonregression thus have achieved very extensive, great, immeasurable, countless, boundless, and inconceivable superior merits and virtues.”

The Buddha replied, “Yes, Well-Appearing One, it is as you say. The great bodhisattvas of nonregression have achieved extensive, great, immeasurable, countless, boundless, and inconceivable superior merits and virtues. Why? Well-Appearing One, these great bodhisattvas have attained immeasurable and boundless superior knowledge not shared by voice-hearers and self-enlightened ones. Dwelling in this knowledge, these great bodhisattvas are able to initiate the four unhindered understandings. Because of these four unhindered understandings, all heavenly beings, human beings, asuras, and so forth of the world cannot challenge them to deplete their wisdom and ability of debate.”

At that time, Well-Appearing One said to the Buddha again, “World-Honored One, you have taught about the actions, features, and forms of the great bodhisattvas of nonregression for as many kalpas as the sands of the Ganges to manifest what the boundless superior merits and virtues these great bodhisattvas have achieved. We beseech you, Thus-Comer, that you can also teach about their fathomless meanings so that various great bodhisattvas can dwell peacefully in them to cultivate and fulfill quickly giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita; internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature; realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable; the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering; the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path; the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless

concentrations; the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations; the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration; the dharani gates and samadhi gates; the five eyes and six supernatural powers; the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power; the thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features; staying in correct mindfulness and dwelling in equanimity at all times; and the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena."

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, "Excellent, excellent! Today you have besought the Thus-Comer, One Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened One to teach about the fathomless meanings for various great bodhisattvas, so that they are able to dwell peacefully in them and cultivate and fulfill quickly the merits and virtues caused by peaceful dwelling. You must know, Well-Appearing One, the fathomless meaning is emptiness, formlessness, nonaspiration, nondoing, nonarising, nonextinction, tranquility, nirvana, realness, dharma realm, dharma nature, reality, and so forth. You must know, Well-Appearing One, all these designated names are the loci of the fathomless meanings. They are the manifestation of the fathomless meanings of nirvana."

At that time, Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, "Does only nirvana have the fathomless meanings, or do the rest of the dharmas also have the fathomless meanings?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "The rest of the dharmas are also named the fathomless. Why? Well-Appearing One, matter is fathomless, and feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness are also fathomless. The eye sphere, ear sphere, and so forth, and conscious sphere are fathomless. The sight sphere, sound sphere, and so forth, and mental-image sphere are fathomless. The eye realm, ear realm, and so forth, and conscious realm are fathomless. The sight realm, sound realm, and so forth, and mental-image realm are fathomless. The eye consciousness realm, ear consciousness realm, and so forth, and conscious consciousness realm are fathomless. The eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact are fathomless. The feelings produced by eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact are fathomless. The earth realm, water realm, and so forth, and consciousness realm are fathomless.

Ignorance, action, consciousness, and so forth, and old age and death are fathomless. Giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita are fathomless. The noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering are fathomless. The four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path are fathomless. The four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations are fathomless. The eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations are fathomless. The liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration are fathomless. The dharani gates and samadhi gates are fathomless. The ten stages of the three vehicles and the ten stages of bodhisattva are fathomless. The five eyes and six supernatural powers are fathomless. The Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power are fathomless. The thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features are fathomless. Staying in correct mindfulness and dwelling in equanimity at all times are fathomless. Stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi are fathomless. The perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena are fathomless. All great bodhisattva actions and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas are also fathomless."

(The Buddha said that not only nirvana is fathomless, but all dharmas are also fathomless.)

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Chapter 55

The fathomless Meaning

Section 2

(In the Second Assembly

At that time, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, “World-Honored One, why is matter fathomless? Why are feeling, thinking, action, consciousness, and so forth, and all great bodhisattva actions fathomless? Why is the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas also fathomless?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “Because the realness of matter is fathomless, matter is fathomless; because the realness of feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness is fathomless, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness are fathomless. And so on, because the realness of all great bodhisattva actions is fathomless, all great bodhisattva actions are fathomless; because the realness of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas is fathomless, the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas is fathomless.”

(The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One that because the realness of various dharmas is fathomless, the dharmas are fathomless.)

Meanwhile, Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, “Why is the realness of matter fathomless? Why is the realness of feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness fathomless? Why is the realness of all great bodhisattva actions fathomless? Why is the realness of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas fathomless?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “The realness of matter is neither with matter nor apart from matter, so it is fathomless; the realness of feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness is neither with nor apart from feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness, so it is

fathomless. The realness of all great bodhisattva actions is neither with nor apart from all great bodhisattva actions, so it is fathomless; the realness of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas is neither with nor apart from the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas, so it is fathomless."

(The Buddha further explained that because the realness of various dharmas is neither with nor apart from the dharmas, the realness is fathomless.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One said to the Buddha, "The Thus-Comer is unique, subtle, exquisite, and expedient, who has manifested nirvana for the great bodhisattvas of nonregression by negating matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness, and so forth, and all great bodhisattva actions and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas. The World-Honored One is unique, subtle, exquisite, and expedient, who has manifested nirvana for the great bodhisattvas of nonregression by negating all dharmas that are material or immaterial, visible or invisible, substantial or unsubstantial, of the world or beyond the world, shared or not shared by other vehicles, flawed or flawless, and conditioned or unconditioned."

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, "Yes, it is as you say. The Thus-Comer is unique, subtle, exquisite, and expedient, who has manifested nirvana for the great bodhisattvas of nonregression by negating matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness, and so forth, and all great bodhisattva actions and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas. The World-Honored One is unique, subtle, exquisite, and expedient, who has manifested nirvana for the great bodhisattvas of nonregression by negating all dharmas that are material or immaterial, visible or invisible, substantial or unsubstantial, of the world or beyond the world, shared or not shared by other vehicles, flawed or flawless, and conditioned or unconditioned.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas should reflect carefully on, measure, evaluate, contemplate, and investigate various fathomless spheres based on the essential meaning correspondent with prajna paramita. They should think, 'I must dwell and learn as the fathomless prajna paramita has taught me.' Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas can reflect on, measure, contemplate, and investigate carefully the very profound meaning correspondent with the fathomless prajna paramita and dwell and learn as they are taught by the fathomless prajna paramita, then these great bodhisattvas, because of their diligent

cultivation and learning, will initiate a mindfulness based on the fathomless prajna paramita to absorb immeasurable, countless, and boundless virtuous roots; transcend numberless kalpas of reincarnation in birth and death; and realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly. Let alone if they can cultivate prajna paramita incessantly and always dwell in the mind correspondent with the bodhi. Well-Appearing One, a man eagerly awaited a date with a pretty woman, but the woman could not show up for some reason. His desire intensified. Well-Appearing One, what do you think will happen to his unfulfilled longing?"

(The Buddha said that the Thus-Comer has subtly and expediently revealed nirvana by negating the dharmas for the great bodhisattvas. They should learn and dwell as the fathomless prajna paramita teaches to absorb various virtuous roots, transcend birth and death, and attain the unsurpassed bodhi.)

"World-Honored One, this man will focus on the woman and wonder, 'Why didn't she come to meet me?'"

"Well-Appearing One, what do you think about this? Would this man have a strong desire for her consistently?"

"World-Honored One, yes, he would be quite driven by lust."

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, "If the great bodhisattvas have initiated a mindfulness to learn as they are taught by the fathomless prajna paramita, then the kalpas of reincarnation in birth and death that they transcend will be as many as the desires that this man had in one day and night. You must know, Well-Appearing One, if these great bodhisattvas cultivate and learn by following the fathomless essential meaning of prajna paramita, they will immediately get rid of all flaws and sins that once hindered their pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. The bodhisattvas will be able to realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly if they can cultivate and learn assiduously by following the fathomless prajna paramita. Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas can dwell as the fathomless prajna paramita teaches, the merits and virtues gained by them in one day and night will be too many to be contained by all Buddha lands of the large threefold thousand-world that are as many as the sands of the Ganges if the merits and virtues could be measured

quantitatively. In comparison, the rest of the merits and virtues that fill as many Buddha worlds of the large thousand-world as the sands of the Ganges will be much less than the merits and virtues gained by these great bodhisattvas for one day and one night by one hundredth, one thousandth, one hundred-thousandth, and so forth, and one upanisadam-api.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas stay away from prajna paramita to practice giving and make offerings to the triple gems, the Buddha, the dharma, and the sangha, for as many kalpas as the sands of the Ganges, what do you think about this? Will these great bodhisattvas gain many blessings?"

Well-Appearing One replied, "Yes, World-Honored One, the blessing gained by them will be numberless and boundless."

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, "If the great bodhisattvas learn as they are taught by the fathomless prajna paramita for one day and night, the merits and virtues thus gained will be much more than the former ones. Well-Appearing One, the fathomless prajna paramita is the path that various great bodhisattvas should follow. By walking on this path, the great bodhisattvas will reach the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly.

(The Buddha in these paragraphs again stressed the importance of the fathomless prajna paramita. It is superior to other path; it is the only path that great bodhisattvas should follow for reaching the unsurpassed bodhi.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas stay away from prajna paramita to practice giving and make offerings to stream-enterers, once-returners, nonreturners, arhats, self-enlightened ones, bodhisattvas, and various Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones for as many kalpas as the sands of the Ganges, Well-Appearing One, what do you think about this? Will these great bodhisattvas gain many blessings?"

Well-Appearing One replied, "World-Honored One, the blessings gained by these great bodhisattvas will be numberless and boundless.

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, “If the great bodhisattvas learn as they are taught by the fathomless prajna paramita for one day and night, the merits and virtues gained by them will be much more than the former ones. Why? Well-Appearing One, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas will transcend the stage of voice-hearer and the stage of self-enlightened one and enter onto the bodhisattva path of nonarising before long. They will further cultivate bodhisattva actions step by step, and realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi soon.

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas stay far away from prajna paramita to diligently and assiduously cultivate and learn giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna paramitas for as many kalpas as the sands of the Ganges, then Well-Appearing One, what do you think about this? Will the great bodhisattvas gain many blessings?”

Well-Appearing One replied, “World-Honored One, the blessings gained by them will be numberless and boundless.”

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, “If the great bodhisattvas dwell as they are taught by the fathomless prajna paramita to diligently and assiduously cultivate and learn giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna for just one day and night, then the merits and virtues gained by them will be much more than the former ones. Why? Well-Appearing One, it is because the fathomless prajna paramita is the mother of great bodhisattvas. Why? The fathomless prajna paramita can give birth to great bodhisattvas. All great bodhisattvas can fulfill the Buddha dharma quickly if they cultivate based on the fathomless prajna paramita.

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas stay far away from prajna paramita to practice giving to all sentient beings for as many great kalpas as the sands of the Ganges, what do you think about this? Will these great bodhisattvas gain many blessings?”

Well-Appearing One replied. “World-Honored One, the blessings gained by them will be numberless and boundless.”

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, “If the great bodhisattvas dwell as they are taught by the fathomless prajna paramita to practice giving to all sentient beings for one day and

night, then the merits and virtues gained by them will be much more than the former ones. Why? Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas are not apart from prajna paramita, they are not apart from the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. Therefore, Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas should not stay away from the fathomless prajna paramita when they intend to achieve the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas stay far away from prajna paramita to cultivate giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita; dwell in internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature; dwell in realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable; dwell in the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering; cultivate the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path; cultivate the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations; cultivate the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations; cultivate the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration; cultivate the stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilements, and so forth, and the stage of dharma cloud; cultivate all dharani gates and all samadhi gates; cultivate the five eyes and the six supernatural powers; cultivate the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power; cultivate to stay in correct mindfulness and dwell in equanimity at all times; and cultivate the perfect knowledge of everything, the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena for as many great kalpas as the sands of the Ganges, then Well-Appearing One, what do you think about this? Will these great bodhisattvas gain many blessings because of this cause and condition?"

Well-Appearing One replied, "World-Honored One, the blessings gained by them will be numberless and boundless."

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, "If the great bodhisattvas dwell as they are taught by the fathomless prajna paramita to cultivate giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena for just one day and night, then the merits and virtues thus gained will be much more than the former ones. Why? Well-Appearing One, if

the great bodhisattvas are not far away from prajna paramita, it will not regress in the pursuit of the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. If they are far away from prajna paramita, it is for sure that they will regress in the pursuit of the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. Therefore, Well-Appearing One, when intending to attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, the great bodhisattvas should not stay away from the fathomless prajna paramita.

(The Buddha explained why great bodhisattvas should not stay away from prajna paramita.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas stay far away from prajna paramita to practice various kinds of property giving and dharma giving, stay in a spacious and quiet place to concentrate and reflect, and transfer the blessings thus accumulated along with all sentient beings equally toward the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi for as many kalpas as the sands of the Ganges, then Well-Appearing One, what do you think about this? Will these great bodhisattvas gain many blessings because of this cause and condition?"

Well-Appearing One replied, "World-Honored One, the blessings gained by them will be numberless and boundless."

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, "If the great bodhisattvas dwell as they are taught by the fathomless prajna paramita to practice all kinds of property giving and dharma giving, stay in a spacious and quiet place to concentrate and reflect, and transfer all blessings thus accumulated along with all sentient beings equally toward the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi for just one day and night, then the merits and virtues thus gained will be much more than the former ones. Why? Well-Appearing One, the transference based on the fathomless prajna paramita is superior to all others, while the transference far apart from prajna paramita is inferior. Why? Well-Appearing One, the fathomless prajna paramita is the leader of all factors for enlightenment. Therefore, Well-Appearing One, when intending to attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, the great bodhisattvas should not stay far away from the fathomless prajna paramita to transfer the merits and virtues along with all sentient beings equally toward the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas stay far away from prajna paramita to joyfully participate in the merits and virtues of all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of

Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones and their disciples in the past, future, and present, and transfer the merits and virtues thus derived along with all sentient beings equally toward the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, what do you think about this? Will these great bodhisattvas gain many blessings because of this cause and condition?"

Well-Appearing One replied, "World-Honored One, the blessings gained by them will be numberless and boundless."

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, "If the great bodhisattvas dwell as they are taught by the fathomless prajna paramita to joyfully participate in the merits and virtues of all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones and their disciples in the past, future, and present, and transfer the merits and virtues thus derived along with all sentient beings equally toward the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, then the merits and virtues thus gained will be much more than the former ones. Why? Well-Appearing One, the fathomless prajna paramita is the mentor of all virtuous roots, merits, and virtues. Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas would like to attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, they should not stay away from the fathomless prajna paramita when joyfully participating in the merits and virtues and transferring them toward the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi."

(The Buddha instructed that great bodhisattvas should stay with prajna paramita when participating in and transferring merits and virtues toward the unsurpassed bodhi.)

At that time, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One said to the Buddha, "World-Honored One, as the Buddha says, various actions are caused by differentiation, produced by delusions, and none of them is real. How can these great bodhisattvas practice property giving and so forth to attain numberless, countless, and boundless blessings? World-Honored One, as the property giving, dharma giving, and so forth are made by differentiations, they cannot bring about correct views, and the practitioners will not enter onto the correct path of nonarising and attain the stream-entry effect, once-return effect, nonreturn effect, arhat effect, self-enlightenment bodhi, or the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi."

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, “Yes, it is as you say. Various actions are made by differentiation and arise from delusions; they are not real. Therefore, the blessings caused by property giving, dharma giving, and so forth based on differentiation cannot bring about real and correct views and thus will not lead to correct path of nonarising and assist one to achieve the stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. Well-Appearing One, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas have understood that all kinds of giving with differentiation are empty and nonexistent; they are illusory and unreal. Why? Well-Appearing One, I have said that all dharmas, including property giving, dharma giving, and so forth, based on differentiation are empty, nonexistent, illusory, and unreal. Why? Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas have learned internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature well, and understand various kinds of emptiness thoroughly as taught by the Buddha. Well-Appearing One, these great bodhisattvas have dwelled peacefully in emptiness and contemplated and investigated the blessings produced by giving practice. They are aware that these blessings are accumulated based on differentiation, and are empty, nonexistent, illusory, and unreal. If the great bodhisattvas stay with the fathomless prajna paramita, they will gain numberless, measureless, and boundless blessings. If they can activate correct views, they will enter onto the correct path of nonarising, and finally attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.”

(The Buddha further taught the right way for great bodhisattvas to practice the fathomless prajna paramita based on the realization that the blessings caused by differentiation are empty and unreal.)

At that time, Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, “Are the numberless, measureless, and boundless different?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “Numberless means an unattainable number, applicable to both conditioned and unconditioned realms. Measureless refers to unattainable measurement, relevant to dharmas in the past, future, or the present. Boundless indicates borders that cannot be identified and measured.”

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, “World-Honored One, is it based on specific causes and conditions to say that matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness are numberless, measureless, and boundless?”

The Buddha replied, “Yes, it is based on a specific cause and condition to say that matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness are numberless, measureless, and boundless.”

At that time, Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, “Based on what cause and condition to say that matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness are numberless, measureless, and boundless?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “As the self-natures of matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness are empty, matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness are numberless, measureless, and boundless.”

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, “Are only the self-nature of matters of matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness empty? Are the self-natures of all dharmas also empty?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “Didn’t I say before that the self-natures of all dharmas are empty?”

Well-Appearing One replied, “The Buddha did say that the self-natures of all dharmas are empty, and I have also understood the meaning of the Buddha’s words. Because various sentient beings do not know and are not awakened to the meaning, I am inquiring once more. World-Honored One, the emptiness of the self-natures of all dharmas is endless, numberless, measureless, and boundless. World-Honored One, in the emptiness of the self-natures of all dharmas, the end is unattainable, number is unattainable, measurement is unattainable, and boundaries are also unattainable. Because of this cause and condition, we say that the meanings and the words of the endless, numberless, measureless, and boundless are not different.”

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, “Yes, it is as you say. The endless, numberless, measureless, and boundless are not different either in their meanings or words. They all manifest the emptiness of all dharmas. Well-Appearing One, the emptiness of all dharmas is unspeakable,

but the Thus-Comer has expediently described it as endless, numberless, measureless, boundless, empty, formless, without aspiration, without making, without arising, without extinction, apart from contamination, tranquil, nirvana, realness, and reality."

(The Buddha listed the statements used to expediently describe the same meaning of the emptiness of all dharmas although it is unspeakable.)

At that time, Well-Appearing One said to the Buddha, "World-Honored One, expedient skillfulness is unique and unusual. The real forms of various dharmas are unspeakable, but they are manifested and explained to sentient beings expediently and skillfully. World-Honored One, if my understanding of the Buddha's teaching is correct, all dharma natures are unspeakable."

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "Yes, you are correct. All dharma natures are unspeakable. Why? It is because all dharma natures are empty in the final analysis, and emptiness in the final analysis is unspeakable."

(The Buddha explained why all dharma natures are unspeakable.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, "Does unspeakable meaning have addition and subtraction?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "The unspeakable meaning has no addition or subtraction."

At that time, Well-Appearing One said to the Buddha, "As the unspeakable meaning has no addition or subtraction, giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita have no addition and subtraction. The four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path have no addition and subtraction. The four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations have no addition and subtraction. The eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and universal contemplations have no addition and subtraction. The liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration have no addition and subtraction. The stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilements, and so forth, and the stage of dharma cloud have no addition and subtraction. The dharani gates and the samadhi gates have no addition and

subtraction. The five eyes and the six supernatural powers have no addition and subtraction. The Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power have no addition and subtraction. Staying in correct mindfulness and dwelling in equanimity at all times have no addition and subtraction. The perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena have no addition and subtraction either. World-Honored One, if the six paramitas, four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena have no addition and subtraction, then all these dharmas should be nonexistent. If they are nonexistent, how can the great bodhisattvas cultivate the six paramitas, the four bases of mindfulness, and so forth and realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi?"

(Well-Appearing One's question is if all dharmas are without addition and subtraction and thus they are nonexistent, then how can the great bodhisattvas cultivate the six paramitas and so forth to realize the unsurpassed bodhi?"

The Buddha replied to Well Appearing On, "If the unspeakable meaning has no addition and subtraction, the six paramitas, four bases of mindfulness, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena should have no addition and subtraction. If the unspeakable meaning is nonexistent, then the six paramitas, the four bases of mindfulness, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena are also nonexistent. Well-Appearing One, when cultivating and dwelling peacefully in prajna paramita expediently and skillfully, the great bodhisattvas should not think, 'I have added to or remove from prajna paramitas, meditation paramita, and so forth, and giving paramita.' Rather, they should think that prajna paramita, meditation paramita, and so forth, and giving paramita are only the names and ideas. Well-Appearing One, when cultivating giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita, these great bodhisattvas should stay in a mind in accord with giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita to initiate thinking and virtuous roots, and transfer them along with various sentient beings equally toward the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi as the Buddha does in transferring toward the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi in a subtle and fathomless way. They will realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi because of the powers of the expedient and skillful transference."

(The Buddha replied that the great bodhisattvas should cultivate the six paramitas and so forth with the thought that all these dharmas are only the names and ideas. They should stay in a mind in accord with prajna paramita in cultivating various superior holy dharmas and transferring the merits and virtues toward the unsurpassed bodhi.)

At that time, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "World-Honored One, what is the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "The realness of all dharmas is the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi."

Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, "What is meant by the realness of all dharmas when you say that the realness of all dharmas is the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "The realness of matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness is the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. The realness of the eye sphere, ear sphere, and so forth, and conscious sphere is the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. The realness of the sight sphere, sound sphere, and so forth, and mental-image sphere is the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. The realness of the eye realm, ear realm, and so forth, and conscious realm is the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. The realness of the sight realm, sound realm, and so forth, and mental-image realm is the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. The realness of the eye consciousness realm, ear consciousness realm, and so forth, and conscious consciousness realm is the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. The realness of the eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact is the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. The realness of the feelings produced by eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact is the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. The realness of the earth realm, water realm, and so forth, and consciousness realm is the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. The realness of ignorance, action, consciousness, and so forth, and old age and death is the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. The realness of giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita is the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. The realness of internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature is the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. The realness of

the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering is the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. The realness of the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path is the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. The realness of the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations is the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. The realness of the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations is the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. The realness of the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration is the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. The realness of the stage of pure contemplation, stage of eight-forbearance, and so forth, and stage of Thus-Comer is the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. The realness of the stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilements, and so forth, and stage of dharma cloud is the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. The realness of dharani gates and samadhi gates is the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. The realness of five eyes and six supernatural powers is the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. The realness of the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power is the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. The realness of staying in correct mindfulness and dwelling in equanimity at all times is the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. The realness of stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi is the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. The realness of the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena is the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. The realness of the birth and death and the realness of nirvana are the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.

(The Buddha explained the meaning of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.)

"Well-Appearing One, as realness is without addition or subtraction, so the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas is without addition or subtraction. Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas are not apart from prajna paramita; they always enjoy dwelling peacefully in the realness of all dharmas. They do not see the dharmas increase or decrease. Because of this cause and condition, the unspeakable meaning does not increase or decrease, so giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna paramitas, and so forth, and

the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena have no addition or subtraction. Because the unspeakable meaning is nonexistent, the six paramitas, four bases of mindfulness, and so forth, and perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena are also nonexistent. Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas adopt nonaddition, nonsubtraction, and nonattainment as skillful means to accumulate various merits and virtues when cultivating prajna paramita, they will be able to realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi."

(The Buddha further taught that the great bodhisattvas should view all dharmas as without addition, subtraction, and attainment to cultivate prajna paramita and accumulate various merits and virtues to realize the unsurpassed bodhi.)

At that time, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "World-Honored One, if the great bodhisattvas adopt nonaddition, nonsubtraction, and nonattainment as skillful means to cultivate prajna paramita and accumulate various merits and virtues, and thus realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, then do they realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi with their initial minds or with their latter minds? World-Honored One, when the initial mind arises, the latter mind has not arisen yet, so these two minds do not combine. When the latter mind arises, the initial mind has passed away, so they cannot be combined either. Given the truth that they are not combined, how can the great bodhisattvas accumulate virtuous roots? If the virtuous roots cannot be accumulated, how can the superior knowledge arise? If the superior knowledge cannot arise, how can the great bodhisattvas realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi?"

(Well-Appearing One's question now is that as the former mind and the later mind do not arise simultaneously so they cannot combine, how can great bodhisattvas accumulate their merits and virtues? How can they develop superior knowledge to achieve unsurpassed bodhi?)

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "Let use analogies to clarify. Well-Appearing One, what do you think about this: when light a lamp, is the wick ignited by the initial flame or the latter flame?"

Well-Appearing One replied, “My understanding is that it is not ignited by either the initial or latter flame, nor apart from them.”

The Buddha asked Well-Appearing One, “What do you think about this? Is the wick lit when the lamp burns?”

Well-Appearing One replied, “It seems so.”

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, “So do the great bodhisattvas. When cultivating prajna paramita, they do not realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi with or apart from the initial mind, nor do they realize and attain it with or apart from the latter mind. The great bodhisattvas can realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi because they have made various virtuous roots grow and increase.

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas have cultivated prajna paramita since the time they began to aspire to it, then they fulfill the ten stages, and finally they realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.”

At that time, Well-Appearing One asked, “World-Honored One, what are the ten stages that the great bodhisattvas fulfill to attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “The great bodhisattvas should cultivate and fulfill the stage of ecstasy, the stage of freedom from defilements, and so forth, and the stage of dharma cloud to attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. They should also learn the stage of pure contemplation, the stage of eight-forbearance, and so forth, and the stage of Thus-Comer so to attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. Well-Appearing One, when diligently cultivating and fulfilling these stages, the great bodhisattvas will be able to realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. They realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi neither because of nor apart from their initial or later mind.”

At that time, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One said to the Buddha, “World-Honored One, the essential meaning of dependent origination that the Thus-Comer teaches is very profound. The Thus-Comer teaches that the great bodhisattvas can attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi neither because of nor apart from their initial mind or latter mind. It

is rather because of cultivating prajna paramita to foster virtuous roots and fulfill the ten stages that the great bodhisattvas can realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi."

The Buddha asked Well-Appearing One, "What do you think about this? If a mind has disappeared, will it arise again?"

Well-Appearing One replied, "No, World-Honored One."

The Buddha asked Well-Appearing One, "What do you think about this? If a mind has arisen, will it disappear?"

Well-Appearing One replied, "Yes. If a mind has arisen, it certainly will disappear."

The Buddha asked Well-Appearing One again, "Do you think the mind will definitely not disappear?"

Well-Appearing One replied, "No, World-Honored One."

The Buddha asked Well-Appearing One, "Do you think the mind dwells as the realness of the mind does?"

Well-Appearing One replied, "Yes, World-Honored One. The mind dwells as the realness of the mind does."

The Buddha asked Well-Appearing One, "What do you think about this? If the mind dwells as the realness does, is it permanent as realness?"

Well-Appearing One replied, "No, World-Honored One."

The Buddha asked Well-Appearing One, "What do you think about this? Is the realness of various dharmas fathomless?"

Well-Appearing One replied, "Yes, World-Honored One, the realness of various dharmas is fathomless."

The Buddha asked Well-Appearing One, "What do you think about this? Is the mind with realness?"

Well-Appearing One replied, “No, World-Honored One.”

The Buddha asked Well-Appearing One, “What do you think about this? Is the mind apart from realness?”

Well-Appearing One replied, “No, World-Honored One.”

The Buddha asked Well-Appearing One, “What do you think about this? Is realness with the mind?”

Well-Appearing One replied, “No, World-Honored One.”

The Buddha asked Well-Appearing One, “What do you think about this? Is realness apart from the mind?”

Well-Appearing One replied, “No, World-Honored One.”

The Buddha asked Well-Appearing One, “What do you think about this? Can realness see realness?”

Well-Appearing One replied, “No, World-Honored One.”

The Buddha asked Well-Appearing One, “What do you think about this? If the great bodhisattvas practice this way, do they practice the fathomless prajna paramita?”

Well-Appearing One replied, “Yes, World-Honored One. If the great bodhisattvas practice this way, they do practice the fathomless prajna paramita.”

(The Buddha taught that if the great bodhisattvas practice the fathomless prajna paramita with the realization that the mind is neither with realness nor apart realness, and realness is neither with not apart from the mind, they do practice the fathomless prajna paramita.)

The Buddha asked Well-Appearing One, “What do you think about this? If the great bodhisattvas practice this way, where do they practice?”

Well-Appearing One replied, “If great bodhisattvas practice this way, they practice nowhere. Why? World-Honored One, if great bodhisattvas dwell in realness when practicing the

fathomless prajna paramita, no mind or place will be present. Why? World-Honored One, if great bodhisattvas dwell in realness when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, there will be no practice, no place of practice, and no practitioner."

The Buddha asked Well-Appearing One, "What do you think about this? When practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, what will the great bodhisattvas practice?"

Well-Appearing One replied, "When practicing prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas will practice the ultimate truth. In this ultimate truth, the practice and the place of practice are not present. It is because the one who can grasp and those to be grasped are unattainable."

The Buddha asked Well-Appearing One, "What do you think about this? When practicing fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas will practice the ultimate truth without grasping the forms, but will they practice the forms?"

Well-Appearing One replied, "No, World-Honored One."

The Buddha asked Well-Appearing One, "What do you think about this? When practicing fathomless prajna paramita, do the great bodhisattvas cast off the forms in practicing the ultimate truth?"

Well-Appearing One replied, "No, World-Honored One."

The Buddha asked Well-Appearing One, "What do you think about this? When cultivating fathomless prajna paramita, do the great bodhisattvas practice the ultimate truth with a thought of casting off the forms?"

Well-Appearing One replied, "No, World-Honored One."

The Buddha asked Well-Appearing One, "When practicing fathomless prajna paramita, how do great bodhisattvas neither cast off the forms nor have a thought of casting off the forms?"

Well-Appearing One replied, "When practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great do not think, 'I should cast off the forms and the thought of casting off the forms.' Nor do they think, 'I should cast off formlessness and the thought of casting off formlessness.' It is because

they should not differentiate among all kinds of dharmas. World-Honored One, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, these great bodhisattvas can stay away from various differentiations, but because they have not fulfilled the cultivation of the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, four unhindered understandings, great loving-kindness, great compassion, great joy, great equanimity, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power, as well as other numberless and boundless superior merits and virtues, they are unable to realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi for the time being. World-Honored One, these great bodhisattvas have achieved subtle and wonderful expedient skillfulness and are aware that all dharmas are neither formed nor destructed, so should not be grasped or cast off. Why? World-Honored One, these great bodhisattvas have fully understood that the characteristics of all dharmas are empty. World-Honored One, they have dwelled in the emptiness of the characteristics of all dharmas. Being compelled by the powers of aspiration produced by great compassion, the great bodhisattvas have entered the three kinds of samadhi to assist the sentient beings to mature by means of the three concentrations."

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, "Yes, it is as you say."

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "How do the great bodhisattvas enter the three kinds of samadhi to assist the sentient beings to mature?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "When dwelling peacefully in the samadhi of emptiness, the great bodhisattvas have seen that most sentient beings are attached to the 'I' and the associated images, so expediently teach them to dwell peacefully in the samadhi of emptiness. When dwelling in the samadhi of formlessness, the great bodhisattvas have seen that most sentient beings are practicing the forms of the dharmas, so expediently teach them to dwell peacefully in the samadhi of formlessness. When dwelling peacefully in the samadhi of nonaspiration, the great bodhisattvas have seen that most sentient beings love to aspire to something, so expediently teach them to dwell peacefully in the samadhi of nonaspiration. Well-Appearing One, this is how the great bodhisattvas enter the three kinds of samadhi to appropriately assist the sentient beings to mature when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita."

(The Buddha taught the way of entering the three kinds of samadhi to assist the sentient beings to mature.)

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Chapter 56

Practices in Dreams

(In the Second Assembly)

At that time, the long-lived sage Sariputra asked Well-Appearing One, “If the great bodhisattvas practice the three kinds of samadhi in dreams, will they improve their cultivation of the fathomless prajna paramita?”

Well-Appearing One replied, “If the great bodhisattvas practice the three kinds of samadhi during the daytime to improve their cultivation of the fathomless prajna paramita, they will also improve their cultivation of the fathomless prajna paramita in dreams. Why? Sariputra, there is no distinction between daytime when one is awake and nighttime when one is dreaming. Sariputra, thus, if ones practicing prajna paramita in the daytime are named for developing the fathomless prajna paramita, then those practicing prajna paramita in dreams are also named for cultivating the three kinds of samadhi based on the fathomless prajna paramita; so, they will be able to enhance their cultivation of prajna paramita.”

In the meantime, Sariputra asked Well-Appearing One, “If a person makes karmas in dreams, will this person also increase or decrease blessings? The Buddha says that the dharmas in the conditioned realm are illusory and like dreams, then how can they increase or decrease blessings because of making karmas? Isn’t it that the karmas made by the one awake will increase or decrease blessings, but not in dreams?”

Well-Appearing One replied to Sariputra by asking, “A man killed someone when he was awake then recalled it in his dreams and felt excited. Another man also killed someone in his dreams and felt excited when he was awake. What do you think about these two kinds of karmas?”

Meanwhile, Sariputra also asked Well-Appearing One, “The karma or the thinking does not arise unless it is activated by certain conditions. Based on what conditions do the karma and the thinking in the dreams arise?”

Well-Appearing One replied, “The karma and thinking will not arise unless they are activated by conditions whether the person is awake or in dreams. Why? Sariputra, when one sees, hears, feels, or realizes, his awakening wisdom will give rise to pure or contaminated conditions. Without seeing, hearing, feeling, and realization, there will be no awakening wisdom, and no contaminated or pure conditions. Therefore, we must know whether one is awake or in dreams, karma and thinking will arise when conditions are available. Karma and thinking will not arise without conditions.”

In the meantime, Sariputra asked Well-Appearing One, “The Buddha says that karma and thinking are without self-natures, then how can we say that they arise based on the conditions?”

Well-Appearing One replied, “Although the self-natures of karma, thinking, and conditions are empty, one’s mind will grasp and perceive the images with differentiation. So, it is said that karma and thinking with conditions will arise, while karma and thinking without conditions will not.”

Meanwhile Sariputra asked Well-Appearing One again, “If the great bodhisattvas cultivate giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna paramitas in dreams and transfer the virtuous roots thus derived along with various sentient beings equally toward the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, do they really undertake the transference?”

Well-Appearing One replied, “We’d better ask Bodhisattva Maitreya to answer your question. He has been conferred by the Buddha the prophecy of attaining the unsurpassed great bodhi without regression for a long time. He is now in the last phase before becoming a Buddha. He can answer all questions like this.”

Sariputra thus followed Well-Appearing One’s suggestion and respectfully asked Bodhisattva Maitreya this question.

In the meantime, Bodhisattva Maitreya replied to Sariputra, “What does it mean to say that Maitreya can answer this question? Can matter answer? Can feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness answer? Can the emptiness of matter answer? Can the emptiness of feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness answer? Matter cannot answer, and feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness cannot answer either. The emptiness of matter cannot answer, and the emptiness of feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness cannot provide an answer either. Why? Sariputra, I do not see any dharma can answer or can be an answer, nor do I see the time, place, and cause of providing answer. I do not see any dharma can remember or can be remembered, nor do I see the time, place, and cause of remembering. Why? Sariputra, the original natures of all dharmas are empty; they are not existent, not different, and not separate. They are unattainable in the final analysis and reasoning.”

At that time, the long-lived sage Sariputra asked Great bodhisattva Maitreya again, “Did you the benevolent one express what you have realized?”

The Great Bodhisattva Maitreya replied, “What I say is not exactly what I have realized. Why? Sariputra, it is because what I have realized is unspeakable.”

Meanwhile, Sariputra thought, “Bodhisattva Maitreya has very profound and broad wisdom. He has cultivated and fulfilled all kinds of giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna paramita long time ago. He has adopted nonattainment as skillful means to answer all questions easily and perfectly.’

At that time, the Buddha asked Sariputra, “You have realized and attained arhat effect by means of this dharma. Have you seen this dharma nature and thought that it can be spoken?”

Sariputra replied, “No, World-Honored One.”

The Buddha said to Sariputra, “So the dharma nature that various great bodhisattvas have realized is also unspeakable when they practice the fathomless prajna paramita. Sariputra, these great bodhisattvas will not think, ‘I have been conferred the prophecy of attaining the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi because of this dharma.’ Nor do they think, ‘I will realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi because of this dharma.’ Sariputra, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, they are not skeptical and think, ‘Can

I realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi?' Instead, they will think, 'I definitely will realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.' Sariputra, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita and hearing the profound dharma, they are not frightened, scared, terrified, sinking, drowned, worried, or regretful. They certainly know this: I certainly will realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi that I am pursuing to bring benefits and happiness to all sentient beings in the endless future."

(After hearing the dialogues between Well-Appearing One and Sariputra, and the statements of Bodhisattva Maitreya, the Buddha taught that the great bodhisattvas should not be skeptical about the dharma, which means that all existent beings are empty and unattainable and do not arise unless activated by conditions.)

Chapter 57

Fulfilling Aspirations

At that time, the Buddha said to the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One, "A great bodhisattva who practices giving paramita sees that various sentient beings are in hunger and thirst. Their clothes are very old and ragged, they need beds and bedding, and they do not have enough money and property. After seeing all these, the bodhisattva reflected, 'What can I do to bring relief to these sentient beings and assist them to get rid of stinginess and greed, so they will not be in need of living supplies anymore?' The bodhisattva thus said, 'I vow to practice giving paramita diligently selflessly to assist sentient beings to mature, dignify and purify the Buddha lands, and let them realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly. I vow that in my Buddha land there will be no more sentient beings in need of living supplies, and all the sentient beings in my Buddha land will be able to enjoy the best entertainments just like the heavenly beings in the Heaven of Four Great Kings, Heaven of Thirty-Three Smaller Heavens,

and so forth, and the Heaven of Enjoying Other-Made Changes.' Because of fulfilling giving paramita, this great bodhisattva will realize the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi soon.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, a great bodhisattva practicing pure-precept paramita sees sentient beings suffering from burning vexations. They kill one another and hold incorrect views. Because of this cause and condition, they become ill and short-lived; their countenances look haggard, weak, and not virtuous. They will be reborn into poverty, low caste, imperfect bodies, and will do vulgar and filthy jobs to earn a living. After seeing this, the bodhisattva reflected, 'What should I do to bring relief to these sentient beings so that they will stay far away from various negative karma effects?' After such a reflection, the bodhisattva said, 'I vow to cultivate pure-precept paramita diligently selflessly to assist sentient beings to mature, dignify and purify the Buddha lands, and let them realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly. I vow that in my Buddha land no sentient beings will be affected by negative karmas; all sentient beings will practice the ten virtuous karmas and enjoy the superior effects such as a long lifespan and so forth. Well-Appearing One, because of fulfilling pure-precept paramita, this great bodhisattva will realize the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi soon.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, a great bodhisattva cultivating forbearance paramita sees sentient beings treating each other with anger and hatred. They slander, insult, and scold others as piercing them with spears. They fight and kill each other with swords and sticks, and their vicious anger perseveres even after taking one's life. Upon seeing this living circumstance, the bodhisattva thought, 'What can I do to bring relief to these sentient beings so that they will stay far away from evils?' After having this thought, the bodhisattva stated, 'I vow to cultivate forbearance paramita diligently selflessly to assist sentient beings to mature, dignify and purify the Buddha lands, and let them fully realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly. The sentient beings in my Buddha land will not be bothered by the vexations caused by negative karmas, and all sentient beings will treat each other as parents, brothers, sisters, and relatives without disharmony among them.' Because of fulfilling forbearance paramita, the great bodhisattva will realize the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi soon.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, a great bodhisattva cultivating diligence paramita sees that various sentient beings are lazy and tired; they do not work diligently; they abandon the three vehicles and even do not cultivate the heavenly and human virtuous karmas. After seeing this, the bodhisattva thought, 'What can I do to bring relief to these sentient beings so that they will stay far away from laziness and tiredness?' After having this thought, the bodhisattva stated, 'I vow to cultivate diligence paramita assiduously selflessly to assist sentient beings to mature, dignify and purify the Buddha lands, and let them attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly. There will be no more lazy and tired sentient beings in my Buddha land; they will all work and progress bravely and powerfully, cultivate assiduously the virtuous causes leading to the three vehicles and positive destinies, and will be reborn in the heavenly or human realm and attain liberation before long.' Well-Appearing One, because of fulfilling diligence paramita, this great bodhisattva will realize the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi soon.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, a great bodhisattva cultivating meditation paramita sees that various sentient beings are concealed by the five covers; they have lost meditations, immeasurable minds, and formless concentrations. After seeing this, the bodhisattva thought, 'What can I do to bring relief to these sentient beings so that they are able to stay far away from restlessness and turbulences of mind?' After having this thought, the bodhisattva stated, 'I vow to cultivate meditation paramita diligently selflessly to assist sentient beings to mature, dignify and purify the Buddha lands, and let them attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly. There will be no more sentient beings with restless and turbulent minds in my Buddha land; they will be able to enter and get out of the subtle and wonderful superior concentrations in meditations freely and easily.' Well-Appearing One, because of fulfilling meditation paramita, this great bodhisattva will realize the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi soon.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, a great bodhisattva cultivating prajna paramita sees that various sentient beings are ignorant and fond of vicious wisdom; their views of the world and beyond the world are wrong; they even insist that there are no virtuous karmas, no not virtuous karmas, and no effects of karmas. They hold incorrect views, such as the discontinuation of all dharmas, the permanence of all dharmas, the sameness of all dharmas, and the difference of all dharmas. After seeing this, the bodhisattva thought, 'What can I do to bring relief to these sentient beings so that they are able to stay far away from wrong views and

attachments?' After having this thought, the bodhisattva declared, 'I vow to cultivate prajna paramita diligently selflessly to assist sentient beings to mature, dignify and purify the Buddha lands, and let them attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly. There will be no more sentient beings possessing vicious wisdom and incorrect views in my Buddha land; all sentient beings will fulfill correct views and wonderful wisdom, and they will all look solemn and magnificent.' Well-Appearing One, because of fulfilling prajna paramita, this great bodhisattva will realize the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi soon.

(The Buddha taught how great bodhisattvas should cultivate each of the six paramitas to benefit sentient beings.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, a great bodhisattva cultivating the six paramitas simultaneously sees three different groups of sentient beings: those who are determined to aspire to correct concentration, those who prefer incorrect concentration, and those who are undecided. After seeing this, the great bodhisattva thought, 'What can I do to help these sentient beings avoid incorrect concentration and make the right decision?' After having this thought, the bodhisattva declared, 'I vow to cultivate the six paramitas selflessly to assist sentient beings to mature, dignify and purify the Buddha lands, and let them attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly. In my Buddha land, there will be no more sentient beings who prefer incorrect concentration or are undecided. All sentient beings will dwell in correct concentration.' Well-Appearing One, because of fulfilling the six paramitas, this great bodhisattva will realize and attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge soon."

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, a bodhisattva cultivating the six paramitas simultaneously sees that various sentient beings fall into the three inferior destinies and suffer fiercely. After seeing the situation, the bodhisattva thought, 'What can I do to bring relief to these sentient beings so that they are able to permanently get rid of the suffering in the three inferior destinies?' After having this reflection, the bodhisattva declared, 'I vow to cultivate the six paramitas selflessly to assist sentient beings to mature, dignify and purify the Buddha lands, and let them attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge quickly. There will be no more the names and the voices of hell, the realm of animals, and the realm of ghosts in my Buddha land; all sentient beings will be oriented to the superior destinies.' Well-Appearing One,

because of fulfilling the six paramitas, the great bodhisattva will realize and attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge soon.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, a great bodhisattva cultivating the six paramitas simultaneously sees that various sentient beings live on uneven grounds because of the hindrance caused by their negative karmas. They live in places filled with mounds, ditches, pits, filthy grass and stems, poisonous thorns and thistles, and all kinds of impurity. After seeing the situation, the bodhisattva thought, 'What can I do to bring relief to these sentient beings so that they are able to get rid of various hindrances caused by negative karmas forever and live on the ground as plain as the palms, in which there are no thistles, filthy grass, and so forth?' After having this thought, the bodhisattva declared, 'I vow to cultivate the six paramitas selflessly to assist sentient beings to mature, dignify and purify the Buddha lands, and let them attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly. In my Buddha land, there will be no filthy karmas. The vast grounds where the sentient beings live are plain, pretty, and widespread, magnificently decorated with desirable and lovely gardens, ponds, and fragrant flowers.' Well-Appearing One, because of fulfilling the six paramitas, this great bodhisattva will realize and attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge soon.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, a great bodhisattva cultivating the six paramitas simultaneously sees that various sentient beings live on the grounds without treasures but full of soils, rocks, and rubbles because they are less blessed. After seeing this, the bodhisattva thought, 'What can I do to bring relief to these less blessed sentient beings so that they are able to live in prosperous and wealthy places?' After having this thought, the bodhisattva declared, 'I vow to cultivate the six paramitas diligently selflessly to assist sentient beings to mature, dignify and purify the Buddha lands, and let them attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly. In my Buddha land, there will be no more less blessed sentient beings. All the grounds are paved with sands of gold and full of rare and unique lapis lazuli, and so forth. All sentient beings will enjoy them without being indulged in them.' Well-Appearing One, because of fulfilling the six paramitas, this great bodhisattva will realize and attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge soon.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, a great bodhisattva cultivating the six paramitas simultaneously sees that various sentient beings are attached to whatever they receive and thus initiate all kinds of negative karmas. After seeing this, the bodhisattva thought, 'What should I do to bring relief to these sentient beings so that they can get rid of the attachment to negative karmas forever?' After having this thought, this bodhisattva declared, 'I vow to cultivate the six paramitas diligently and assiduously selflessly to assist sentient beings to mature, dignify and purify the Buddha lands, and let them attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly. In my Buddha land, all sentient beings will not be attached to the stimuli caused by the sight, sound, and so forth; nor will they be indulged in various living supplies.' Well-Appearing One, because of fulfilling the six paramitas, this great bodhisattva will realize and attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge soon.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, a great bodhisattva cultivating the six paramitas simultaneously sees that various sentient beings have four different castes: Ksatriya, Brahman, and so forth. After seeing this, the bodhisattva thought, 'What should I do to bring relief to these various sentient beings, so they will be free from all these differentiations?' Upon reflection, the bodhisattva declared, 'I vow to cultivate the six paramitas diligently and assiduously selflessly to assist sentient beings to mature, dignify and purify the Buddha lands, and let them attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly. In my Buddha land, there will be no more distinctions between noble status and humble status; all sentient beings will live with equal dignity and nobility.' Well-Appearing One, because of fulfilling the six paramitas, this great bodhisattva will realize and attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge soon.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, a great bodhisattva cultivating the six paramitas simultaneously sees that various sentient beings are reborn differently in inferior, middle, or noble families. After seeing this, the bodhisattva thought, 'What can I do to relieve these sentient beings so that there will be no more differences among families?' After having this reflection, the bodhisattva declared, 'I vow to cultivate the six paramitas diligently and assiduously selflessly to assist sentient beings to mature, dignify and purify the Buddha lands, and let them attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly. In my Buddha land, there will be no such differences as the noble, middle, or inferior families. All sentient beings will be reborn in

noble families.' Well-Appearing One, because of fulfilling the six paramitas, this great bodhisattva will realize and attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge soon.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, a great bodhisattva cultivating the six paramitas simultaneously sees that various sentient beings have different countenances and builds; some are pretty and upright, while some are ugly and not well proportioned. After seeing this, the bodhisattva thought, 'What can I do to bring relief to these sentient beings so that they will avoid such differentiation?' Upon this reflection, the bodhisattva declared, 'I vow to cultivate the six paramitas diligently and assiduously selflessly to assist sentient beings to mature, dignify and purify the Buddha lands, and let them attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly. In my Buddha land, there will be no more differences of countenances and physical bodies for all sentient beings; all will appear in solid gold color, and look upright, solemn, and magnificent. They will achieve perfect and pure appearances.' Well-Appearing One, because of fulfilling the six paramitas, this great bodhisattva will realize and attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge soon.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, a great bodhisattva cultivating the six paramitas simultaneously sees that various sentient beings are manipulated and dominated, so they are not free or comfortable. After seeing this, this bodhisattva thought, 'What can I do to bring relief to these sentient beings so that they will become liberated?' After having such a thought, the bodhisattva declared, 'I vow to cultivate the six paramitas diligently and assiduously selflessly to assist sentient beings to mature, dignify and purify the Buddha lands, and let them attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly. In my Buddha land, all sentient beings will be able to act independently; they are no more dominated by someone else. No more dominators can be seen, and no more names of dominators can be heard. There are only the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones who conduct and guide with correct dharma and thus are named the dharma Kings.' Well-Appearing One, because of fulfilling the six paramitas, this great bodhisattva will realize and attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge soon.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, a great bodhisattva cultivating the six paramitas simultaneously sees that various sentient beings have different destinies, such as the hells, the

realm of animals, and so forth. After seeing this, the bodhisattva thought, ‘What can I do to bring relief to these sentient beings so that there will be no more differences between the superior and inferior destinies?’ After having such a thought, the bodhisattva declared, ‘I vow to cultivate the six paramitas diligently and assiduously selflessly to assist sentient beings to mature, dignify and purify the Buddha lands, and enable them to attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge quickly. In my Buddha land, there will be no more differences among the destinies; there will be no more the names of the hells, the realm of animals, the realm of the ghosts, asuras, human beings, and the heavenly beings. All sentient beings will be equal, and all will cultivate virtuous dharmas. They will all cultivate giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita together in harmony; dwell peacefully in internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature; realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable; and the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering. They will cultivate the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path; the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations; the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration; the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations; the stages of bodhisattva; the dharani gates and samadhi gates; the five eyes and six supernatural powers; the Buddha’s ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha’s wisdom and power; great loving-kindness, great compassion, great joy, and great equanimity; the perfect major marks and distinguishing minor features; staying in correct mindfulness and dwelling in equanimity at all times; the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena; and all great bodhisattva actions and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas.’ Well-Appearing One, because of fulfilling these six paramitas, this great bodhisattva will realize and attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge soon.

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, a great bodhisattva cultivating the six paramitas simultaneously sees that various sentient beings are born through four different ways: from an egg, through the womb, from moisture, and through transformation. After seeing this, the bodhisattva thought, ‘What can I do to bring relief to these sentient beings so that there will be

no more differences among the ways of birth?' After having such a thought, the bodhisattva declared, 'I vow to cultivate the six paramitas diligently and assiduously selflessly to assist sentient beings to mature, dignify and purify the Buddha lands, and let them attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly. In my Buddha land, there will be no more such four different ways of birth; all sentient beings will be born through transformation.' Well-Appearing One, because of fulfilling the six paramitas, this great bodhisattva will realize and attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge soon.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, a great bodhisattva cultivating the six paramitas simultaneously sees that various sentient beings do not have the five supernatural powers and are unable to act easily and freely. After seeing this, the bodhisattva thought, 'What can I do to bring relief to these sentient beings so that they are able to attain the five supernatural powers?' After having such a thought, the bodhisattva declared, 'I vow to cultivate the six paramitas diligently and assiduously selflessly to assist sentient beings to mature, dignify and purify the Buddha lands, and let them attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly. In my Buddha land, all the sentient beings will be able to play the five supernatural powers freely and at ease.' Well-Appearing One, because of fulfilling the six paramitas, this great bodhisattva will realize and attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge soon.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, a great bodhisattva cultivating the six paramitas simultaneously sees that various sentient beings have bowel movement and urination because of eating food to support their physical bodies; there are also pus, blood, and other smelly and filthy things that make one disgusted. After seeing this, the bodhisattva thought, 'What can I do to bring relief to these sentient beings so that they will be free from eating food and all kinds of filthy things?' After having this thought, the bodhisattva declared, 'I vow to cultivate the six paramitas diligently and assiduously selflessly to assist sentient beings to mature, dignify and purify the Buddha lands, and let them attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly. In my Buddha land, all sentient beings will eat exquisite dharma as food; they will all be like the heavenly beings in the Heaven of Extremely Great Brightness and Purity who are free from all kinds of defilements inside and outside their bodies.' Well-Appearing One, because of fulfilling the six paramitas, this great bodhisattva will realize and attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge soon.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, a great bodhisattva cultivating the six paramitas simultaneously sees that various sentient beings cannot emit bright lights, and whatever they do will depend on illumination from outside. After seeing this, the bodhisattva thought, 'What can I do to bring relief to these sentient beings so that they will stay away from the bodies without bright lights?' After having such a thought, the bodhisattva declared, 'I vow to cultivate the six paramitas diligently and assiduously selflessly to assist sentient beings to mature, dignify and purify the Buddha lands, and let them attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly. In my Buddha land, all sentient beings will have radiant bodies without relying on external light.' Well-Appearing One, because of fulfilling the six paramitas, this great bodhisattva will realize and attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge soon.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, a great bodhisattva cultivating the six paramitas simultaneously sees that the lands in which various sentient beings live have changes in days, nights, months, semi-months, and seasons. After seeing this, the bodhisattva reflected, 'What can I do to bring relief to the sentient beings so the land where they live will be rid of the changes in days, nights, seasons, and so forth?' After having such a reflection, the bodhisattva declared, 'I vow to cultivate the six paramitas diligently and assiduously without selflessly to assist sentient beings to mature, dignify and purify the Buddha lands, and let them attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly. In my Buddha land, there will be no more the names of days, nights, months, semi-months, and seasons.' Well-Appearing One, because of fulfilling the six paramitas, this great bodhisattva will realize and attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge soon.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, a great bodhisattva cultivating the six paramitas simultaneously sees that various sentient beings are very short-lived. After seeing this, the bodhisattva thought, 'What can I do to bring relief to the sentient beings so they will not be so short-lived?' After having such a reflection, this bodhisattva declared, 'I vow to cultivate the six paramitas diligently and assiduously selflessly to assist sentient beings to mature, dignify and purify the Buddha lands, and let them attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly. In my Buddha land, the sentient beings will have a lifespan as long as countless kalpas.' Well-Appearing One, because of fulfilling the six paramitas, this great bodhisattva will realize and attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge soon.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, a great bodhisattva cultivating the six paramitas simultaneously sees that various sentient beings do not have perfect physical features. After seeing this, the bodhisattva thought, 'What can I do to bring relief to these sentient beings so that they will have perfect physical features?' After having such a thought, the bodhisattva declared, 'I vow to cultivate the six paramitas diligently and assiduously without selflessly to assist sentient beings to mature, dignify and purify the Buddha lands, and let them attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly. In my Buddha land, all the sentient beings will have perfect, magnificent features; looking at them will bring others pure, exquisite joys.' Well-Appearing One, because of fulfilling the six paramitas, this great bodhisattva will realize and attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge soon.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, a great bodhisattva cultivating the six paramitas simultaneously sees that various sentient beings are away from the virtuous roots. After seeing this, the bodhisattva thought, 'What can I do to bring relief to these sentient beings so that they will possess virtuous roots?' After having this reflection, this bodhisattva declared, 'I vow to cultivate the six paramitas diligently and assiduously selflessly to assist sentient beings to mature, dignify and purify the Buddha lands, and let them attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly. In my Buddha land, all the sentient beings will be able to achieve superior and wonderful virtuous roots. Because of these virtuous roots, they will make the best offerings to the Buddhas, and by means of the blessings thus derived they are able to make offerings to more Buddhas, World-Honored Ones, wherever they are reborn.' Well-Appearing One, because of fulfilling the six paramitas, this great bodhisattva will realize and attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge soon.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, a great bodhisattva cultivating the six paramitas simultaneously sees that various sentient beings have diseases in body and mind. The diseases of the body are caused by the wind, heat, phlegm, or their mixture. The diseases of the mind are greed, anger, ignorance, arrogance, and so forth. After seeing this, the bodhisattva thought, 'What can I do to bring relief to these sentient beings so they can get rid of the suffering caused by these physical and mental diseases?' After having such a reflection, this great bodhisattva declared, 'I vow to cultivate the six paramitas diligently and assiduously selflessly to assist sentient beings to mature, dignify and purify the Buddha lands, and attain the unsurpassed,

perfect, and universal bodhi quickly. In my Buddha land, all sentient beings will have pure bodies and minds; there will be neither the diseases of body and mind nor the names of the diseases.' Well-Appearing One, because of fulfilling the six paramitas, this great bodhisattva will realize and attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge soon.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, a great bodhisattva cultivating the six paramitas simultaneously sees that various sentient beings have different interests in the three vehicles. After seeing this, the bodhisattva thought, 'What can I do to bring relief to the sentient beings so they will discard the two vehicles but be dedicated to the great vehicle only?' After having this reflection, this bodhisattva declared, "I vow to cultivate the six paramitas diligently and assiduously selflessly to assist sentient beings to mature, dignify and purify the Buddha lands, and let them attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly. In my Buddha land, all sentient beings will pursue only the great vehicle, with no interest in the two-vehicle effects, and even their names will not exist.' Well-Appearing One, because of fulfilling the six paramitas, this great bodhisattva will realize and attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge soon.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, a great bodhisattva cultivating the six paramitas simultaneously sees that various sentient beings are arrogant. They claim they are enlightened, although they are not. After seeing this, the bodhisattva thought, 'What can I do to bring relief to these sentient beings so that they will be freed from growing bondage of conceit?' After having this thought, the bodhisattva declared, 'I vow to cultivate the six paramitas diligently and assiduously selflessly to assist sentient beings to mature, dignify and purify the Buddha lands, and let them attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly. In my Buddha land, no sentient beings will exhibit excessive self-esteem; all sentient beings will avoid arrogance.' Well-Appearing One, because of fulfilling the six paramitas, this great bodhisattva will realize and attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge soon.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, a great bodhisattva cultivating the six paramitas simultaneously sees that the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones have limitless lifespan and brilliance, and the number of their disciples is also limitless. After seeing this, the great bodhisattva thought, 'What should I do to attain unlimited lifespan, brilliance, and disciples?' After having such a reflection, the bodhisattva declared, 'I

vow to cultivate the six paramitas diligently and assiduously without worries and attachments, assist sentient beings to mature, and dignify and purify the Buddha lands, so I can fulfill the six paramitas quickly and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi soon, then I will have limitless brilliance, lifespan, and disciples.' Well-Appearing One, because of fulfilling the six paramitas, this great bodhisattva will realize and attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge soon.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, a great bodhisattva cultivating the six paramitas simultaneously sees that the land in which the Thus-Comer, One Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened One lives is countless in circumference. After seeing this, the bodhisattva reflected, 'What can I do to live in a place with a countless circumference?' After having this reflection, the bodhisattva declared, 'I vow to cultivate the six paramitas diligently and assiduously without worries and attachments, assist the sentient beings to mature, and dignify and purify the Buddha lands, so that I can fulfill the six paramitas quickly and attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge before long, then all large thousand-worlds of the ten directions as many as the sands of the Ganges will combine together into a land, in which I will teach the dharma to deliver numberless, countless, and boundless sentient beings.' Well-Appearing One, because of fulfilling the six paramitas, this great bodhisattva will realize and attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge soon.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, a great bodhisattva cultivating the six paramitas simultaneously sees that various sentient beings are drifting in the endless cycle of birth and death, and the number of the sentient beings is boundless. After seeing this, the bodhisattva reflected, 'The border of the birth and death is like empty space, so are the sentient beings. The sentient beings, the cycle of birth and death, and the liberated ones are unreal, but the sentient beings have been attached to them, insisting that they are existent. So, they are drifting in the boundless suffering of birth and death. What can I do to bring relief to them?' After having this reflection, the great bodhisattva declared, 'I vow to cultivate the six paramitas diligently and assiduously without worries and attachments, assist the sentient beings to mature, and dignify and purify the Buddha lands, so that I can fulfill the six paramitas quickly and attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge soon. Then I will teach sentient beings about the unsurpassed dharma to liberate them from severe suffering of birth and death, let them realize

that the birth and death and the liberation are nonexistent and empty in the final analysis.' Well-Appearing One, because of fulfilling the six paramitas, this great bodhisattva will realize and attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge soon."

(The Buddha provided several examples to elucidate how great bodhisattvas should concurrently cultivate the six paramitas to benefit sentient beings.)

Chapter 58

The Lady Named "The Ganges Heaven"

In

The Second Assembly

At that time, a heavenly lady named The Ganges Heaven rose from her seat, bowed down before the Buddha's feet with right knee touching the ground and left shoulder covered. She joined her palms together and said respectfully, "World-Honored One, I would like to cultivate and fulfill giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna paramitas; assist sentient beings to mature; and dignify and purify the Buddha lands. I hope the lands that I dignify and purify will be as perfect as the ones that the World-Honored One teaches about in the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita.

Meanwhile, this lady made various golden flowers, silver flowers, flowers grown in waters and ground, and two pieces of heavenly clothes in golden color as offerings to the Buddha. She presented the offerings with sincere esteem. Because of the Buddha's supernatural powers, the offerings flew up to sky, rolled clockwise, turned into a treasure square platform with four pillars beautifully adorned. It looks magnificent and lovely, floating just above the

Buddha's head. This heavenly lady then transferred the virtuous roots thus derived along with various sentient beings equally toward the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.

At that time, the World-Honored One knew that this heavenly lady had a deep and expansive aspiration, so he smiled. When the Buddha smiled, the bright lights of various colors, blue, yellow, dark red, white, red, purple, and fresh green, emitted from his face and shone over immeasurable and boundless Buddha worlds of the ten directions. Owing to an inconceivable supernatural transformation, the bright lights returned to this land and entered the Buddha's head.

As witnessing what happened, Ananda stood up from his seat and bowed down before the Buddha's feet with his left shoulder covered and right knee touching the ground. He put his palms together respectfully and said, "World-Honored One, why did you smile? The Buddhas do not smile without causes and conditions."

At that time, the World-Honored One replied to Joyfully Celebrating One (Ananda), "This heavenly lady will become a Thus-Comer, One Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened One in a future kalpa named Stellar Simile; the name of the Buddha will be Golden Flower. You must know, Joyfully Celebrating One, this heavenly lady is now in her last female body. After this lifetime, she will become a male and will remain so in the future. After this lifetime, she will be reborn in the east with Golden Flower as his name. In the lovely and joyful land of the Unmovable Thus-Comer, One Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened One, Bodhisattva Golden Flower will cultivate diligently celibacy and practice various great bodhisattva actions. You must know, Joyfully Celebrating One, after passing away from the world of the Unmovable Buddha, Bodhisattva Golden Flower will be reborn from one Buddha land to the other and will always make offerings respectfully to esteem and acclaim various Buddhas, the World-Honored Ones, and will never stay away from the Buddhas. It is like a wheel-turning king who moves from one magnificent building to the other and enjoy all kinds of entertainment and pleasure without walking on the ground until the end of life, so does Bodhisattva Golden Flower, who moves from one Buddha country to the other, always encounters various Buddhas, listens to correct dharma teachings, and cultivates great bodhisattva actions until attaining the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi."

At that time, Joyfully Celebrating One thought to himself, “When Bodhisattva Golden Flower becomes a Buddha, he will also teach the fathomless prajna paramita. The great bodhisattvas attending the assembly will be as many as those in this assembly today.”

The Buddha knew what Joyfully Celebrating One was thinking, so he said, “Yes, it is as you think. When Bodhisattva Golden Flower becomes a Buddha, he will also teach the fathomless prajna paramita, and the great bodhisattvas attending the assembly will be as many as those in this assembly today. You must know, Joyfully Celebrating One, when Bodhisattva Golden Flower becomes a Buddha, his monastic disciples will be too many to be counted; much more than hundreds, thousands, or koti nayuta. They will be immeasurable and boundless. You must know, Joyfully Celebrating One, when Bodhisattva Golden Flower becomes a Buddha, his land will not have the faults as I mention in this prajna paramita sutra.”

At that time, Joyfully Celebrating One said to the Buddha again, “This heavenly lady must have encountered a Buddha before so that her aspiration to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi was inspired, and thus she could plant and transfer various virtuous roots. Will she again encounter the Buddha, make offerings to him respectfully, and receive the prophecy of achieving nonregression by him?”

The Buddha replied to Joyfully Celebrating One, “This heavenly lady was first inspired by the Buddha Burning Lamp, and from that time on, she has planted various good roots and transferred the virtuous roots to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. Because of this cause and condition, she was able to meet me, made offerings to me respectfully, and received the prophecy of achieving nonregression. You must know, Joyfully Celebrating One, in the past I made five stems of flowers as offerings to Buddha Burning Lamp and transferred the merit to an aspiration. The Thus-Comer Burning Lamp knew that my roots were mature, so conferred on me this prophecy: ‘You will become a Buddha in the future with Benevolence and Tranquility (Śākyamuni) as your name. The world you conduct is named Barely Tolerable, while the name of the kalpa is the Kalpa of the Sages.’

“When I was conferred the prophecy at that time, this heavenly lady was excited and rejoiced. She danced and jumped and presented golden flowers to the Buddha. She was deeply inspired to look forward to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, so started to plant

virtuous roots and transferred them to the wish that someday when I become a Buddha, she will be conferred the prophecy of attaining the great bodhi as I was. This is why I conferred on her the prophecy today."

After hearing what the Buddha said, Joyfully Celebrating One rejoiced, danced, and jumped and said to the Buddha, "This heavenly lady has planted various virtuous roots for a very long time, and the virtuous roots become mature now. It is the right time for the Thus-Comer, One Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened One to confer on her such prophecy."

The Buddha replied to Joyfully Celebrating One, "Yes, it is as you say. Her virtuous roots are fully developed. It is the time to confer on her the prophecy of achieving nonregression in the pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi."

(The Buddha shared the story of Ganges Heaven, a heavenly lady, who aspired to become a Buddha.)

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Chapter 59

Learning to Stay Close to Virtuous Dharmas

(In the Second Assembly)

At that time, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, “World-Honored One, when cultivating the fathomless prajna paramita, how do the great bodhisattvas learn to stay close to emptiness? How do they enter the samadhi of emptiness? How do they learn to stay close to formlessness? How do they enter the samadhi of formlessness? How do they learn to stay close to nonaspiration? How do they enter the samadhi of nonaspiration? How do they learn to stay close to the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path? How do they cultivate the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path? How do they learn to stay close to the Buddha’s ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha’s wisdom and power? How do they cultivate the Buddha’s ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha’s wisdom and power?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “When cultivating the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas should contemplate the emptiness of matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness. They should contemplate the emptiness of the eye sphere, ear sphere, and so forth, and conscious sphere. They should contemplate the emptiness of the sight sphere, sound sphere, and so forth, and mental-image sphere. They should contemplate the emptiness of the eye realm, ear realm, and so forth, and conscious realm. They should contemplate the emptiness of the sight realm, sound realm, and so forth, and mental-image realm. They should contemplate the emptiness of the eye consciousness realm, ear consciousness realm, and so forth, and conscious consciousness realm. They should contemplate the emptiness of the eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact. They should contemplate the emptiness of the feelings produced by eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact. They should contemplate the emptiness of the earth realm, water realm, and so forth, and consciousness

realm. They should contemplate the emptiness of the cause and condition, consecutive thoughts in sequence, conditions that stimulate the mind, and conditions that reinforce main causes. They should contemplate the emptiness of ignorance, action, consciousness, and so forth, and old age and death. They should contemplate the emptiness of giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita. They should contemplate the emptiness of internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature. They should contemplate the emptiness of realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable. They should contemplate the emptiness of the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering. They should contemplate the emptiness of the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path. They should contemplate the emptiness of the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations. They should contemplate the emptiness of the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations. They should contemplate the emptiness of the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration. They should contemplate the emptiness of the stage of pure contemplation, stage of eight-forbearance, and so forth, and stage of Thus-Comer. They should contemplate the emptiness of the stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilements, and so forth, and stage of dharma cloud. They should contemplate the emptiness of all dharani gates and all samadhi gates. They should contemplate the emptiness of the five eyes and six supernatural powers. They should contemplate the emptiness of the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power. They should contemplate the emptiness of great loving-kindness, great compassion, great joy, and great equanimity. They should contemplate the emptiness of the thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features. They should contemplate the emptiness of staying in correct mindfulness and dwelling in equanimity at all times. They should contemplate the emptiness of the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena. They should contemplate the emptiness of stream-entry effect, once-return effect, nonreturn effect, arhat effect, and self-enlightenment bodhi. They should contemplate the emptiness of all great bodhisattva actions and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas. They should contemplate the emptiness of the flawed and flawless dharmas. They should contemplate

the emptiness of the dharmas of the world and beyond the world. They should contemplate the emptiness of the conditioned and the unconditioned dharmas. They should contemplate the emptiness of the dharmas in the past, future, and present. They should contemplate the emptiness of the virtuous, not virtuous, and neutral dharmas. They should contemplate the emptiness of the dharmas in the realm of desire, the realm of form, and the realm of formlessness.

"Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas should not stay in restless minds when they contemplate. If their minds are not restless, they can learn not to see the dharmas. If they do not see the dharmas, they can refrain from realizing and attaining the dharmas. Why? Well-Appearing One, these great bodhisattvas have learned well that the self-forms of all dharmas are empty, and in emptiness no dharma increases or decreases, so they do not see or realize the dharmas. Why? Well-Appearing One, in the ultimate meaning of all dharmas, the one who can realize the dharmas, the dharmas realized, the place of realization, the time of realization, and the cause of realization are unattainable and cannot be seen, whether considered individually or collectively. looked at together or separately.

(As responding to Well-Appearing One's question of how the great bodhisattvas learn to stay close to and then enter virtuous dharmas, the Buddha said that they should contemplate the emptiness of all dharmas and refrain from realizing and attaining the virtuous dharmas.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "World-Honored One, how do the great bodhisattvas contemplate the emptiness of dharmas without realizing and attaining them as the World-Honored One instructs?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "When contemplating the emptiness of all dharmas, the great bodhisattvas will think, 'I should contemplate the phenomena of all dharmas as empty, but I should not realize and attain them. I contemplate all dharmas as empty for the sake of learning, not for the sake of realization. It is the time for learning not for realization.' Before entering concentrations, the great bodhisattvas' minds are stuck with the phenomena, while after entering concentrations, they are not.

(The Buddha taught how to contemplate all dharmas as empty without realization. The bodhisattvas contemplate emptiness is for learning, not for realization.)

"Well-Appearing One, for the time being, these great bodhisattvas do not withdraw from giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita, nor do they extinguish all flaws. They do not withdraw from internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature, nor do they extinguish all flaws. They do not withdraw from realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable, nor do they do extinguish all flaws. They do not withdraw from the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering, nor do they extinguish all flaws. They do not withdraw from the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations, nor do they extinguish all flaws. They do not withdraw from the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations, nor do they extinguish all flaws. They do not withdraw from the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path, nor do they extinguish all flaws. They do not withdraw from the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration, nor do they extinguish all flaws. They do not withdraw from the ten stages of three vehicles and the ten stages of bodhisattva, nor do they extinguish all flaws. They do not withdraw from the dharani gates and samadhi gates, nor do they extinguish all flaws. They do not withdraw from the five eyes and six supernatural powers, nor do they extinguish all flaws. They do not withdraw from the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power, nor do they extinguish all flaws. They do not withdraw from the perfect features, nor do they extinguish all flaws. They do not withdraw from staying in correct mindfulness and dwelling in equanimity at all times, nor do they extinguish all flaws. They do not withdraw from the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena, nor do they extinguish all flaws. They do not withdraw from all great bodhisattva actions, nor do they extinguish all flaws. They do not withdraw from the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas, nor do they extinguish all flaws.

"Why? Well-Appearing One, these great bodhisattvas have successfully developed a broad and great wisdom and are capable of dwelling in the emptiness of dharmas and in all factors for enlightenment. They often think, 'I should learn but should not realize and attain now.' Well-Appearing One, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, these great

bodhisattvas always think, ‘I should learn but should not realize and attain giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita now. I should learn but should not realize and attain internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature now. I should learn but should not realize and attain realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable now. I should learn but should not realize and attain the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering now. I should learn but should not realize and attain the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations now. I should learn but should not realize and attain the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations now. I should learn but should not realize and attain the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path now. I should learn but should not realize and attain the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration now. I should learn but should not realize and attain the ten stages of three vehicles and the ten stages of bodhisattva now. I should learn but should not realize and attain the dharani gates and samadhi gates now. I should learn but should not realize and attain the five eyes and six supernatural powers now. I should learn but should not realize and attain the Buddha’s ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha’s wisdom and power now. I should learn but should not realize and attain the perfect features now. I should learn but should not realize and attain staying in correct mindfulness and dwelling in equanimity at all times now. I should learn but should not realize and attain the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena now. I should learn but should not realize and attain all great bodhisattva actions now. I should learn but should not realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi now. To learn the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, I should learn stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi expediently and skillfully but should not realize and attain them for the time being.’

“Well-Appearing One, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas should learn to stay close to, dwell peacefully in, and cultivate the samadhi of emptiness, but should not realize the reality. They should learn to stay close to, dwell peacefully

in, and cultivate the samadhi of formlessness, but should not realize the reality. They should learn to stay close to, dwell peacefully in, and cultivate the samadhi of nonaspiration, but should not realize the reality. They should learn to stay close to, dwell peacefully in, and cultivate the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path, but should not realize the reality. They should learn to stay close to, aspire to, and cultivate the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power, but should not realize the reality.

"Well-Appearing One, these great bodhisattvas have learned to stay close to, dwelled peacefully in, and cultivated the samadhi of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration, but they do not realize stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi. They have learned to stay close, dwelled peacefully in, and cultivated the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path, but they do not realize stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi, Because of this cause and condition, they will not fall into the stages of voice-hearer or the stage of self-enlightened one; rather, they will realize the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly.

(The Buddha further taught that when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas should learn to stay close to, dwell peacefully in, and cultivate various superior virtuous dharmas, but should not realize the reality for the time being. It is the time for learning, not for realizing reality so they will not fall into the stage of voice-hearer or the stage of self-enlightened one.)

"Well-Appearing One, there was a good-looking, strong, and courageous man, who was admired, respected, and liked by many. He came from a wonderful and pure family, excelled in the art of war and was skillful with weapons. He always stayed firmly in concentration and his mind was unmovable. He also thoroughly studied the classics of sixty-four texts and mastered eighteen skills. He succeeded in business, gaining maximum benefits with the least effort. People respected and made offerings to him, so he was pleased and felt satisfied. For some reasons he traveled with his parents, wife, and other family members through a dangerous wilderness full of beasts, robbers, and rebels. All his family members were so scared and terrified. Being confident

with his own powers and abilities, this heroic man soothed and assured his family that he would guard them all the way to the destination in safety, and he did it successfully, so all were finally relieved, happy, and grateful. The strange thing was that on their way, no animal or bad-tempered robber had any intention of doing harm to them. Why? It is because of his courage and good skills, which made him fearless.

"Well-Appearing One, so do the great bodhisattvas. Out of mercy and compassion, they seek the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi to free sentient beings from the suffering in birth and death. They empathize with all sentient beings and are determined to initiate and dwell in the four immeasurable minds. They further cultivate and learn giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna paramitas bravely to fulfill them quickly. Although they have not fulfilled the six paramitas, they decide to cultivate the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge without extinguishing all flaws. They will dwell in the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration without being dominated by their powers. They will not be hindered or controlled by these liberation gates, nor will they realize and attain them. Because they do not intend to realize and attain the three liberation gates, they will not fall into the stage of the voice-hearer or the stage of the self-enlightened one; rather, they will progress toward the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. Well-Appearing One, it is like the birds with strong and powerful wings that soar high in the open sky for extended periods without descending. These birds traverse empty space without occupying it, so they are neither hindered nor confined by emptiness.

"Well-Appearing One, you must know, the great bodhisattvas have consistently learned, dwelled in and cultivated the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration, but they do not realize and attain them. Because they do not realize and attain them, they will not fall into the stage of the voice-hearer or the stage of the self-enlightened one. They will not extinguish all flaws based on the samadhi of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration until they fulfill the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, four unhindered understandings, great loving-kindness, great compassion, great joy, great equanimity, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power; staying in correct mindfulness and dwelling in equanimity at all times; the dharani gates and samadhi gates; the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, perfect knowledge of all phenomena,

and the rest of numberless and boundless Buddha dharma. Well-Appearing One, you must know that it is like an experienced archer who intended to demonstrate his shooting skills. He aimed at the empty space in the sky, trying to keep arrows from falling by continuously shooting each last arrow so all would stay in sky until he stopped doing so.

(The Buddha used similes to explain why great bodhisattvas should cultivate virtuous dharmas without realizing reality at present.)

"Well-Appearing One, when practicing fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas will not realize and attain reality midway in their pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi until their virtuous roots are fully matured. Therefore, in practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, they should carefully contemplate and investigate the real phenomena of all dharmas as I previously explained."

At that time, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One said to the Buddha, "World-Honored One, the great bodhisattvas are rare and unique; they can do very difficult things. They have learned realness, dharma realm, dharma nature, and the reality of all dharmas. They have also learned emptiness in the final analysis, emptiness of nontemporality, emptiness of deconstruction, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature of all dharmas. They have learned the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering. They have learned the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path. They have also learned the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration. However, they will not revert to the stage of voice-hearer or the stage of self-enlightened one when seeking the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi."

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, "The great bodhisattvas vow never to abandon sentient beings. They pledge, 'I swear never to give up additional efforts unless the sentient beings are liberated.' Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas have superior powers of aspiration and often think, 'I will never renounce all sentient beings unless they are liberated.' Because of this expansive and noble mind, they remain unwavering along the path. Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas always think, 'I should not abandon all sentient beings; I swear to assist them to acquire liberation. The sentient beings are always attached to incorrect

dharmas. To deliver them, I should frequently initiate the liberation gates of tranquil emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration, but I will not realize and attain these gates.' Well-Appearing One, these great bodhisattvas have achieved the powers of expedient skillfulness. Although they have constantly initiated the three liberation gates, they will not realize and attain them, nor will they realize and attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge until attaining the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.

(The Buddha stated that these great bodhisattvas have great power of aspiration and vow never to turn away from sentient beings, so they can undertake difficult and unusual work.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas love to contemplate and investigate the profound meanings. They like to contemplate and investigate internal emptiness, external emptiness, internal-external emptiness, emptiness of emptiness, emptiness of space, emptiness of ultimate truth, emptiness of conditioned phenomena, emptiness of unconditioned reality, emptiness in the final analysis, emptiness of nontemporality, emptiness of deconstruction and nondeconstruction, emptiness of original nature, emptiness of particular and common characteristics, emptiness of all dharmas, emptiness of nonattainment, emptiness of selflessness, emptiness of self-nature, and emptiness of selfless self-nature. They also like to contemplate and investigate the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, four bases of power, five roots, five powers, seven factors for enlightenment, and noble eightfold path and the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration. They have discovered that the characteristics of all dharmas are empty. Well-Appearing One, after having such contemplations and investigations, they think, 'Because of the impact caused by evil friends, various sentient beings have been attached to the ideas of the 'I,' the sentient being, and so forth, and the knower and the viewer for a very long time. Because of these attachments, they have always acted with attainment and thus suffered in the reincarnation of birth and death. To end attachments, I should seek the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, teach various sentient beings the fathomless, exquisite dharma, and help them terminate their attachment, so they will be rid of the suffering caused by birth and death.'

"Well-Appearing One, these great bodhisattvas have learned the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration, but they do not realize and attain reality. Because of

this reason, they will not fall into stream-entry effect, once-return effect, nonreturn effect, arhat effect, or self-enlightenment bodhi. Well-Appearing One, these great bodhisattvas have practiced fathomless prajna paramita with this thought, so they can achieve virtuous roots without attaining reality. Although they do not attain reality, they will not regress and get lost in the cultivation of the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations; the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, four bases of power, five roots, five powers, seven factors for enlightenment, and noble eightfold path; the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations; the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration; internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature; realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable; the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering; giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita; the dharani gates and the samadhi gates; the five eyes and the six supernatural powers; the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and ten universal contemplations; staying in correct mindfulness and dwelling in equanimity at all times; the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena and the rest of innumerable and boundless Buddha dharma.

"Well-Appearing One, these great bodhisattvas will achieve all factors for enlightenment at that time. Their merits and virtues will not diminish or lose until they attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. When practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, these great bodhisattvas will have their virtuous roots grow and increase continually; their virtuous roots will become sharp and penetrating because they have been absorbed by expedient skillfulness; they thus will transcend all voice-hearers and self-enlightened ones.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas will often think, 'Some sentient beings have been absorbed by evil friends so they have upside-down minds in four aspects for a long time; namely, they have upside-down thoughts, minds, and views about permanence, pleasure, selfness, and purity. For the sake of these sentient beings, I should aspire to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, cultivate the great bodhisattva actions, and realize the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal enlightenment, so that I can bring the correct

dharma to these sentient beings and teach them that birth and death are impermanent, without pleasure, without selfness, and not pure. I will teach them that the only real thing is the subtle, exquisite, and tranquil nirvana, in which the merits and virtues of various kinds of permanence, pleasure, selfness, and purity are fully contained.' Well-Appearing One, these great bodhisattvas have possessed this thought in practicing the fathomless prajna paramita. Because they have been absorbed by expedient skillfulness, they will not realize and enter the superior concentrations of various Buddhas unless they have fulfilled the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power.

(The Buddha explained why these great bodhisattvas could refrain from realizing reality in the process of learning and cultivating various superior virtuous dharmas based on expedient skillfulness.)

"Well-Appearing One, although the great bodhisattvas have learned the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration and can enter and get out of them freely and at ease, they do not realize and attain reality for the time being. They will not realize and attain reality and the rest of merits and virtues unless they have fulfilled the merits and virtues that serve as the causes for attaining the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. Well-Appearing One, these great bodhisattvas have not cultivated the rest of various merits and virtues perfectly, although they indeed have cultivated and fulfilled the samadhi of nonaspiration.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, some great bodhisattvas always think, 'Various sentient beings have been absorbed by evil friends for a long time and practiced with attainment; namely, they have been attached to the existence of the 'I,' the sentient being, and so forth, and the knower and the viewer; the existence of matter, feeling, and so forth, and consciousness; the existence of the eye sphere, ear sphere, and so forth, and conscious sphere; the existence of the sight sphere, sound sphere, and so forth, and mental-image sphere; the existence of the eye realm, ear realm, and so forth, and conscious realm; the existence of the sight realm, sound realm, and so forth, and mental-image realm; the existence of the eye consciousness realm, ear consciousness realm, and so forth, and conscious consciousness realm; the existence of the eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact; the existence of the feelings produced by eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact; the existence of the earth realm,

water realm, and so forth, and consciousness realm; the existence of ignorance, action, consciousness, and so forth, and old age and death; the existence of the path of the ten virtuous karmas; the existence of the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations; the existence of the four approaches of absorption; and the existence of the rest of superior dharmas. For the sake of these great bodhisattva, I should aspire to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, cultivate various great bodhisattva actions, and realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal enlightenment so that these great bodhisattvas can permanently terminate their attachment to attainment.' Well-Appearing One, because these great bodhisattvas have had such a thought, and because they have been absorbed by expedient skillfulness when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, they will not enter and stay in the superior concentrations of the Buddhas until they fulfill the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, four unhindered understandings, great loving-kindness, great compassion, great joy, great equanimity, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power, as well as the rest of innumerable and boundless Buddha dharma. Well-Appearing One, although these great bodhisattvas have learned the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration and can enter and get out of them freely and at ease, they do not realize and attain reality for the time being. They will not realize and attain reality and the rest of merits and virtues unless they have fulfilled the merits and virtues that serve as the causes for attaining the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. Well-Appearing One, these great bodhisattvas have not cultivated the rest of various merits and virtues perfectly, although they indeed have cultivated and fulfilled the samadhi of emptiness.

(The Buddha continued to explain why these great bodhisattvas could refrain from realizing reality in the process of learning and cultivating various superior virtuous dharmas owing to expedient skillfulness.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, some great bodhisattvas have always thought, 'Various sentient beings have been absorbed by evil friends for a long time, so they are attached to the forms of man, woman, sight, sound, smell, taste, touch, mental-image, and the rest of dharmas. For these sentient beings, I should aspire to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, cultivate various great bodhisattva actions and realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal enlightenment, so that the sentient beings can terminate such attachment forever.'

You must know, Well-Appearing One, these great bodhisattvas have this good thought because they have practiced the expedient skillfulness of the fathomless prajna paramita. They will not stay in the superior concentrations of the Buddhas unless they can fulfill the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, four unhindered understandings, great loving-kindness, great compassion, great joy, great equanimity, eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power, and the rest of numberless and boundless Buddha dharmas. Well-Appearing One, although these great bodhisattvas have learned and are able to enter and get out of the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration freely, they do not rush to realize reality for the time being. They do not realize and attain reality and the rest of the merits and virtues because they know that they have not fulfilled sufficient causes for attaining the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. You must know, Well-Appearing One, these great bodhisattvas have fulfilled the samadhi gate of formlessness although they have not fulfilled the rest of merits and virtues.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas have cultivated well giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita; dwelled peacefully in internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature; dwelled peacefully in realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable. They have also cultivated and learned well the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path; the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration; the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations; the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations; the ten stages; the dharani gates and samadhi gates; the five eyes and six supernatural powers; the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power; staying in correct mindfulness and dwelling in equanimity at all times; the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena; all great bodhisattva actions and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas. Well-Appearing One, as these great bodhisattvas have achieved such merits, virtues, and wisdom, it is unreasonable to say that they still love birth and death and assert that birth and death is full of pleasures, or that they still have a fervent intention to dwell in the three realms.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, as the great bodhisattvas have cultivated well the factors for the bodhi and the dharmas of the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones and the great bodhisattvas, they should ask themselves this question, 'If the great bodhisattvas are eager to achieve the unsurpassed bodhi, why do they cultivate diligently prajna paramita at all times without attachment and refrain from realizing emptiness, formlessness, nonaspiration, nonarising, nonextinction, nonmaking, nondoing, nonnature, and reality, and thus also refrain from attaining stream-entry effect, once-return effect, nonreturn effect, arhat effect, and self-enlightenment bodhi when they cultivate the factors for the bodhi?'

"Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas reply that they would like to realize the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, so they should reflect on emptiness, formlessness, nonaspiration, nonarising, nonextinction, nonmaking, nondoing, nonnature, reality, and the rest of the factors for the bodhi, but would not cultivate or learn them, then these great bodhisattvas must have not been conferred by the Buddha the prophecy of achieving nonregression in the pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. Why? These great bodhisattvas cannot explicate, recognize, and manifest the characteristics of the cultivation and learning of the great bodhisattvas who are without regression.

"Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas reply that in order to realize the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, they should reflect correctly on emptiness, formlessness, nonaspiration, nonarising, nonextinction, nonmaking, nondoing, nonnature, reality, and the rest of the factors for the bodh, and should also expediently and skillfully cultivate and learn them, but would not realize them arbitrarily, then these great bodhisattvas must have been conferred by the Buddha the prophecy of achieving nonregression in the pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. Why? These great bodhisattvas can explicate, recognize, and manifest the characteristics of the cultivation and learning of the great bodhisattvas who are without regression.

"Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas cannot explicate, recognize, and manifest the characteristics of the great bodhisattva who are without regression, you must know that these great bodhisattvas have not well cultivated and learned giving, pure precept, forbearance,

diligence, meditation, and prajna paramitas and the rest of the factors for enlightenment. They have not reached the stage of slight vexations and cannot explicate, recognize, and manifest the characteristics of nonregression. If the great bodhisattvas can explicate, recognize, and manifest the characteristics of the great bodhisattvas without regression, you must know that these great bodhisattvas have already cultivated and learned well giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna paramitas and the rest of the factors for enlightenment. They have also reached the stage of slight vexations so that they can explicate, recognize, and manifest the characteristics of nonregression."

At that time, Well-Appearing One asked, "World-Honored One, if the great bodhisattvas have not achieved nonregression yet, can they also reply like the nonregressive ones do?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One: "Some great bodhisattvas can reply like the nonregressive ones do although they have not attained nonregression yet. Well-Appearing One, these great bodhisattvas have not yet attained nonregression, but they have cultivated and learned the six paramitas and the rest of the factors for enlightenment well; they have also developed a sharp and clever wisdom of enlightenment, so they are able to reply as the nonregressive bodhisattvas do whether they have or have not heard about it."

At that time, Well-Appearing One said to the Buddha again, "Many great bodhisattvas are pursuing the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, but only few can reply what stages the nonregressive bodhisattvas have achieved and what stages they have not yet achieved, and in what stages they are dwelling."

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, "Yes, it is. Why? Well-Appearing One, only very few great bodhisattvas have been conferred the prophecy of attaining the subtle and exquisite wisdom of nonregression. Those who have been so conferred are able to respond this way. Well-Appearing One, those who can respond this way must have planted the most brilliant and sharpest virtuous roots. They have cultivated very profound and broad knowledge and wisdom that cannot be stolen or destroyed by heavenly beings, human beings, asuras, and so forth of the world."

(In these paragraphs, the dialogues discuss distinguishing the bodhisattvas who regress from those who do not.)

Chapter 60

Overstating Self Achievement

Section 1

(In the Second Assembly)

At that time, the Buddha said to the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One, “Some great bodhisattvas have never desired or praised the stage of voice-hearer or the stage of self-enlightened one, not even in their dreams. They have never had a thought of loving or praising them. Instead, they have always contemplated all dharmas as dreams, echoes, illusions, illusory images of water under sunlight, shadows, transformed things, and mirages. As they contemplate this way, they will not realize and attain reality. You must know that these great bodhisattvas have possessed the characteristics of nonregression.

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, some great bodhisattvas dreamed that the Thus-Comer, One Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened One was surrounded by countless hundreds of thousands of koti nayuta sentient beings when teaching the dharma. The sentient beings became aware of the essential meanings of the dharma after hearing the teaching and started to diligently cultivate the dharma. They practiced the dharma to reach nirvana. They interacted with others harmoniously and respectfully and behaved in accordance with the dharma. You must know that these great bodhisattvas have also attained the characteristics of nonregression.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas dreamed of the Thus-Comer, One Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened One teaching the essential meanings of the dharma to numberless audience, displaying great supernatural powers. He had thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features. The brilliant lights constantly shone around the Buddha's body and expanded to as far as one yojana, while the audience listened in the sky, and the Thus-Comer sent transformed persons to boundless Buddha lands to offer services. You must know that these great bodhisattvas have already possessed the characteristics of nonregression.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas dreamed of crazy robbers destroying the village. The village was on fire, and lions, tigers, wolves, fierce animals, poisonous snakes, and evil scorpions emerged to harm people. They also dreamed that enemies came to kill them by cutting their heads; their parents, brothers, sisters, wives, and relatives were dying; they themselves were very cold, hot, hungry, thirsty and overwhelmed by other vexations and suffering. When seeing these terrible things, they were not shocked, scared, terrified, worried, or annoyed. After they were awake, they thought, 'The three realms are not real; they are as illusory as what one sees in dreams. When I attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal enlightenment, I will teach sentient beings that all dharmas in the three realms are unreal and as illusory as dreams.' You must know that these great bodhisattvas have possessed the characteristics of nonregression.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas dreamed of the hells, the realm of animals, and the realm of the ghosts, and thought, 'I should cultivate various great bodhisattva actions diligently and assiduously, so that I can achieve the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly. In my Buddha land, there will be no hells, realm of animals, and realm of the ghosts and their names.' When they are awake, they also have the same thought. You must know, Well-Appearing One, when these great bodhisattvas become the Buddhas, there will be no inferior destinies in their Buddha lands. Why? Regardless of being awake or dreaming, all dharmas are the same. You must know that these bodhisattvas have already possessed the characteristics of nonregression.

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas dreamed of various sentient beings living in burning hells or burning villages and cities, so they vowed, ‘If I have been conferred the prophecy of achieving nonregression and definitely will realize the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, I wish the burning fires will be put out immediately and all will become nice and cool.’ When the great bodhisattvas were making this wish in their dreams and the fires ceased immediately, you must know that these great bodhisattvas have been conferred the prophecy of achieving nonregression. If the fires did not cease in their dreams, you must know that these great bodhisattvas have not been conferred the prophecy of achieving nonregression.

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, when awake, the great bodhisattvas saw cities and villages on fire. They thought, "I have seen in my dreams and when I am awake that I possess the characteristics of nonregression, but I am not sure if it is true. If it is true and I will achieve the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, may these fires cease immediately and become cool." If the fires gradually diminish, burning some houses and skipping others, it confirms the bodhisattvas have received the prophecy of achieving nonregression. The sentient beings affected by the fires had made negative karmas to destroy the correct dharma in previous lives. They once fell into bad destinies and suffered for numberless kalpas, and their negative karmas remain in this life; or they just experience minor retribution in present life but will suffer more and severely in numberless kalpas in the future because of the negative karmas they committed in previous lives.

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, based on these causes and conditions we can idnetify the great bodhisattvas of nonregression. There are other characteristics that will distinguish nonregressive bodhisattvas from the regressive ones. Let me explain to you respectively. Please listen to me and reflect on them carefully!”

(The Buddha had so far talked about some characteristics of the great bodhisattvas who are nonregressive. He would teach Well-Appearing One and others present in the assembly more about such characteristics.)

Well-Appearing One replied, “Yes. We are looking forward to your teaching.

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, “The great bodhisattvas saw that some men or women were captivated by mischievous nonhuman spirits and suffered and could not get rid of them. So the great bodhisattvas thought, ‘If the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones know that I have attained the pleasures of pure intentions and decide to confer on me the prophecy of achieving nonregression in pursuing the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi; if I have initiated pure intentions to aspire to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi for a long time, and stayed far away from any intentions in accord with the voice-hearers and the self-enlightened ones; if I definitely will attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi and bring benefits and happiness to various sentient beings for the endless futures; and if there are really numberless Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones in the ten directions, who are currently teaching the subtle, exquisite, and wonderful dharma to bring benefits and happiness to all sentient beings, and can see everything, know everything, understand everything, and realize everything, including different intentions and preferences of all sentient beings, I am begging your deep mercy to look at my heart and listen to my sincerest words. If I can really cultivate great bodhisattva actions, and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi to relieve all sentient beings from the suffering in birth and death, I wish these men and women will get rid of the harassment and annoyance caused by nonhuman spirits immediately.’ If the nonhuman spirits do not leave immediately when the great bodhisattvas make this wish, you must know that they have not been conferred the prophecy of achieving nonregression yet. If the nonhuman spirits do leave immediately, these great bodhisattvas have been already conferred the prophecy.

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, some great bodhisattvas have not cultivated and learned well giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna paramitas; have not dwelled peacefully in internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature; have not dwelled peacefully in realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable; have not dwelled peacefully in the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering; have not cultivated and learned well the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path; have not cultivated and learned well the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations; have not cultivated and learned well the

eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations; have not cultivated and learned well the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration; have not cultivated and learned well the dharani gates and samadhi gates; have not entered onto the bodhisattva path of nonarising; and have not cultivated and possessed all Buddha dharmas so they are far away from the expedient skillfulness of bodhisattva, then they cannot avoid harassment and annoyance of the evil demons. They are not aware of the demonic hindrances either. Without really knowing their own strengths and weaknesses and how many virtuous roots they have accumulated, these great bodhisattvas rush to imitate other great bodhisattvas to make wishes, the demons will take advantage to deceive them. When seeing that some men or women are captivated by nonhuman spirits, these great bodhisattvas will make vow, 'If I had been conferred by the Buddhas in the past the prophecy of achieving nonregression in pursuing the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, these men or women would get rid of the nonhuman spirits immediately.' At that time, the evil demons tried to deceive these great bodhisattvas by driving the nonhuman spirits away because they had stronger magic power than the spirits.

"These great bodhisattvas rejoiced, danced, and jumped when they saw what happened. They thought, 'Now the nonhuman spirits were gone. It is obvious because of my powers. Why? The nonhuman spirits let the men and women go when they heard my words. This is the only reason that they did this.' The bodhisattvas were unaware of the demons' actions, mistakenly believed those powers were their own and were delighted. They thus disdained other bodhisattvas and said, 'I had been conferred by the Buddhas in the past the prophecy of achieving nonregression in pursuing the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, so all vows I make will not be in vain. You have not been conferred the prophecy, so you should not imitate me to make vows because that will be useless.' As these great bodhisattvas slander other bodhisattvas in contempt and mistakenly boast their own abilities, their various merits and virtues are contaminated by arrogance. They thus stay far away from the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi and from the attainment of the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. Because these great bodhisattvas do not have expedient and skillful powers, their arrogance caused by overstating self-achievement grows and increases; because they slander other bodhisattvas in contempt, they will fall into the stage of voice-hearer or self-enlightened one

although they have worked diligently. Because they do not have many blessings and virtues, they are hindered by demons. These great bodhisattvas thus cannot stay in intimate connection with and make offerings respectfully to esteem and acclaim the real virtuous intellectuals; cannot inquire about the characteristics of the bodhisattva of nonregression; and cannot receive the messages about demonic affairs, so they are closely bound to demons. Why? These great bodhisattvas have cultivated giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna paramitas not long enough and have stayed far away from expedient skillfulness, they are easily deceived and puzzled by evil demons. Therefore, Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas should learn to know well about demonic hindrances. They should not overstate their achievement to thus diminish and lose the unsurpassed Buddha effects that they are pursuing."

(The Buddha cautioned that the great bodhisattvas should learn to know well about demonic hindrances and stay away from self-conceit.)

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Chapter 60

Overstating Self Achievement

Section 2

(In the Second Assembly)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, why should great bodhisattvas be aware of demonic hindrances? If the great bodhisattvas have not cultivated giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna paramitas long enough and stayed far away from expedient skillfulness, they are easily deceived by demons. Evil demons often disguised as various figures, approached great bodhisattvas and said, 'Hi, good gentleman, do you know that? You were conferred by Buddhas in the past the prophecy of attaining the great bodhi, so you will not regress in the pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. I know the names of your parents, brothers, sisters, relatives, friends, family members, and associates in your past seven lives. I know where and when you were born, including the years, months, days, hours, the names of the villages or cities, and the kings of the states.' The demons found that the great bodhisattvas were compassionate and dull-minded, so said to them, 'Your heart was compassionate, and your mind was slow in your previous lives.' If the demons saw that they had resolute hearts and quick minds, they would say, 'Your heart was resolute, and your mind was quick in your previous lives.' The demons noted that the great bodhisattvas preferred living in quiet forests and sleeping on the grounds, begging for one meal a day, staying in graveyards or under trees, never lying down when sleeping, wearing patched clothing, and owning only three pieces of clothes. The demons also found that the bodhisattvas never lied down, liked the used mats, did not desire much and were easily satisfied, loved to get far away to stay in tranquility and concentration, dwelled in correct mindfulness, possessed exquisite wisdom, did not value benefits and offerings, did not treasure good reputation, loved simple and frugal life, did not rub oil on feet, slept a little, were away from restlessness and wandering, talked a little or liked to speak kind words, then the demons would cheat them by saying, 'I knew you were already so

and so in your previous lives. Why? You have achieved such superior and unique merits and virtues in this life. Many have known that. You must have accumulated many superior merits and virtues from your previous lives. You should be proud of yourself. Do not undervalue yourself.'

"After hearing what the demons stated about the great bodhisattvas, including their merits and virtues in the past and what they would achieve in the future, the names of their relatives and friends, and the acclamation of their unique and superior merits and virtues, these great bodhisattvas rejoiced and danced, their self-pride and arrogance increased and started to disdain and slander other bodhisattvas. At that time, knowing these great bodhisattvas' feelings, the evil demons said, 'You will for sure achieve unique and superior merits and virtues. The Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones in the past had conferred on you the prophecy of achieving nonregression in the pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. Now we can see the good omen.' To deceive the great bodhisattvas, the evil demons would appear as monks, laypersons, their parents, relatives, friends, or human and nonhumans, and acclaimed, 'The Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones had conferred on you the prophecy of attaining the great bodhi long time ago. You certainly will not regress in the pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. Why? You have already possessed the characteristics of the great bodhisattvas of nonregression. Please esteem yourself and don't be hesitant!' When hearing what the demons said, the great bodhisattvas became more and more arrogant.

"Well-Appearing One, these great bodhisattvas did not have the characteristics of the great bodhisattvas of nonregression. You must know, Well-Appearing One, they were captivated and hindered by the demons and could not act freely and at ease. Why? These great bodhisattvas did not possess the characteristics of the nonregressive bodhisattvas. The demons misguided them to believe that they had such virtues, they thus became very arrogant and started to disdain and slander other bodhisattvas. Therefore, Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas would like to attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, they should be aware of the demonic affairs so that they would not be deceived and became arrogant.

(The Buddha further explained why the great bodhisattvas should be aware of the demonic hindrances.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, some great bodhisattvas were captivated and bewitched by demons. Their conceit stemmed from their exaggerated reputation. Why? These great bodhisattvas did not cultivate and learn giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita. They did not dwell peacefully in internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature; realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable; and the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering. They did not cultivate and learn the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path; the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations; the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations; the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration; the stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilements, and so forth, and stage of dharma cloud; the dharani gates and samadhi gates; the five eyes and six supernatural powers; the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power; staying in correct mindfulness and always dwelling in equanimity; the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena; and all great bodhisattva actions and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas. Because of this reason, and also due to their ignorance of the four forms of demonic hindrances, the bodhisattvas' weaknesses are easily exploited by demons.

"These great bodhisattvas do not know matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness; the eye sphere, ear sphere, and so forth, and conscious sphere; the sight sphere, sound sphere, and so forth, and mental-image sphere; the eye realm, ear realm, and so forth, and conscious realm; the sight realm, sound realm, and so forth, and mental-image realm; the eye consciousness realm, ear consciousness, and so forth, and conscious consciousness realm; the eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact; the feelings produced by eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact; the earth realm, water realm, and so forth, and consciousness realm; ignorance, action, consciousness, and so forth, and old age and

death; giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita; internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature; realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable; the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering; the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path; the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations; the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations; the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration; the stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilements, and so forth, and stage of dharma cloud; the dharani gates and samadhi gates; the five eyes and six supernatural powers; the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power; staying in correct mindfulness and dwelling in equanimity at all times; stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi; the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena; and the real form of the names of sentient beings and all dharmas, namely, the formlessness. Because of this cause and condition, the evil demons take advantage of their weaknesses and make various transformed figures expediently to deceive the great bodhisattvas, 'You have fulfilled the cultivation that you have aspired to, and will attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. When you become a Buddha, you will have honorable names that represent your superior and esteemed merits and virtues.' These bodhisattvas had thought about those names for a long time, and the demons could read their minds. In the meantime, because these great bodhisattvas were far away from prajna paramita and did not have expedient skillfulness, once hearing what the demons said, they would think, 'This person is very special. His prophecy of the names of the Buddha that I will become is the same as I have long thought about. It is for sure that various Buddhas in the past had conferred on me the prophecy of attaining the great bodhi. I will not regress in my pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. When I become a Buddha in the future, I certainly will attain these noble names that reflect my various merits and virtues.' These great bodhisattvas were captivated by the evil demons, their associates, or the sramanas driven by the demons. They thus wrongly believed that they had been conferred the prophecy of becoming a Buddha with such noble names, so their

arrogance increased and thought, ‘I will become a Buddha in the future and gain such names that represent my merits and virtues. No other bodhisattvas can compare to me.’

“You must know, Well-Appearing One, these great bodhisattvas do not possess the characteristics that the great bodhisattvas of nonregression should have. They become so arrogant and disdain and slander other bodhisattvas only because they heard the demon’s deceptive words. Because of their arrogance, slander, and contempt for other bodhisattvas, they will stay far away from the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi and cannot adopt expedient skillfulness, thus they will turn away from virtuous friends, and be always absorbed by the not virtuous friends. They will fall into the stage of the voice-hearer or the stage of the self-enlightened one.

“You must know, Well-Appearing One, it is likely that these great bodhisattva will return to correct mindfulness sometime in the future, sincerely repent and regret their actions, and start again to stay with the virtuous friends frequently and make offerings respectfully to esteem and acclaim them. After drifting in the cycle of birth and death for such a long time, they are now returning to cultivate and learn based on the fathomless prajna paramita step by step, and will realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. Well-Appearing One, if these great bodhisattvas do not return to correct mindfulness, do not repent and regret what they did in the past, and do not stay with the virtuous friends and make offerings respectfully to esteem and acclaim them, then they will drift in birth and death for a long time. Even in later days they can cultivate various virtuous dharmas diligently, they will fall into the stage of the voice-hearer or the stage of the self-enlightened. If a monk as a voice-hearer pursuer commits one of the four grievous sins, he will be no more a sramana or the son of Sakya; he will not be able to attain stream-entry effect presently. So do the bodhisattvas who are attached to faulty reputations. When hearing the demons’ lies that they will become a Buddha, they become arrogant and start to slander and disdain other great bodhisattvas. You must know that their sins are more serious than the four grievous sins by many times. Let’s put the four grievous sins aside. Their sins are even more serious than the five uninterrupted sins by immeasurable times. Why? These great bodhisattvas have not achieved the superior merits and virtues. They become arrogant upon hearing the demon’s lies, then they commit a sin that is more serious than the five uninterrupted sins. Therefore, in order to attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, the great

bodhisattvas should be alert to and aware of the subtle demonic hindrances, such as the unreal names and so forth when working diligently toward the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, a great bodhisattva has cultivated the practice of seclusion, living in mountains, woods, vast and dried swamps, or wilderness to practice meditation and contemplation. Meanwhile, the demon approached the bodhisattva and respectfully said, 'Great bodhisattva, you are truly cultivating solitude. All Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones will admire and acclaim you. Heavenly Emperor Indra and all heavenly deities will always protect, make offerings to and esteem you. You should always stay here; don't move elsewhere!' You must know, Well-Appearing One, I will not especially admire and acclaim the great bodhisattvas who get away to stay in quiet forests, wilderness, or mountains to meditate and reflect there."

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked, "World-Honored One, what kinds of getting away does the Buddha not admire when great bodhisattvas stay alone in quiet forests, wilderness, and mountains to practice meditation and reflection?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "Whether the great bodhisattvas live in mountains, forests, vast and dried swamps, wilderness, other quiet places, or in the crowded and noisy cities, villages, and capitals, what really matters is if they can get far away from the negative karmas and the intentions in accord with voice-hearers and self-enlightened ones. If they can practice the fathomless prajna paramita and the rest of the superior and wonderful merits and virtues, they are the real faraway actions practitioners. All Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones will confirm and admire such faraway actions. The great bodhisattvas should cultivate and learn this way. If the great bodhisattvas can correctly reflect on and cultivate this kind of getting far away diligently day and night without aspiring to voice-hearer and self-enlightened one and can get rid of all negative karmas of vexations, noises, and restlessness, they indeed practice the faraway actions of the bodhisattva. This will allow the great bodhisattvas to realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly, bringing benefits and happiness to all sentient beings incessantly and endlessly. You must know, Well-Appearing One, the way that the evil demons admire to live

as a recluse in mountains, forests, vast and dried swamps, wilderness, or other quiet places and sit and meditate without lying down is not the real faraway practice of bodhisattva. Why? In this kind of getting far away, noises and restlessness along with the negative karmas of vexations and the intentions in accord with voice-hearers and self-enlightened ones remain. Consequently, the great bodhisattvas will not believe in, cultivate, and learn diligently and assiduously the fathomless prajna paramita. They will be far away from fulfilling the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge.

(The Buddha taught that the true distant actions of a bodhisattva involve staying away from the negative karmas with vexations and the intentions in accord with voice-hearers and self-enlightened ones to practice the fathomless prajna paramita and the rest of the superior and wonderful merits and virtues.)

"You must know, Well-Appearing One, some great bodhisattvas prefer practicing getting away admired by the demons and thus initiate an impure arrogant mind to look down on, disdain, and slander other great bodhisattvas. Those who are slandered and disdained live in cities, villages, or capitals, their minds are pure, without negative karmas of vexations or intentions in accord with the voice-hearer or the self-enlightened one. They cultivate and learn diligently and attentively giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramitas. They dwell peacefully in internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature; realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable; and the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering. They cultivate and learn diligently the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path. They cultivate and learn diligently the merits and virtues of the world, such as the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, four formless concentrations, and five supernatural powers. They cultivate and learn diligently the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration; the ten stages of bodhisattva; the dharani gates and the samadhi gates; the five eyes and six supernatural powers; the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations; the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power; staying in correct mindfulness and always dwelling in equanimity; and the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of

the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena. They dignify and purify the Buddha lands and assist sentient beings to mature. Although they live in noisy and restless environments, their minds remain tranquil, and they practice the real getting far away all the time. These are the great bodhisattvas who are disdained, slandered, and insulted with contempt by the arrogant great bodhisattvas.

"You must know, Well-Appearing One, some great bodhisattvas have been far away from prajna paramita and from expedient skillfulness. They reside in a wilderness that spans one hundred yojanas, where there are no dangerous animals, snakes, scorpions, or robbers, but ghosts, devas, and rakshasas (spirits) inhabit and roam the area. These great bodhisattvas have stayed in the quiet places for one, five, ten, one hundred, one thousand, or koti nayuta years, claiming that they are cultivating distant actions although they are not. They do not understand what getting far away really means. Some other great bodhisattvas live in noisiness, but they have tranquil minds. They are far away from various negative karmas of vexation and the intention correspondent with the voice-hearer and the self-enlightened one. They are aspiring wholeheartedly to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. You must know, Well-Appearing One, the former great bodhisattvas have lived in the wilderness for a very long time, but they have not been rid of the intentions correspondent with the voice-hearer and the self-enlightened one; rather, they have cultivated the faraway actions based on and thus are deeply imbued with the stages of voice-hearer or self-enlightened one. Although they have cultivated the so-called getting far away for a long time, the Buddhas are not happy about that.

"You must know, Well-Appearing One, these great bodhisattvas have not achieved the faraway actions that I admire. They even do not have the characteristics close to the real faraway actions. Why? They do not like the real faraway actions; they only love to cultivate the unreal faraway actions of the voice-hearer and the self-enlightened one. Well-Appearing One, you must know that when the great bodhisattvas cultivate the unreal getting far away, the demons will come from the sky and delightedly acclaim, 'Great bodhisattva, excellent, excellent! You really can cultivate the genuine getting far away that all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones admire. You have cultivated and learned this getting far away diligently, so you will attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi before long.' You must know, Well-Appearing One, because these great bodhisattvas are attached to the

faraway actions based on the two vehicles and regard them as the superior ones, they will look down on, disdain, and slander those who are pursuing to dwell in the bodhisattva vehicle, or the monks who live in noisy cities but can adjust well and keep their minds in tranquility.

"You must know, Well-Appearing One, these great bodhisattvas disdain and slander with contempt the genuine faraway practitioners that the Buddhas admire, saying that they live in noisiness and chaos and their minds are not tranquil, so they do not practice the real getting far away; while on the other hand, they view those not approved by the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones as genuine faraway practitioners, saying that they live in quiet places so they have tranquil minds. They should stay in close connection with and make offerings respectfully to the genuine practitioners that the Buddhas admire, but they look down on, disdain, and slander them. They should stay far away from the not virtuous friends, but they stay with them intimately and make offerings respectfully to them as to the World-Honored One. You must know, Well-Appearing One, these great bodhisattvas have stayed far away from prajna paramita and cannot act expediently and skillfully; they have allowed various differentiations and attachments to arise in their delusions. Why? They always think, 'I have cultivated and learned genuine getting far away, so the nonhumans admire me, protect me, and keep me in mind. Who will respect and protect those who live in cities with restless minds?' Because of this cause and condition, their arrogance grows, and when they disdain and slander other great bodhisattvas, their vexations and negative karmas also grow and increase.

(The Buddha further distinguished the real getting far away from the false one.)

"Well-Appearing One, you must know that in comparison to the real great bodhisattvas, these fake great bodhisattvas are the candela (violent and rude people), who have polluted all bodhisattvas. They appear in the form of great bodhisattva, but they are the thieves of all heavenly and human beings; they have deceived all heavenly beings, human beings, asuras, and so forth. They are robbers wearing the robes of a monk. All bodhisattva-vehicle practitioners should stay away from them and should not make offerings to esteem or acclaim them. Why? They are arrogant; they look like a bodhisattva, but with a lot of defiled vexations inside. Therefore, Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas do not want to abandon the perfect

knowledge of all perfect knowledge and give up the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, and if they are deeply dedicated to pursuing the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge and attaining the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi to bring benefits and happiness to all sentient beings, they should not stay with these fake bodhisattvas, nor should they make offerings to esteem and acclaim these evil ones.

(The Buddha rebuked the fake faraway practitioners were robbers wearing the robes of a monk.)

"You must know, Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas should cultivate diligently their own practices and actions, stay far away from birth and death, and avoid attachment to the three realms. To the evil robbers and candala, they should have empathy with loving-kindness, compassion, joy, and equanimity and think, 'I must not do as those evil ones do. If I get lost and do something wrong, I should wake up and stop it immediately.' Therefore, Well-Appearing One, to realize the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, the great bodhisattvas should be always in alert and awake and get to know various demonic hindrances. They should progress diligently and stay far away from the faults that those great bodhisattvas do, and work hard to pursue the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas would like to foster the aspiration to realize the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, they should always stay with and make offerings respectfully to esteem and acclaim the real, virtuous intellectuals."

(The Buddha concluded what the great bodhisattvas should do to realize the unsurpassed bodhi.)

At that time, Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "What are the real, virtuous intellectuals for great bodhisattvas?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One: "All Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones are the real, virtuous intellectuals for bodhisattvas. All great bodhisattvas are also the real, virtuous intellectuals for bodhisattvas. The voice-hearers and the rest of virtuous gentlepersons who teach, explain, analyze, and manifest the essential meanings correspondent with giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna paramitas and make others understandable are also the real, virtuous intellectuals for bodhisattvas.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita are the real, virtuous intellectuals for bodhisattvas. The four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path are the real, virtuous intellectuals for bodhisattvas. The four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations are the real, virtuous intellectuals for bodhisattvas. The eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations are the real, virtuous intellectuals for bodhisattvas. The liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration are the real, virtuous intellectuals for bodhisattvas. The stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilements, and so forth, and stage of dharma cloud are the real, virtuous intellectuals for bodhisattvas. The dharani gates and samadhi gates are the real, virtuous intellectuals for bodhisattvas. The five eyes and six supernatural powers are the real, virtuous intellectuals for bodhisattvas. The Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power are the real, virtuous intellectuals for bodhisattvas. Staying in correct mindfulness and always dwelling in equanimity are the real, virtuous intellectuals for bodhisattvas. The perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena are the real, virtuous intellectuals for bodhisattvas. All great bodhisattva actions are the real, virtuous intellectuals for bodhisattvas. The unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas is the real, virtuous intellectual for bodhisattvas. The termination of all negative enduring dispositions is also the real, virtuous intellectual for bodhisattvas.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering are the real, virtuous intellectuals for bodhisattvas. The dharmas that serve as the conditions are the real, virtuous intellectuals for bodhisattvas. The factors of dependent origination are the real, virtuous intellectuals for bodhisattvas. Internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature are the real, virtuous intellectuals for bodhisattvas. Realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable are the real virtuous intellectuals for bodhisattvas.

(The Buddha explained the real, virtuous intellectuals for great bodhisattvas.)

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita are the guiding teachers, brilliant torches, illuminating lamps, explanation and awakening, knowledge and wisdom, rescue and protection, abodes and houses, continents and islands, objectives and destinations, and fathers and mothers for great bodhisattvas. The four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path are the guiding teachers, brilliant torches, illuminating lamps, explanation and awakening, knowledge and wisdom, rescue and protection, abodes and houses, continents and islands, objectives and destinations, and fathers and mothers for great bodhisattvas. The four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations are the guiding teachers, brilliant torches, illuminating lamps, explanation and awakening, knowledge and wisdom, rescue and protection, abodes and houses, continents and islands, objectives and destinations, and fathers and mothers for great bodhisattvas. The eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and the universal contemplations are also the guiding teachers, brilliant torches, illuminating lamps, explanation and awakening, knowledge and wisdom, rescue and protection, abodes and houses, continents and islands, objectives and destinations, and fathers and mothers for the great bodhisattvas.

“The liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration are the guiding teachers, brilliant torches, illuminating lamps, explanation and awakening, knowledge and wisdom, rescue and protection, abodes and houses, continents and islands, objectives and destinations, and fathers and mothers for great bodhisattvas. The stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilements, and so forth, and stage of dharma cloud are the guiding teachers, brilliant torches, illuminating lamps, explanation and awakening, knowledge and wisdom, rescue and protection, abodes and houses, continents and islands, objectives and destinations, and fathers and mothers for great bodhisattvas. The dharani gates and samadhi gates are the guiding teachers, brilliant torches, illuminating lamps, explanation and awakening, knowledge and wisdom, rescue and protection, abodes and houses, continents and islands, objectives and destinations, and fathers and mothers for great bodhisattvas. The five eyes and six supernatural powers are the guiding teachers, brilliant torches, illuminating lamps, explanation and awakening, knowledge and wisdom, rescue and protection, abodes and houses, continents and islands, objectives and destinations, and fathers and mothers for great bodhisattvas. The

Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power are also the guiding teachers, brilliant torches, illuminating lamps, explanation and awakening, knowledge and wisdom, rescue and protection, abodes and houses, continents and islands, objectives and destinations, and fathers and mothers for great bodhisattvas.

"Staying in correct mindfulness and always dwelling in equanimity are the guiding teachers, brilliant torches, illuminating lamps, explanation and awakening, knowledge and wisdom, rescue and protection, abodes and houses, continents and islands, objectives and destinations, and fathers and mothers for great bodhisattvas. The perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena are the guiding teachers, brilliant torches, illuminating lamps, explanation and awakening, knowledge and wisdom, rescue and protection, abodes and houses, continents and islands, objectives and destinations, and fathers and mothers for great bodhisattvas. All great bodhisattva actions are the guiding teachers, brilliant torches, illuminating lamps, explanation and awakening, knowledge and wisdom, rescue and protection, abodes and houses, continents and islands, objectives and destinations, and fathers and mothers for great bodhisattvas. The unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas is the guiding teacher, brilliant torch, illuminating lamp, explanation and awakening, knowledge and wisdom, rescue and protection, abode and house, continent and island, objective and destination, and father and mother for great bodhisattvas. The termination of all enduring negative dispositions is also the guiding teacher, brilliant torch, illuminating lamp, explanation and awakening, knowledge and wisdom, rescue and protection, abode and house, continent and island, objective and destination, and father and mother for great bodhisattvas.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering are the guiding teachers, brilliant torches, illuminating lamps, explanation and awakening, knowledge and wisdom, rescue and protection, abodes and houses, continents and islands, objectives and destinations, and fathers and mothers for great bodhisattvas. The dharmas that serve as the conditions and the factors of dependent origination are the guiding teachers, brilliant torches, illuminating lamps, explanation and awakening, knowledge and wisdom, rescue and protection, abodes and houses,

continents and islands, objectives and destinations, and fathers and mothers for great bodhisattvas. Internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature are the guiding teachers, brilliant torches, illuminating lamps, explanation and awakening, knowledge and wisdom, rescue and protection, abodes and houses, continents and islands, objectives and destinations, and fathers and mothers for great bodhisattvas. Realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable are also the guiding teachers, brilliant torches, illuminating lamps, explanation and awakening, knowledge and wisdom, rescue and protection, abodes and houses, continents and islands, objectives and destinations, and fathers and mothers for great bodhisattvas. Why? It is because the Buddhas, the World-Honored Ones in the past, future, and present have adopted giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable as the guiding teachers, brilliant torches, illuminating lamps, explanation and awakening, knowledge and wisdom, rescue and protection, abodes and houses, continents and islands, objectives and destinations, and fathers and mothers. Why? All Buddhas, the World-Honored Ones, in the past, future, and present are born from giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable.

(All these superior virtuous dharmas mentioned by the Buddha are the teachers, parents, lights, and basis serving as the guidance and powerful support for great bodhisattvas in the long and difficult journey of pursuing the unsurpassed bodhi.)

"Therefore, Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas have great motivation to realize the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, assist the sentient beings to mature, and dignify and purify the Buddha lands, they should learn giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita. They should learn the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path; the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations; the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations; the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration; the stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilements, and so forth, and stage of dharma cloud; the dharani gates and samadhi gates; the five eyes and six supernatural powers; the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power; staying in correct mindfulness and dwelling in equanimity; the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect

knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena. They should learn all great bodhisattva actions and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas. They should learn the termination of all enduring negative dispositions. They should learn the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering. They should learn the dharmas that serve as the conditions and the factors of dependent origination. They should learn internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature as well as realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable.

"Well-Appearing One, after learning giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable, the great bodhisattvas should further absorb sentient beings through four approaches. What are the four approaches? They are unconditional generous giving, speaking virtuous and kind words, doing actions beneficial for others, and getting along with others in harmony and empathy. Well-Appearing One, I have contemplated all these meanings, so I will say that giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable are the guiding teachers, brilliant torches, and so forth, and the fathers and mothers of the great bodhisattvas. Therefore, Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas would like to act by following the Buddha's words, dwell without following the words other than the Buddha's, solve the puzzles of all sentient beings, fulfill all their wishes, dignify and purify the Buddha lands, and assist the sentient beings to mature, they should learn prajna paramita. Why? Well-Appearing One, in the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita, all dharmas that the great bodhisattvas should learn are extensively taught. All great bodhisattvas must cultivate and learn them diligently."

(The Buddha further taught the superior holy dharmas that bodhisattva-vehicle practitioners should learn and cultivate.)

At that time, Well-Appearing One asked, "World-Honored One, what are the forms of the fathomless prajna paramita?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "Empty space, nonattachment, and formlessness are the forms of the fathomless prajna paramita. Why? Well-Appearing One, in the profound forms of prajna paramita, the forms of all dharmas are nonexistent and unattainable."

(The Buddha stated that the forms of the fathomless prajna paramita are emptiness, nonattachment, and formlessness.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, “Are there the causes and conditions that allow us to say that the rest of the dharmas have also the wonderful forms as the prajna paramita does?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “Yes, there are the causes and conditions to say that the rest of the dharmas also have the same wonderful forms as prajna paramita. Why? Why? Well-Appearing One, as the fathomless prajna paramita adopts getting far away as its form, so the rest of the dharmas also adopt getting far away as their form. As the fathomless prajna paramita adopts empty nature as its form, so the rest of the dharmas also adopt empty nature as their form. Based on these causes and conditions, it is reasonable to say that the rest of the dharmas also have the wonderful forms as of the fathomless prajna paramita. It is because the self-natures of all dharmas are empty and far away.”

(Not only prajna paramita, but other dharmas have similar wonderful forms.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, “If the self-natures of all dharmas are empty and far away, then all dharmas are empty and far away. If this is the case, how can the sentient beings establish contamination and purification? The dharmas with empty self-natures do not have contamination and purification; the faraway dharmas do not have contamination and purification either. The dharmas with empty self-natures cannot realize the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi; the faraway dharmas cannot realize the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi either. There are no attainable dharmas in the empty nature or the faraway nature. If in the empty and faraway natures, no great bodhisattvas can realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, then how can I understand such profound essential meanings that the Buddha teaches?”

(Well-Appearing One asked that if the dharmas are empty and far away, how can the great bodhisattvas understand and realize the profound meanings of the dharma?)

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “What do you think about this? Do the sentient beings have the ‘I’ and the associated images? Have they been attached to the ‘I’ and the associated images for a very long time?”

Well-Appearing One replied. “Yes, World-Honored One. The sentient beings have the ‘I’ and the associated images and have been attached to them for a very long time.”

The Buddha asked Well-Appearing One, “What do you think about this? Are the ‘I’ and the associated images that the sentient beings are attached to empty and far away?”

Well-Appearing One replied, “Yes, World-Honored One, the ‘I’ and the associated images to which the sentient beings are attached are empty and far away.”

The Buddha asked Well-Appearing One, “What do you think about this? Do the sentient beings drift in birth and death because they are attached to the ‘I’ and the associated images?”

Well-Appearing One replied, “Yes, World-Honored One. The sentient beings have drifted in birth and death because of their attachment to the ‘I’ and the associated images.”

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, “The sentient beings have drifted in birth and death because they are contaminated. Contamination is established because of the sentient beings. If the minds of the sentient beings are not contaminated, the ‘I’ and the associated images are not contaminated either. If there is no such contamination, there will be no drifting in birth and death. As the drifting in birth and death is unattainable, you must know that the sentient beings are far away from the contamination. Based on noncontamination, purification is established. Therefore, Well-Appearing One, although the self-natures of all dharmas are empty and far away, the sentient beings can establish contamination and purification.”

(The Buddha explained why and how sentient beings established contamination and purification of all dharmas.)

At that time, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One said to the Buddha again, “World-Honored One, if the great bodhisattvas can practice the fathomless prajna paramita and the empty and faraway natures of all dharmas, these great bodhisattvas will not practice matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness; the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and conscious

spheres; the sight, sound, smell, taste, touch, and mental-image spheres; the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and conscious realms; the sight, sound, smell, taste, touch, and mental-image realms; the eye consciousness realm, ear consciousness realm, nose consciousness realm, tongue consciousness realm, body consciousness realm, and conscious consciousness realm; the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and conscious contacts; and the feelings produced by eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and conscious contacts; and the earth, water, fire, wind, space, and consciousness realms. If the great bodhisattvas can practice the fathomless prajna paramita and the empty and faraway natures of all dharmas, they will not practice cause and condition, consecutive thoughts, conditions that stimulate the mind, and the conditions that reinforce main causes; ignorance, action, consciousness, name and form, six sense spheres, contact, reception, craving, grasping, existence, birth, old age, and death; giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna paramitas; internal emptiness, external emptiness, internal-external emptiness, emptiness of emptiness, emptiness of space, emptiness of ultimate truth, emptiness of conditioned phenomena, emptiness of unconditioned reality, emptiness in the final analysis, emptiness of nontemporality, emptiness of deconstruction and nondeconstruction, emptiness of original nature, emptiness of particular and common characteristics, emptiness of all dharmas, emptiness of nonattainment, emptiness of selflessness, emptiness of self-nature, and emptiness of selfless self-nature; and realness, dharma realm, dharma nature, the nature of nonillusion, nature of changelessness, nature of equality, nature of nonarising, dharma concentration, dharma dwelling, reality, the realm of empty space, and the realm of the inconceivable. If the great bodhisattvas can practice the fathomless prajna paramita and the empty and faraway natures of all dharmas, they will not practice the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering; the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, four bases of power, five roots, five powers, seven factors for enlightenment, and noble eightfold path; the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations; the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations; the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration; the stages of pure contemplation, embryonic Buddha nature, eight-forbearance, insight, slight vexation, freedom from desires, arhat, self-enlightenment bodhi, bodhisattva, and Thus-Comer; the stages of ecstasy, freedom from defilements, emitting light, flaming wisdom, being extremely difficult to surpass, realness manifestation, going far away, the

unmovable, expedient wisdom, and dharma cloud; all dharani gates and all samadhi gates; the five eyes and six supernatural powers; the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, four unhindered understandings, great loving-kindness, great compassion, great joy, great equanimity, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power; staying in correct mindfulness and always dwelling in equanimity; stream-entry effect, once-return effect, nonreturn effect, arhat effect, self-enlightenment bodhi, and the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena. Why? It is because the ones who practice the dharmas, the dharmas to be practiced, and the cause, the place, and the time of the practice are all unattainable.

"World-Honored One, if the great bodhisattvas cultivate various dharmas this way, they will not be subjugated by all heavenly beings, human beings, asuras, and so forth of the world. Rather, the great bodhisattvas will overcome all of them. World-Honored One, if the great bodhisattvas cultivate this way, they will not be subjugated by all voice-hearers and self-enlightened ones; on the contrary, the great bodhisattvas can subjugate them. Why? It is because these great bodhisattvas have already dwelled peacefully and firmly in the state of invincibility; that is, the state of nonarising for bodhisattva. World-Honored One, these great bodhisattvas will always dwell firmly in the intention correspondent with the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, so they are invincible. World-Honored One, as these great bodhisattvas cultivate this way, they are very close to the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge and will attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi soon."

The Buddha said, "Yes, it is as you say. If the great bodhisattvas can practice the fathomless prajna paramita and the empty and faraway natures of all dharmas this way, they will not practice matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of everything, the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena. Then the ones who practice the dharmas, the dharmas to be practiced, and the cause, the place, and the time of the practice are unattainable. If the great bodhisattvas practice this way, they will neither be subjugated by all heavenly beings, human beings, asuras, and so forth, nor by voice-hearers and self-enlightened ones. On the contrary, these great bodhisattvas can subjugate all of them. These great bodhisattvas have already dwelled peacefully and firmly in the state of invincibility; that is, the state of nonarising for bodhisattva.

These great bodhisattvas have always dwelled peacefully and firmly in the intention correspondent with the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, and they are invincible. They are very close to the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge and will attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi soon."

(The Buddha confirmed what Well-Appearing One said that if the great bodhisattvas can practice the fathomless prajna paramita and the forms of various dharmas as empty, far away, and unattainable, then they do dwell peacefully and firmly in the state of nonarising; they will be invincible since they are very close to the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge.)

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Chapter 60

Overstating Self Achievement

Section 3

(In the Second Assembly)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, suppose that all sentient beings of the continent of Jambudvipa are reborn as human beings. They all have aspired to cultivate and learn various great bodhisattva actions, and have all realized and attained the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. Meanwhile, some good gentlemen and gentlewomen make the most wonderful offerings respectfully to esteem and acclaim all these Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones in the rest of their lives, and further transfer all virtuous roots thus accumulated along with sentient beings equally toward the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. What do you think about this? Will these good gentlemen and gentlewomen be much blessed?"

Well-Appearing One replied, "They will be much blessed, World-Honored One. They will be much blessed, Well-Gone One."

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, "If the good gentlemen and gentlewomen lecture publicly on such fathomless prajna paramita and organize, analyze, and explain respectively to make it understandable, so the sentient beings are able to dwell in a mind correspondent with the fathomless prajna paramita, then the merits and virtues gained by these good gentlemen and gentlewomen will be much more than the former ones by innumerable times.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, suppose that all sentient beings of the large threefold thousand-world are reborn as human beings. They all have aspired to cultivate and learn various great bodhisattva actions, and have all realized and attained the unsurpassed, perfect, and

universal bodhi. Meanwhile, some good gentlemen and gentlewomen make the most wonderful offerings respectfully to esteem and acclaim all these Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones in the rest of their lives, and further transfer all virtuous roots thus accumulated along with sentient beings equally toward the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. What do you think about this? Will these good gentlemen and gentlewomen be much blessed?"

Well-Appearing One replied, "They will be much blessed, World-Honored One. They will be much blessed, Well-Gone One."

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, "If the good gentlemen and gentlewomen lecture publicly on such fathomless prajna paramita and organize, analyze, and explain respectively to make it understandable, so the sentient beings are able to dwell in a mind correspondent with the fathomless prajna paramita, then the merits and virtues gained by these good gentlemen and gentlewomen will be much more than the former ones by innumerable times.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, suppose that all sentient beings of this continent of Jambudvipa are reborn as human beings simultaneously, and in the meantime some good gentlemen and gentlewomen have expediently taught and guided these human beings so they are able to dwell peacefully in the path of the ten virtuous karmas; the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and the four formless concentrations; the five supernatural powers; the stream-entry effect, once-return effect, nonreturn effect, arhat effect, or self-enlightenment bodhi; and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. Furthermore, they will transfer all virtuous roots thus accumulated along with all sentient beings equally toward the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. What do you think about this? Will these good gentlemen and gentlewomen be much blessed because of this cause and condition?"

Well-Appearing One replied, "They will be much blessed, World-Honored One. They will be much blessed, Well-Gone One."

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, "If the good gentlemen and gentlewomen lecture publicly on such fathomless prajna paramita and organize, analyze, and explain

respectively to make it understandable so the sentient beings are able to dwell in a mind correspondent with the fathomless prajna paramita, then the merits and virtues gained by these good gentlemen and gentlewomen will be much more than the former ones by innumerable times.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, suppose that all sentient beings of the large threefold thousand-world are reborn as human beings simultaneously, and in the meantime some good gentlemen and gentlewomen have expediently taught and guided these human beings so they are able to dwell peacefully in the path of the ten virtuous karmas; the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and the four formless concentrations; the five supernatural powers; the stream-entry effect, once-return effect, nonreturn effect, arhat effect, or self-enlightenment bodhi; and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. Furthermore, they will transfer all virtuous roots thus accumulated along with all sentient beings equally toward the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. What do you think about this? Will these good gentlemen and gentlewomen be much blessed because of this cause and condition?"

Well-Appearing One replied, "They will be much blessed, World-Honored One. They will be much blessed, Well-Gone One."

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, "If the good gentlemen and gentlewomen lecture publicly on such fathomless prajna paramita and organize, analyze, and explain respectively to make it understandable so the sentient beings are able to dwell in a mind correspondent with the fathomless prajna paramita, then the merits and virtues gained by these good gentlemen and gentlewomen will be much more than the former ones by innumerable times.

"Well-Appearing One, you must know that these great bodhisattvas will guide various sentient beings to cross the river and reach the blessed other shore owing to their strengthened powers of diligence. Why? These great bodhisattvas have worked diligently on the dharma; their powers increase and no other sentient beings can catch up except the Thus-Comer, One Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened One. Why? When cultivating prajna paramita, these great bodhisattvas have observed that the sentient beings lack benefits and happiness, so their minds of great loving-kindness arise. They have noted that the sentient beings

are weak and in suffering, so their minds of great compassion arise. They have found that the sentient beings have gained benefits and happiness now, so their minds of great joy arise. They have seen that the sentient beings are detached from the natures and forms of all dharmas, so their minds of great equanimity arise. They have done what the voice-hearers and self-enlightened ones cannot do. Although these great bodhisattvas have great loving-kindness, great compassion, great joy, and great equanimity and treat all sentient beings equally, they are not attached to all dharmas, so they are so different from the ordinary sentient beings, the voice-hearers, and the self-enlightened ones who are attached to what they have attained.

"Well-Appearing One, these great bodhisattvas will consistently initiate loving-kindness, compassion, joy, and equanimity for all sentient beings. They maintain equanimity only because they cannot stop benefiting all sentient beings, even briefly. Well-Appearing One, these great bodhisattvas have cultivated prajna paramita and attained great brightness. That is, they have attained the great brightness of giving paramita, the great brightness of pure-precept paramita, the great brightness of forbearance paramita, the great brightness of diligence paramita, the great brightness of meditation paramita, and the great brightness of prajna paramita.

"Well-Appearing One, although these great bodhisattvas have not realized the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, they have achieved nonregression in the pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, so they are able to guide sentient beings to reach the other shore, the blessed realm. They deserve the offerings of clothes, food, drinks, beds, chairs, medicines, and other living supplies. Well-Appearing One, these great bodhisattvas have always stayed in a mind in accord with prajna paramita. This is their way to return the favor with gratitude to the givers; this is also the reason why they can stay close to the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. Therefore, Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas would like to really repay the favors and the trusts granted by the kings, high-ranking officials, and the rest of the sentient beings; show a real and pure way for the sentient beings; become a great bright illumination for the sentient beings; liberate all sentient beings from the prisons of the three realms; bring pure dharma eye to the sentient beings; relieve the sentient beings from the ocean of birth and death; serve as great continents and isles for the sentient beings; and bring ultimate peace and happiness to all sentient beings, they should always dwell peacefully in a mind correspondent with the fathomless prajna paramita.

(The Buddha emphasized the importance of dwelling in a mind correspondent with prajna paramita for the great bodhisattvas who would like to benefit sentient beings.)

"Well-Appearing One, some great bodhisattvas have always dwelled peacefully in an intention correspondent with the fathomless prajna paramita; they have spoken about and reflected reasonably on the dharmas correspondent with prajna paramita. Well-Appearing One, as these great bodhisattvas dwell in the intention correspondent with prajna paramita, no other intentions will be allowed to arise in their minds even briefly.

"Well-Appearing One, these great bodhisattvas have worked diligently day and night to dwell peacefully and firmly in the intention correspondent with prajna paramita without interruption, so no other intentions will be allowed to arise. A man was used to have no jewels. One day he got one and enjoyed and treasured it very much. But later he lost it and became extremely painful, and thought, 'It is such a great pity! When can I have that lost jewel returned to me?' This thought remained in his mind all the time without interruption. So do the great bodhisattvas who have worked diligently and dwelled peacefully in a mind correspondent with prajna paramita. Once staying away from the intention correspondent with prajna paramita, they will also lose the intention correspondent with the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. Therefore, Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas should dwell peacefully in an intention correspondent with the fathomless prajna paramita. If they do this way, they will not lose the intention correspondent with the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge."

At that time, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "World-Honored One, the self-nature of all intentions is empty, and the self-nature of all intentions is far away too. So are all dharmas. In the empty self-nature and faraway self-nature of all dharmas, the great bodhisattva, prajna paramita, the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, and the intentions are all unattainable. Then why does the Thus-Comer, One Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened One advise and encourage the great bodhisattvas not to stay away from the intention correspondent with prajna paramita and the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge?"

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, "The great bodhisattvas realize that the self-nature of all dharmas and the self-nature of intentions are empty and far away, and that such

empty nature and faraway nature are not made by the voice-hearers, self-enlightened ones, bodhisattvas, Thus-Comers, or the rest of the sentient beings. They also realize that dharma concentration, dharma dwelling, dharma nature, dharma realm, the nature of nonillusion, nature of changelessness, nature of equality, nature of nonarising, realness, reality, the realm of empty space, and the realm of the inconceivable of all dharmas always dwell as they have done. The great bodhisattvas thus will not be apart from the intention correspondent with prajna paramita and the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. Why? The self-nature of the fathomless prajna paramita, the self-nature of the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, and the self-nature of the intention are far away and empty. Such empty nature and faraway nature do not increase or decrease. To correctly and fully understand this truth is not apart from the intention correspondent with prajna paramita and the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge.

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, “If the self-nature of the fathomless prajna paramita is also empty and faraway, then how do the great bodhisattvas cultivate and realize the nature of equality of prajna paramita and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “When cultivating the nature of equality of prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas realize that the Buddha dharma does not increase or decrease. They also realize that dharma concentration, dharma dwelling, dharma nature, dharma realm, the nature of nonillusion, nature of changelessness, nature of equality, nature of nonarising, realness, reality, the realm of empty space, and the realm of the inconceivable of all dharmas do not increase or decrease. Why? The fathomless prajna paramita is not one, two, or many. You must know, Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas are not shocked, scared, frightened, sinking, drowned, and hesitant upon hearing the fathomless prajna paramita, they must have cultivated the fathomless prajna paramita and reached its ultimate stage; they have dwelled peacefully in the state of nonregression. They will realize the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi to greatly and universally benefit the sentient beings before long.”

At that time, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, “World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita with the empty, nonexistent, not easy, and not solid nature of the fathomless prajna paramita?”

“No, Well-Appearing One.”

“World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita apart from the empty, nonexistent, not easy, and not solid nature of the fathomless prajna paramita?”

“No, Well-Appearing One.”

“World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita with the fathomless prajna paramita?”

“No, Well-Appearing One.”

“World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita apart from the fathomless prajna paramita?”

“No, Well-Appearing One.”

“World-Honored One, can one practice emptiness with the nature of emptiness?”

“No, Well-Appearing One.”

“World-Honored One, can one practice emptiness apart from the nature of emptiness?”

“No, Well-Appearing One.”

“World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita with matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness?”

“No, Well-Appearing One.”

“World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita apart from matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness?”

“No, Well-Appearing One.”

“World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita with the eye sphere, ear sphere, and so forth, and the conscious sphere?”

“No, Well-Appearing One.”

"World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita apart from the eye sphere, ear sphere, and so forth, and the conscious sphere?"

"No, Well-Appearing One."

"World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita with the sight sphere, sound sphere, and so forth, and the mental-image sphere?"

"No, Well-Appearing One."

"World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita apart from the sight sphere, sound sphere, and so forth, and the mental-image sphere?"

"No, Well-Appearing One."

"World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita with the eye realm, ear realm, and so forth, and the conscious realm?"

"No, Well-Appearing One."

"World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita apart from the eye realm, ear realm, and so forth, and the conscious realm?"

"No, Well-Appearing One."

"World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita with the sight realm, sound realm, and so forth, and the mental-image realm?"

"No, Well-Appearing One."

"World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita apart from the sight realm, sound realm, and so forth, and the mental-image realm?"

"No, Well-Appearing One."

"World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita with the eye consciousness realm, ear consciousness realm, and so forth, and the conscious consciousness realm?"

"No, Well-Appearing One."

"World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita apart from the eye consciousness realm, ear consciousness realm, and so forth, and the conscious consciousness realm?"

"No, Well-Appearing One."

"World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita with the eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and the conscious contact?"

"No, Well-Appearing One."

"World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita apart from the eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and the conscious contact?"

"No, Well-Appearing One."

"World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita with the feelings produced by eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact?"

"No, Well-Appearing One."

"World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita apart from the feelings produced by eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact?"

"No, Well-Appearing One."

"World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita with the earth realm, water realm, and so forth, and the consciousness realm?"

"No, Well-Appearing One."

"World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita apart from the earth realm, water realm, and so forth, and the conscious realm?"

"No, Well-Appearing One."

"World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita with cause and condition, consecutive thoughts, the conditions that stimulate the mind, and the conditions that reinforce main causes?"

"No, Well-Appearing One."

"World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita apart from cause and condition, consecutive thoughts, the conditions that stimulate the mind, and the conditions that reinforce main causes?"

"No, Well-Appearing One."

"World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita with ignorance, action, consciousness, and so forth, and old age and death?"

"No, Well-Appearing One."

"World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita apart from ignorance, action, consciousness, and so forth, and old age and death?"

"No, Well-Appearing One."

"World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita with giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita?"

"No, Well-Appearing One."

"World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita apart from giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita?"

"No, Well-Appearing One."

"World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita with internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature?"

"No, Well-Appearing One."

"World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita apart from internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature?"

"No, Well-Appearing One."

"World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita with realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable?"

"No, Well-Appearing One."

"World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita apart from realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable?"

"No, Well-Appearing One."

"World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita with the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering?"

"No, Well-Appearing One."

"World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita apart from the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering?"

"No, Well-Appearing One."

"World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita with the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations?"

"No, Well-Appearing One."

"World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita apart from the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations?"

"No, Well-Appearing One."

"World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita with the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations?"

"No, Well-Appearing One."

"World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita apart from the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations?"

"No, Well-Appearing One."

"World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita with the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and the noble eightfold path?"

"No, Well-Appearing One."

"World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita apart from the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and the noble eightfold path?"

"No, Well-Appearing One."

"World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita with the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration?"

"No, Well-Appearing One."

"World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita apart from the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration?"

"No, Well-Appearing One."

"World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita with the stage of pure contemplation, the stage of embryonic Buddha nature, and so forth, and the stage of Thus-Comer?"

"No, Well-Appearing One."

"World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita apart from the stage of pure contemplation, the stage of embryonic Buddha nature, and so forth, and the stage of Thus-Comer?"

"No, Well-Appearing One."

"World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita with the stage of ecstasy, the stage of freedom from defilements, and so forth, and the stage of dharma cloud?"

"No, Well-Appearing One."

"World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita apart from the stage of ecstasy, the stage of freedom from defilements, and so forth, and the stage of dharma cloud?"

"No, Well-Appearing One."

"World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita with all dharani gates and all samadhi gates?"

"No, Well-Appearing One."

"World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita apart from all dharani gates and all samadhi gates?"

"No, Well-Appearing One."

"World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita with the five eyes and six supernatural powers?"

"No, Well-Appearing One."

"World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita apart from the five eyes and six supernatural powers?"

"No, Well-Appearing One."

"World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita with the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and the eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power?"

"No, Well-Appearing One."

"World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita apart from the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and the eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power?"

"No, Well-Appearing One."

"World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita with the thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features?"

"No, Well-Appearing One."

"World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita apart from the thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features?"

"No, Well-Appearing One."

"World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita with staying in correct mindfulness and dwelling in equanimity at all times?"

"No, Well-Appearing One."

"World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita apart from staying correct mindfulness and dwelling in equanimity at all times?"

"No, Well-Appearing One."

"World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita with stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi?"

"No, Well-Appearing One."

"World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita apart from stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi?"

"No, Well-Appearing One."

"World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita with all great bodhisattva actions and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas?"

"No, Well-Appearing One."

"World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita apart from all great bodhisattva actions and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas?"

"No, Well-Appearing One."

"World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita with the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena?"

"No, Well-Appearing One."

"World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita apart from the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena?"

"No, Well-Appearing One."

"World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita with the empty, nonexistent, not easy, and not solid matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness?"

"No, Well-Appearing One."

"World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita apart from the empty, nonexistent, not easy, and not solid matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness?"

"No, Well-Appearing One."

"World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita with the empty, nonexistent, not easy, and not solid perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena?"

"No, Well-Appearing One."

"World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita apart from the empty, nonexistent, not easy, and not solid perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena?"

"No, Well-Appearing One."

"World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita with realness, dharma realm, dharma nature, the nature of nonillusion, nature of changelessness, nature of equality, nature of nonarising, dharma concentration, dharma dwelling, reality, the realm of empty space, and the realm of the inconceivable of matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness?"

"No, Well-Appearing One."

"World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita apart from realness, dharma realm, dharma nature, the nature of nonillusion, nature of changelessness, nature of equality, nature of nonarising, dharma concentration, dharma dwelling, reality, the realm of empty space, and the realm of the inconceivable of matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness?"

"No, Well-Appearing One."

"World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita with realness, dharma realm, dharma nature, the nature of nonillusion, nature of changelessness, nature of equality, nature of nonarising, dharma concentration, dharma dwelling, reality, the realm of empty space, and the realm of the inconceivable of the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena?"

"No, Well-Appearing One."

"World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita apart from realness, dharma realm, dharma nature, the nature of nonillusion, nature of changelessness, nature of equality, nature of nonarising, dharma concentration, dharma dwelling, reality, the realm of empty space, and the realm of the inconceivable of the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena?"

"No, Well-Appearing One."

"World-Honored One, if one cannot practice the fathomless prajna paramita with and apart from all these dharmas, then how can the great bodhisattvas practice the fathomless prajna paramita?"

The Buddha replied by asking Well-Appearing One, "What do you think about this? Have you seen any dharma that can practice the fathomless prajna paramita?"

Well-Appearing One said, "No, World-Honored One."

The Buddha asked Well-Appearing One, "What do you think about this? Have you seen that the fathomless prajna paramita is the locus where the great bodhisattvas practice?"

Well-Appearing One replied, "No, World-Honored One."

The Buddha asked Well-Appearing One, "What do you think about this? Are the dharmas that you have not seen attainable?"

Well-Appearing One replied, "No, World-Honored One."

The Buddha asked Well-Appearing One, "What do you think about this? Do the unattainable dharmas have arising and extinction?"

Well-Appearing One replied, "No, World-Honored One."

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, "The dharma nature of all dharmas that you have seen is the dharma forbearance of nonarising of the great bodhisattvas. If the great bodhisattvas can achieve such dharma forbearance of nonarising, they will be conferred by various Buddhas the prophecy of achieving nonregression in the unsurpassed, perfect, and

universal bodhi. These great bodhisattvas will be able to diligently practice the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, four unhindered understandings, great loving-kindness, great compassion, great joy, great equanimity, and the eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power as they should do; they thus can acquire immeasurable and countless superior merits and virtues. If the great bodhisattvas can cultivate this way, it is unreasonable to say that they will not be able to attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi; the perfect knowledge of all phenomena; the great knowledge; and the wonderful knowledge. Why? It is because these great bodhisattvas have realized and attained the dharma forbearance of nonarising and will not regress in the pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi."

(Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha that as all dharmas are unattainable, and no one can practice prajna paramita either with or apart from various dharmas, how can great bodhisattvas cultivate prajna paramita and attain the unsurpassed bodhi? The Buddha explained that the dharma nature of all dharmas that we have seen as without arising and extinction and unattainable is exactly the dharma forbearance of nonarising for the great bodhisattvas. If the great bodhisattvas realize this truth, they will not regress in the pursuit of the unsurpassed bodhi.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "World-Honored One, will the great bodhisattvas be conferred by the Buddha the prophecy of achieving nonregression in the pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi because of the nature of nonarising of all dharmas?"

"No, Well-Appearing One."

"World-Honored One, will the great bodhisattvas be conferred by the Buddha the prophecy of achieving nonregression in the pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi because of the nature of arising of all dharmas?"

"No, Well-Appearing One."

"World-Honored One, will the great bodhisattvas be conferred by the Buddha the prophecy of achieving nonregression in the pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi because of the nature of arising and nonarising of all dharmas?"

"No, Well-Appearing One."

"World-Honored One, will the great bodhisattvas be conferred by the Buddha the prophecy of achieving nonregression in the pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi because of the nature of nonarising and not nonarising of all dharmas?"

"No, Well-Appearing One."

"World-Honored One, then how can the great bodhisattvas be conferred by the Buddha the prophecy of achieving nonregression in the pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi?"

The Buddha replied by asking Well-Appearing One, "What do you think about this? Have you seen any dharma that can be conferred the prophecy of achieving nonregression in the pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi?"

Well-Appearing One said, "No, World-Honored One. I have not seen any dharma that can be conferred the prophecy of achieving nonregression in the pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, nor have I seen anyone who can realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddha. The place, the time, and the cause of this realization and attainment are all unattainable."

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, "Yes, it is as you say. Well-Appearing One, because all dharmas are unattainable, the great bodhisattvas will not think, 'I can realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. I definitely will attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi with this method, at this time, and in this place.' Why? Well-Appearing One, as the great bodhisattvas cultivate the fathomless prajna paramita, they do not have such differentiation. Why? The fathomless prajna paramita is far away from all kinds of differentiation. To let such differentiation arise is not practicing the fathomless prajna paramita."

(The Buddha concluded that those who have differentiation among the causes, time, place, other factors, and hold the thought that these dharmas are existent or nonexistent, attainable or unattainable, can receive the prophecy of achieving nonregression from the Buddha.)

Chapter 61

Learning Together

Section 1

(In the Second Assembly)

At that time, Heavenly Emperor Indra said to the Buddha, “World-Honored One, such prajna paramita is extremely profound. It is difficult to see and be awakened to. It is beyond one’s reflection and imagination. It is so subtle and mystic that only the wise and intelligent ones can understand since various forms are in the final analysis apart from differentiation. World-Honored One, if the good gentlemen and gentlewomen love to hear, accept, embrace, practice, read, recite, thoroughly understand, reasonably reflect on, cultivate, and lecture on the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita incessantly until realizing the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi without being distracted by and mixed with other thoughts, they should first follow this path to achieve many virtuous roots so that they can fulfill this wish.”

In the meantime, the Buddha said to Heavenly Emperor Indra, “Yes, it is as you say. Kausika, if the good gentlemen and gentlewomen love to hear, accept, embrace, practice, read, recite, thoroughly understand, reasonably reflect on, cultivate, and lecture on the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita incessantly until realizing the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, and are not occupied by the ideas and the associated images other than prajna paramita, then these good gentlemen and gentlewomen should follow this path to achieve great and broad virtuous roots to fulfill their wish. Kausika, some good gentlemen and gentlewomen have guided and encouraged various sentient beings in the continent of Jambudvipa, the continent of Aparagodaniya, and so forth, and the large threefold thousand-world to practice the path of the ten virtuous karmas, four meditations, four immeasurable minds, four formless concentrations, and five supernatural powers, and thus have gained many merits and virtues. On the other hand, some good gentlemen and gentlewomen love to hear, accept, embrace, practice, read, recite, thoroughly understand, cultivate, and correctly lecture on the sutras of fathomless prajna

paramita, then the merits and virtues thus gained will be much more than the former ones by one hundred, one thousand, or even one upanisadam times."

At that time in the assembly, a bhiksu (monk) said to Heavenly Emperor Indra, "Kausika, if the good gentlemen and gentlewomen love to hear, accept, embrace, read, recite, thoroughly understand, reasonably reflect on, cultivate, and correctly lecture for others on the profound sutras of prajna paramita in concentration and do not involve other minds and associated images until attaining the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, then the merits and virtues thus acquired will be much more than those gained by all sentient beings in the continent of Jambudvipa, the continent of Aparagodaniya, and so forth, and the large threefold thousand-world who have achieved numberless merits and virtues from practicing the path of the ten virtuous karmas, four meditations, four immeasurable minds, four formless concentrations, and five supernatural powers."

Heavenly Emperor Indra said, "As these good gentlemen and gentlewomen began to initiate a mind correspondent with the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, the merits and virtues thus gained at that moment were already more than those acquired by all sentient beings in the continent of Jambudvipa, continent of Aparagodaniya, and so forth, and the large threefold thousand-world who had achieved the merits and virtues caused by practicing the path of the ten virtuous karmas, four meditations, four immeasurable minds, four formless concentrations, and five supernatural powers by hundreds of thousands of times, not to mention the merits and virtues gained by the good gentlemen and gentlewomen who can hear, accept, embrace, read, recite, thoroughly understand, reasonably reflect on, cultivate, and correctly lecture for others on the very profound sutras of prajna paramita without being involved with other minds and associated images until attaining the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.

"You must know, bhiksu, the merits and virtues accumulated by these good gentlemen and gentlewomen are not only much more than those acquired by all sentient beings in the continent of Jambudvipa, continent of Aparagodaniya, and so forth, and the threefold thousand-world who have accumulated from practicing the path of the ten virtuous karmas, four meditations, and so forth, but also more than the merits and virtues of all heavenly beings, human beings, asuras, and so forth in the worlds. Why? It is because these good gentlemen and

gentlewomen will realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi before long to bring endless benefits and happiness to all sentient beings.

"You must know, bhiksu, the merits, virtues, knowledge, and wisdom of these good gentlemen and gentlewomen are not only superior to all merits and virtues of the heavenly beings, human beings, asuras, and so forth in the worlds, but also superior to all merits and virtues of the stream-enterers, once-returners, nonreturners, arhats, and self-enlightened ones. Why? These good gentlemen and gentlewomen will realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi soon to bring endless benefits and happiness to all sentient beings.

"You must know, bhiksu, the merits, virtues, knowledge, and wisdom of these good gentlemen and gentlewomen are not only superior to all merits and virtues of the stream-enterers, once-returners, nonreturners, arhats, and self-enlightened ones, but also superior to the great bodhisattvas who stay far away from the skillful means of prajna paramita to cultivate giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna paramitas; dwell peacefully in internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature; dwell peacefully in realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable; dwell peacefully in the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering; cultivate the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations; cultivate the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations; cultivate the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path; cultivate the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration; cultivate the stage of ecstasy, the stage of freedom from defilements, and so forth, and stage of dharma cloud; cultivate all dharani gates and all samadhi gates; cultivate the five eyes and six supernatural powers; cultivate the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power; cultivate to stay in correct mindfulness and dwell in equanimity at all times; cultivate the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena; contemplate the twelve chains of dependent origination from two directions; assist the sentient beings to mature, and dignify and purify the Buddha lands; and cultivate all great bodhisattva actions and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas. Why? These good gentlemen and gentlewomen will realize and

attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi before long to bring endless benefits and happiness to all sentient beings.

(Heavenly Emperor Indra stated that practicing prajna paramita to benefit all beings produces greater merits and virtues than practicing small vehicles or the bodhisattva path without skillful means.)

"You must know, bhiksu, the merits, virtues, knowledge, and wisdom of these good gentlemen and gentlewomen are also superior to all great bodhisattvas who stay far away from skillful means when cultivating all merits and virtues of prajna paramita. Why? It is because these good gentlemen and gentlewomen can realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly to bring endless benefits and happiness to all sentient beings.

"Furthermore, bhiksu, these good gentlemen and gentlewomen are true great bodhisattvas. Since they have cultivated the fathomless prajna paramita by following the Buddha's teachings, they will not be subjugated by all heavenly beings, human beings, asuras, bodhisattvas, self-enlightened ones, and voice-hearers. They will inherit and perpetuate the seeds and essence of the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge forever. They have never been far away from the real and pure virtuous friends, namely, the Buddhas and the bodhisattvas. They will sit on the throne of the wonderful bodhi before long, overcome all evil demons and their associates, realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, and relieve the sentient beings from the suffering of birth, old age, illness, and death and lead them to ultimate and permanent happiness of nirvana.

"You must know, bhiksu, these great bodhisattvas have cultivated the fathomless prajna paramita by following the Buddha's teaching. They always learn the dharmas that the great bodhisattvas should learn; they do not learn the dharmas that the voice-hearers and the self-enlightened ones learn.

"You must know, bhiksu, because these great bodhisattvas have cultivated the fathomless prajna paramita and have always learned what the great bodhisattvas should learn, the four heavenly kings will lead their heavenly beings to visit them and make offerings respectfully to esteem and acclaim them. They will all say, 'Excellent, great bodhisattvas! You should learn

diligently the dharmas that various great bodhisattvas should learn. Do not learn the dharmas that the voice-hearers and the self-enlightened ones learn. If you can learn this way, you will be able to sit on the throne of the wonderful bodhi quickly, and realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi soon. You will receive the four bowls as the Thus-Comer, One Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened One previously did. We will present the four bowls to you in the same manner as the four heavenly kings did previously.'

"You must know, bhiksu, because these great bodhisattvas have cultivated the fathomless prajna paramita and have always learned what the great bodhisattvas should learn, Heavenly Emperor will also lead heavenly beings to visit them and make offerings respectfully to esteem and acclaim them, and will say, 'Excellent, great bodhisattvas! You should learn diligently the dharmas that various great bodhisattvas should learn. Do not learn the dharmas that the voice-hearers and the self-enlightened ones learn. If you can learn this way, you will be able to sit on the throne of the wonderful bodhi quickly, realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi soon, and turn the wonderful dharma wheel to deliver all sentient beings.'

"You must know, bhiksu, because these great bodhisattvas have cultivated the fathomless prajna paramita and have always learned what the great bodhisattvas should learn, the heavenly sons from the Heaven of Yama (The Heaven of Wonderful Times) will lead all their associates to visit them and make offerings respectfully to esteem and acclaim them, and will say, 'Excellent, excellent, great bodhisattvas! You should learn diligently the dharmas that various great bodhisattvas should learn. Do not learn the dharmas that the voice-hearers and the self-enlightened ones learn. If you can learn this way, you will be able to sit on the throne of the wonderful bodhi quickly, realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi soon, and turn the wonderful dharma wheel to deliver all sentient beings.'

"You must know, bhiksu, because these great bodhisattvas have cultivated the fathomless prajna paramita and have always learned what the great bodhisattvas should learn, the heavenly sons from the Heaven of Tusita (The Heaven of Joyful Satisfaction) will lead their associates to visit them and make offerings respectfully to esteem and acclaim them, and will say, 'Excellent, excellent, great bodhisattvas! You should learn diligently the dharmas that various great bodhisattvas should learn. Do not learn the dharmas that the voice-hearers and the self-

enlightened ones learn. If you can learn this way, you will be able to sit on the throne of the wonderful bodhi quickly, realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi soon, and turn the wonderful dharma wheel to deliver all sentient beings.'

"You must know, bhiksu, because these great bodhisattvas have cultivated the fathomless prajna paramita and have always learned what the great bodhisattvas should learn, the heavenly sons from the Heaven of Enjoying Self-Made Changes will lead their associates to visit them and make offerings respectfully to esteem and acclaim them, and will say, 'Excellent, excellent, great bodhisattvas! You should learn diligently the dharmas that various great bodhisattvas should learn. Do not learn the dharmas that the voice-hearers and the self-enlightened ones learn. If you can learn this way, you will be able to sit on the throne of the wonderful bodhi quickly, realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi soon, and turn the wonderful dharma wheel to deliver all sentient beings.'

"You must know, bhiksu, because these great bodhisattvas have cultivated the fathomless prajna paramita and have always learned what the great bodhisattvas should learn, the heavenly sons from the Heaven of Enjoying Other-Made Changes will lead their associates to visit them and make offerings respectfully to esteem and acclaim them, and will say, 'Excellent, excellent, great bodhisattvas! You should learn diligently the dharmas that various great bodhisattvas should learn. Do not learn the dharmas that the voice-hearers and the self-enlightened ones learn. If you can learn this way, you will be able to sit on the throne of the wonderful bodhi quickly, realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi soon, and turn the wonderful dharma wheel to deliver all sentient beings.'

"You must know, bhiksu, because these great bodhisattvas have cultivated the fathomless prajna paramita and have always learned what the great bodhisattvas should learn, the lord of the barely tolerable realm, Great Brahma King, will lead heavenly beings from the Heaven of Brahma Followers, Heaven of Brahma Associates, and Heaven of Brahma Family to visit them and make offerings respectfully to esteem and acclaim them, and will say, 'Excellent, excellent, great bodhisattvas! You should learn diligently the dharmas that various great bodhisattvas should learn. Do not learn the dharmas that the voice-hearers and the self-enlightened ones learn. If you can learn this way, you will be able to sit on the throne of the wonderful bodhi quickly,

realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi soon, and turn the wonderful dharma wheel to deliver all sentient beings.'

"You must know, bhiksu, because these great bodhisattvas have cultivated the fathomless prajna paramita as they are taught, the lords of the Heaven of Extremely Great Brightness and Purity, Heaven of Light, Heaven of Lesser Light, and Heaven of Infinite Light; the Heaven of Universal Purity, Heaven of Purity, Heaven of Lesser Purity, and Heaven of Infinite Purity; the Heaven of Extensive Rewards, Heaven of Expansion, Heaven of Lesser Expansion, and Heaven of Infinite Expansion; and the Heaven of Ultimate Form, Heaven of No Aspiration, Heaven of No Affliction, Heaven of Good Appearance, and Heaven of Good Sight will lead their followers to visit them and make offerings respectfully to esteem and acclaim them, and will say, 'Excellent, excellent, great bodhisattvas! You should learn diligently the dharmas that various great bodhisattvas should learn. Do not learn the dharmas that the voice-hearers and the self-enlightened ones learn. If you can learn this way, you will be able to sit on the throne of the wonderful bodhi quickly, realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi soon, and turn the wonderful dharma wheel to deliver all sentient beings.'

"You must know, bhiksu, because these great bodhisattvas have cultivated the fathomless prajna paramita as they are taught, they will always be protected by and kept in the minds of all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones and various great bodhisattvas, along with all heavenly deities, dragons, asuras, and so forth. Because of this cause and condition, these great bodhisattvas will not be invaded or damaged by all difficulties, dangers, and bad lucks of the world, and their bodies and minds will be always free from worries and pains.

"You must know, bhiksu, because these great bodhisattvas have cultivated the fathomless prajna paramita as they are taught, they will be free from four hundred and four kinds of illness caused by the disharmony of the four basic elements in the world, such as the illness of the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and limbs, except for severe karmic retribution from past lives, which they will experience with less suffering.

"You must know, bhiksu, because the great bodhisattvas have cultivated the fathomless prajna paramita as they are taught, they are able to acquire numberless and boundless merits and

virtues in their present and future lives. The Buddhas, the World-Honored Ones, will know, witness, and continue to enlighten them.”

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Chapter 61

Learning Together

Section 2

(In the Second Assembly)

At that time, the long-lived sage Joyfully Celebrating One thought, “As Heavenly Emperor Indra admired and acclaimed the merits, virtues, and the superior benefits of the fathomless prajna paramita today, was it because of his own talent of debate or because of the compelling mighty powers of the Thus-Comer?”

Heavenly Emperor Indra knew what Joyfully Celebrating One was thinking, so said to him, “Great Virtuous One, it is because of the compelling mighty powers of the Thus-Comer that I could admire the merits, virtues, and the superior benefits of the fathomless prajna paramita.”

At that time, the World-Honored One said to Joyfully Celebrating One, “Yes, it is. As Heavenly Emperor Indra praised the merits, virtues, and the superior benefits of the fathomless prajna paramita today, it is because of the supernatural powers of the Thus-Comer instead of Indra’s own talent of debate. Why? The merits, virtues, and the superior benefits of the fathomless prajna paramita cannot be known and spoken by all heavenly beings, human beings, asuras, and so forth of the world. You must know, Joyfully Celebrating One, as the great bodhisattvas diligently learn, reflect on, and cultivate this fathomless prajna paramita, all evil demons in the large threefold thousand-world will be puzzled; they will wonder, ‘Will these great bodhisattvas withdraw to dwell in stream-entry effect, once-return effect, nonreturn effect, arhat effect, or self-enlightenment bodhi in order to realize and attain the reality, or will they move forward toward the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi?’

“Furthermore, Joyfully Celebrating One, if the great bodhisattvas stay with the fathomless prajna paramita, the evil demons will be extremely worried and painful as they were

shot by poisonous arrows. Furthermore, Joyfully Celebrating One, if the great bodhisattvas practice the fathomless prajna paramita, the evil demons will come to their places and transform themselves into various terrible beings to scare the great bodhisattvas, make them get lost in the pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal enlightenment so as to force them to withdraw with restless minds and thus hinder their aspiration to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. This is exactly what the demons have deeply wished to happen."

At that time, Joyfully Celebrating One asked the Buddha, "When practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, will all great bodhisattvas be disturbed and harassed by evil demons? Are there some great bodhisattvas who will not disturbed and harassed by evil demons?"

The Buddha replied to Joyfully Celebrating One, "Not all great bodhisattvas will be disturbed by evil demons when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita. Some will not be hindered."

The long-lived sage Joyfully Celebrating One asked the Buddha again, "What great bodhisattvas will be and what will not be disturbed by evil demons when they practice the fathomless prajna paramita?"

The Buddha replied to Joyfully Celebrating One, "If the great bodhisattvas in their previous lives did not believe in and understand the fathomless prajna paramita when they heard it, but disdained and slandered it, then these great bodhisattvas will be disturbed and harassed by evil demons when they practice the fathomless prajna paramita in present life. On the other hand, if the great bodhisattvas believed in, understood, and admired the fathomless prajna paramita without disdaining or slandering it when they heard it in their previous lives, these great bodhisattvas will not be disturbed or harassed by evil demons when they practice the fathomless prajna paramita in present life.

"Furthermore, Joyfully Celebrating One, if the great bodhisattvas in their previous lives were skeptical and hesitant when hearing the fathomless prajna paramita, and thought, 'Is it so? Is it not so? Is it real? Is it not real?' Then these great bodhisattvas will be disturbed by evil demons when they practice the fathomless prajna paramita presently. If the great bodhisattvas in their previous lives did not doubt or hesitate when hearing the fathomless prajna paramita; rather,

they would deeply believe in it, then these great bodhisattvas will not be disturbed by evil demons when they practice the fathomless prajna paramita presently.

"Furthermore, Joyfully Celebrating One, if the great bodhisattvas stay far away from virtuous friends but are absorbed and captivated by not virtuous friends, they will not hear the fathomless prajna paramita. Because they do not hear the fathomless prajna paramita, they will not understand it. Because they do not understand it, they will not cultivate and learn it. Because they do not cultivate and learn it, they will not inquire about it. Because they do not inquire about it, they will not practice as they are taught. Because they do not practice as they are taught, they will not be able to realize the fathomless prajna paramita. These great bodhisattvas will be disturbed by evil demons when they practice the fathomless prajna paramita. If the great bodhisattvas stay close to virtuous friends and are not absorbed or captivated by not virtuous friends, they will be able to understand the fathomless prajna paramita when they hear it. Because they can understand it, they are able to cultivate and learn it. Because they can cultivate and learn it, they will inquire about it and practice as they are taught. Because they can practice as they are taught, they will be able to realize the fathomless prajna paramita. These great bodhisattvas will not be disturbed by evil demons when they practice the fathomless prajna paramita.

"Furthermore, Joyfully Celebrating One, if the great bodhisattvas stay far away from prajna paramita but accept and acclaim the fake dharma, then these great bodhisattvas will be disturbed by evil demons when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita. If the great bodhisattvas stay close to prajna paramita and do not accept or acclaim the fake dharma, then they will not be disturbed by evil demons when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita.

"Furthermore, Joyfully Celebrating One, if the great bodhisattvas stay far away from prajna paramita and slander and disdain the real exquisite dharma, then the evil demons will think, 'These bodhisattvas have now become my good company. Because they have slandered the real exquisite dharma, numberless persons who are dwelling in the bodhisattva vehicle will also slander the real exquisite dharma. Because of this cause and condition, my wishes will be fulfilled.' As these bodhisattva-vehicle practitioners cultivate diligently various virtuous dharmas and fall into the stage of voice-hearer or self-enlightened one, more bodhisattvas will also follow

them to do so. These great bodhisattvas thus will be disturbed by evil demons when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita. If the great bodhisattvas stay close to prajna paramita and admire, acclaim, believe in, and accept the real exquisite dharma, and further encourage numberless bodhisattva-vehicle practitioners to do so, then the evil demons will be frightened and worried. Even if these bodhisattvas do not cultivate virtuous dharmas diligently enough, they certainly will not fall into the stage of voice-hearer or the self-enlightened one, but will realize the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. These great bodhisattvas will not be disturbed by evil demons when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita.

(The Buddha explained why some great bodhisattvas would not be disturbed but others would be disturbed by demons.)

"Furthermore, Joyfully Celebrating One, when hearing the teaching of the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita, some great bodhisattvas say, 'The essential meanings of this prajna paramita are too profound to perceive and become awakened to. Why should we lecture on, listen to, accept, embrace, read, recite, reflect on, cultivate diligently, write, and disseminate these sutras? As we cannot understand their ultimate meanings, how can the less blessed and intelligent ones?' Upon hearing this saying, numberless ones dwelling in the bodhisattva vehicle will be frightened and decide to withdraw from the pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal enlightenment. They thus fall into the stage of voice-hearer or self-enlightened one. These great bodhisattvas will be disturbed by evil demons when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita. If the great bodhisattvas hear the teaching of the profound sutras of prajna paramita and say, 'The essential meanings of prajna paramita are too profound to perceive and become awakened to. There will be no way to realize the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi if we do not lecture on, listen to, accept, embrace, read, recite, reflect on, cultivate and learn diligently, write, and disseminate them.' Then numberless persons dwelling in the bodhisattva vehicle will rejoice and be excited. They will follow what they heard to listen to, accept, embrace, read, recite, understand thoroughly, reflect reasonably on, cultivate and learn diligently, lecture for others on, write, and disseminate these profound sutras of prajna paramita and aspire to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. These great bodhisattvas will not be disturbed by evil demons when they practice the fathomless prajna paramita.

"Furthermore, Joyfully Celebrating One, some great bodhisattvas overstate their own merits, virtues, and virtuous roots and look down on other great bodhisattvas when they say, 'I can cultivate giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita, but you cannot. I can dwell peacefully in internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth and emptiness of selfless self-nature, but you cannot. I can dwell peacefully in realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable, but you cannot. I can dwell peacefully in the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering, but you cannot. I can cultivate the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path, but you cannot. I can cultivate the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations, but you cannot. I can cultivate the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations, but you cannot. I can cultivate the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration, but you cannot. I can practice the stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilements, and so forth, and stage of dharma cloud, but you cannot. I can cultivate the knowledge of the stage of pure contemplation, stage of embryonic Buddha nature, and so forth, and stage of Thus-Comer, but you cannot. I can cultivate five eyes and six supernatural powers, but you cannot. I can cultivate the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power, but you cannot. I can cultivate to stay in correct mindfulness and always dwell in equanimity, but you cannot. I can cultivate the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena, but you cannot. I can dignify and purify the Buddha lands and assist the sentient beings to mature, but you cannot. I can contemplate the twelve chains of dependent origination from both directions, but you cannot. I can contemplate and investigate particular and common characteristics of all dharmas, but you cannot. I can cultivate the dharani gates and samadhi gates, but you cannot. I can cultivate all great bodhisattva actions, but you cannot. I can cultivate the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas, but you cannot.' Then, the evil demons are excited and thrilled, 'These great bodhisattvas are my good company. They will drift in birth and death and cannot get out of it forever.' These great bodhisattvas will be disturbed by evil demons when they practice the fathomless prajna paramita. If the great bodhisattvas do not exaggerate their own merits, virtues, and virtuous roots and do not disdain other great bodhisattvas with contempt, and if they can

further cultivate various virtuous dharmas diligently without being attached to their forms, they will not be disturbed by evil demons when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita.

"Furthermore, Joyfully Celebrating One, some great bodhisattvas presume that their names are well known, so they often boast their own virtues and slander and disdain those bodhisattvas who are cultivating the virtuous dharmas. They do not possess the characteristics of the great bodhisattvas of nonregression, but they think they do. Their vexations thus arise. They start to admire themselves and disdain others, and say, 'You do not own the title of bodhisattva. I am the only one who has this title.' As their arrogance increases, they will disdain and slander other bodhisattvas more. At that time, the evil demons say, 'These bodhisattvas are helping me to enlarge my land and palace, and also create more hells, the realm of animals, and the realm of ghosts in my country.' In the meantime, the demons assist these bodhisattvas by giving them supernatural powers to enhance their talent of debate and increase their authority and strength. As more people turn to believe in these bodhisattvas, others will also be encouraged to learn their incorrect views. Their vexations thus increase radically. Because of the upside-down views, their negative karmas caused by body, speech, and mind bring them painfulness, failure, and decay. Because of this cause and condition, the hells, the realm of animals, and the realm of ghosts expand, and the demonic palaces and lands become crowded. The evil demons are very happy and satisfied; they can do whatever they like to do now. These great bodhisattvas thus will be disturbed by evil demons when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita. If the great bodhisattvas do not presume that they have good reputation, do not disdain and slander the bodhisattvas who are cultivating various virtuous dharmas, do not be self-conceited about their own merits and virtues, do not always admire themselves and slander others, and are aware of various demonic affairs, then these great bodhisattvas will not be disturbed by evil demons when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita.

"Furthermore, Joyfully Celebrating One, the great bodhisattvas and the pursuers of the voice-hearer or self-enlightened one vehicle argued against, slandered, and fought each other. At that time, seeing what was happening, the evil demons thought, 'Now these great bodhisattvas have stayed far away from the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, and are much closer to the hells, animals, and ghosts. Why? To argue against, slander, and fight each other is not the path of the bodhi; it is rather the perilous path of the hells, animals, and ghosts.' After having this

thought, the evil demons were excited and thrilled, so they assisted the bodhisattvas by giving them more power and authority. These bodhisattvas would make more negative karmas and would be disturbed by evil demons when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita. If the great bodhisattvas do not argue against, slander, and fight with the pursuers of the voice-hearer or the self-enlightened one vehicle; rather, they expediently guide and convert them to the great vehicle, or make them cultivate various virtuous dharmas in their own vehicles, then these great bodhisattvas will not be disturbed by evil demons when they practice the fathomless prajna paramita.

"Furthermore, Joyfully Celebrating One, some great bodhisattvas argued with other bodhisattvas who are pursuing the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi and cultivating forbearance and kindness. They argued against, slandered, and fought each other. At that time, upon seeing what was happening, the demons thought, 'These bodhisattvas have been far away from the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi; they are very close to the hells, animals, and ghosts. Why? To argue against, slander, and fight each other is not the path of the bodhi; it is rather the perilous path of the hells, animals, and ghosts.' After having this thought, the evil demons were excited and thrilled, so they empowered the bodhisattvas to make the argument and fighting continue endlessly. These great bodhisattvas thus will be disturbed by evil demons when they practice the fathomless prajna paramita. If these great bodhisattvas do not argue against, slander, and fight each other; rather, they assist each other to cultivate various virtuous dharmas and realize the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly, then they will not be disturbed by evil demons when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita.

"Furthermore, Joyfully Celebrating One, some great bodhisattvas are not conferred the prophecy of achieving nonregression and become very jealous, so they harm, argue against, disdain, slander, and insult those who have been conferred the prophecy. They thus regress and lose superior merits and virtuous friends, suffering from birth and death. If they regret their vicious actions and return to pursue the great bodhi, they should work much harder in cultivating various superior actions to regain their lost superior merits and virtues."

At that time, Joyfully Celebrating One asked the Buddha, "World-Honored One, how long will the great bodhisattvas drift and suffer in birth and death because of their vicious minds?

Can they find relief midway? How many kalpas of hard work must they work to regain their lost superior actions? Is it possible to return to their previous state?"

The Buddha replied to Joyfully Celebrating One, "I have taught the way of repenting wrongdoings and making compensation for bodhisattvas, self-enlightened ones, and voice-hearers. You must know, Joyfully Celebrating One, if the great bodhisattvas who have not been conferred the prophecy of achieving nonregression in the pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi do harm to the great bodhisattvas who have been conferred the prophecy of achieving nonregression, argue and fight against, disdain, slander, and insult them and after that, they have no shame and their hatred continues, then they will not be relieved midway. They have to drift in many kalpas in birth and death apart from virtuous friends and bound in suffering. If they do not completely give up their aspiration to the great bodhi, they will have to wear armor for many kalpas to cultivate diligently the superior actions incessantly to regain the merits and virtues they lost. If the great bodhisattvas who have not been conferred the prophecy of achieving nonregression in the pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi do harm to the great bodhisattvas who have been conferred the prophecy, and argue and fight against, disdain, slander, and insult them, but after that, they have shame and their hatred discontinues, and follow up by repenting wrongdoings and think, 'I have already obtained the human body that is very difficult to obtain. How can I do such wrong things to lose great virtuous benefits? I should bring benefits to sentient beings rather than acting against their well-being. I should serve all sentient beings as a servant rather than disdaining and insulting them. I should accept criticism from others rather than responding with violence. I should harmonize all sentient beings so they will respect and love each other, how can I argue with them with rude and vicious words? I should be patient to serve as roads or bridges for all sentient beings to tread on every day, how can I insult them instead? I should aspire to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi to relieve all sentient beings from the severe suffering in birth and death, so they can attain ultimate peace and happiness in nirvana, how can I bring them painfulness instead? I should act as an idiot, dumb, deaf, and blind, and from now on until the endless future, treat all sentient beings without differentiation. If they want to cut my head, hand, foot, ear, nose, or tongue off, dig my eyeball out, or cut my body and limbs with a saw, I will not have a tiny thought of hatred toward them. If I have a thought of hatred, I will immediately destroy my aspiration to the unsurpassed, perfect,

and universal enlightenment and hinder my pursuit of the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, and all will result in my inability to bring benefits, peace, and happiness to all sentient beings.' You must know, Joyfully Celebrating One, these great bodhisattvas can be relieved midway by repenting their sins and making up for the loss of the virtuous merits, so they do not need to reincarnate in birth and death for kalpas. They will not be disturbed by evil demons; instead, they will realize the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly.

(The Buddha taught the method for bodhisattvas to repent their sins of doing harm to, arguing against, and fighting with other bodhisattvas.)

"Furthermore, Joyfully Celebrating One, the great bodhisattvas should not have connection with the pursuers of the voice-hearer or self-enlightened one vehicle. If they do, they should not live with them. If they do live with them, they should not discuss or ask for their opinions in making decisions. Why? If they discuss or ask for their opinions in making decisions, it is very likely to burst out in angry arguments or rude and vicious words, but great bodhisattvas should not be angry or speak rude and vicious words. Even if they will have their heads or feet cut off, the great bodhisattvas should not lose temper and speak rude words. Why? The great bodhisattvas should think, 'I am pursuing the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi to relieve sentient beings from various kinds of suffering and bring ultimate benefits, happiness, and peace to them. It is intolerable to turn such beautiful thing into an ugly, evil one.' You must know, Joyfully Celebrating One, once the great bodhisattvas initiate anger and hatred in their minds and burst out in rude and vicious words, their pursuit in the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi will be hindered and their bodhisattva actions will be ruined. Therefore, to attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, the great bodhisattvas should refrain from anger and hatred and should not burst out in rude and vicious words."

(The Buddha warned great bodhisattvas not to ask for voice-hearers or self-enlightened ones' opinions when making decisions. The Buddha also cautioned that once the great bodhisattvas initiate anger and hatred in their minds and burst out in rude and vicious words, their pursuit in the unsurpassed bodhi will be hindered and their bodhisattva actions will be ruined.)

The long-lived sage Joyfully Celebrating One asked the Buddha, "How should great bodhisattvas behave if they live together with other great bodhisattvas?"

The Buddha replied, “The great bodhisattvas should treat other great bodhisattvas as they do the World-Honored One. Why? When looking at other bodhisattvas, they should think, ‘They are real virtuous intellectuals of mine. They are my companions sailing the same boat. Between us, the time of learning, the place of learning, the way of learning, and the cause of learning are the same. As they learn giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita, I should also learn them. As they learn internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature, I should also learn them. As they learn realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable, I should do the same. As they learn the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering, I should do the same. As they learn the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations, I should do the same. As they learn the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path, I should do the same. As they learn the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations, I should also learn them. As they learn the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration, I should also learn them. As they learn the stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilements, and so forth, and stage of dharma cloud, I should do the same. As they learn all dharani gates and all samadhi gates, I should do the same. As they learn the five eyes and six supernatural powers, I should do the same. As they learn the Buddha’s ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha’s wisdom and power, I should also learn them. As they learn to stay in correct mindfulness and always dwell in equanimity, I should do the same. As they should learn to assist the sentient beings to mature and dignify and purify the Buddha lands, I should do the same. As they learn the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena, I should also learn them.’

“They should further think, ‘Those bodhisattvas have lectured for us on the path of the great bodhi, so they are our good companions and mentors. But if they dwell in a mixture of intentions other than the pure one-vehicle and stay away from a mind correspondent with the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, I will cease learning with them. If these great bodhisattvas stay away from a mixture of intentions and concentrate on the perfect knowledge of

all perfect knowledge, I will learn with them.' As the great bodhisattvas learn this way, they learn with other great bodhisattvas as their classmates."

(The Buddha taught how great bodhisattvas should live and learn with other great bodhisattvas.)

Chapter 62

Being with the Same Nature

Section 1

In

The Second Assembly

At that time, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "World-Honored One, why do the great bodhisattvas have the same nature? Why are they named classmates when they dwell in and learn the same nature?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "Internal emptiness shares the same nature with great bodhisattvas; external emptiness, internal-external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature share the same nature with great bodhisattvas. To dwell in and learn them is named learning the same nature. Because of this learning, the great bodhisattvas will realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness and their empty nature share the same nature with great bodhisattvas. The eye sphere, ear sphere, and so forth, and the conscious spheres and their empty nature share the same nature with great bodhisattvas. The sight sphere, sound sphere, and so forth, and the mental-image sphere and their

empty nature share the same nature with great bodhisattvas. The eye realm, ear realm, and so forth, and the conscious realm and their empty nature share the same nature with great bodhisattvas. The sight realm, sound realm, and so forth, and the mental-image realm and their empty realms share the same nature with great bodhisattvas. The eye consciousness realm, ear consciousness realm, and so forth, and the conscious consciousness realm and their empty nature share the same nature with great bodhisattvas. The eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and the conscious contact and their empty nature share the same nature with great bodhisattvas. The feelings produced by eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact and their empty nature share the same nature with great bodhisattvas. The earth realm, water realm, and so forth, and the conscious realm and their empty nature share the same nature with great bodhisattvas. Ignorance, action, consciousness, and so forth, and old age and death and their empty nature share the same nature with great bodhisattvas. Giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita and their empty nature share the same nature with great bodhisattvas. Internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature and their empty nature share the same nature with great bodhisattvas. Realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable and their empty nature share the same nature with great bodhisattvas. The noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering and their empty nature share the same nature with great bodhisattvas. The four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and the noble eightfold path and their empty nature share the same nature with great bodhisattvas. The four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations and their empty nature share the same nature with great bodhisattvas. The eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations and their empty nature share the same nature with great bodhisattvas. The liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration and their empty nature share the same nature with great bodhisattvas. The stage of pure contemplation, stage of embryonic Buddha nature, and so forth, and the stage of Thus-Comer and their empty nature share the same nature with great bodhisattvas. The stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilements, and so forth, and the stage of dharma cloud and their empty nature share the same nature with great bodhisattvas. The dharani gates and samadhi gates and their empty nature share the same nature with great bodhisattvas. The five eyes and six supernatural powers and their empty nature share

the same nature with great bodhisattvas. The Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power and their empty nature share the same nature with great bodhisattvas. Staying in correct mindfulness and always dwelling in equanimity and their empty nature share the same nature with great bodhisattvas. The perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena and their empty nature share the same nature with great bodhisattvas. Stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi and their empty nature share the same nature with great bodhisattvas. The great bodhisattva actions and their empty nature share the same nature with great bodhisattvas. The unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas and its empty nature share the same nature with great bodhisattvas. The great bodhisattvas who have learned from them are named learning the same nature. Because of this learning, they will realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly."

(The Buddha taught that various dharmas and their empty nature share the same nature with great bodhisattvas. Learning this way enables one to realize the unsurpassed bodhi.)

At that time, Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, "World-Honored One, if the great bodhisattvas learn for the sake of the exhaustion of matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness, and so forth, and the great bodhisattva actions and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas, do they learn the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge? If the great bodhisattvas learn for the sake of the departure of matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness, and so forth, and the great bodhisattva actions and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas, do they learn the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge? If the great bodhisattvas learn for the sake of the extinction of matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness, and so forth, and the great bodhisattva actions and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas, do they learn the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge? If the great bodhisattvas learn for the sake of the nonarising of matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness, and so forth, and the great bodhisattva actions and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas, do they learn the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge?"

The Buddha replied, “As to your question, ‘If the great bodhisattvas learn for the sake of the exhaustion, departure, extinction, and nonarising of matter, feeling, thinking, action, consciousness and so forth, and the great bodhisattva actions and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas, do they learn the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge?’ Let me ask you, Well-Appearing One, does the realness of matter, feeling, and so forth, and the great bodhisattva actions and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas exhaust, depart, extinguish, and discontinue?”

Well-Appearing One replied, “No, World-Honored One. No, Well-Gone One.”

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, “If the great bodhisattvas learn realness this way, they do learn the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. You must know, Well-Appearing One, the realness does not exhaust, depart, extinguish, or discontinue; it cannot be realized and attained. If the great bodhisattvas learn realness this way, they do learn the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge.

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas learn this way, they do learn giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita; internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature; realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable; the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering; the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path; the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations; the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations; the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration; the stage of ecstasy, stage of embryonic Buddha nature, and so forth, and the stage of dharma cloud; all dharani gates and all samadhi gates; the five eyes and six supernatural powers; the Buddha’s ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha’s wisdom and power; staying in correct mindfulness and always dwelling in equanimity; the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena; all great bodhisattva actions; and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas. Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas learn giving

paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas, they do learn the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge.

(The Buddha taught that if the great bodhisattvas learn and realize that the realness of all dharmas is without exhaustion, departure, extinction, and discontinuation and cannot be realized, they do learn the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge and various superior holy dharmas.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas learn this way, they will reach the ultimate other shore. If the great bodhisattvas learn this way, they will reach the nonregressive stage of bodhisattva soon. If the great bodhisattvas learn this way, they will walk on the way all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones have walked. If the great bodhisattvas learn this way, they will protect the dharma from turning upside down and do what should be done to get out of darkness. If the great bodhisattvas learn this way, they will perfectly assist the sentient beings to mature and skillfully dignify and purify the Buddha lands. If the great bodhisattvas learn this way, they are named good learners of great loving-kindness, great compassion, great joy, and great equanimity and the rest of numberless and boundless Buddha dharmas. Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas learn this way, they learn the four noble truths through twelve forms in three steps to turn the dharma wheel and establish hundreds of thousands of koti nayuta sentient beings in nirvana without remainder. If the great bodhisattvas learn this way, they will nurture the seeds of Thus-Comer to keep them from discontinuation. If the great bodhisattvas learn this way, they learn from various Buddhas to open the gate of nectar leading to nirvana; establish numberless, countless, and boundless sentient beings to dwell in the dharmas of the three vehicles; show for all sentient beings the unconditioned realm of ultimate tranquility; and learn and cultivate the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. Only the superior sentient beings can learn this way; the inferior ones cannot learn this way. You must know, Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas would like to deliver all sentient beings and relieve them from the suffering of birth and death, they should learn this way.

(The Buddha said that to learn this way, namely, learning the realness of all dharmas as without exhaustion, departure, extinction, and discontinuation and cannot be realized, the great bodhisattvas will gain many superior benefits; only the superior ones can learn this way.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas learn this way, they will not fall in the hells, the realm of animals, or the realm of the ghosts. If the great bodhisattvas learn this way, they will not be reborn in borderland or as shallow-minded people. If the great bodhisattvas learn this way, they will not be reborn in a family of candāla, pulkasa, poverty, low class, or a livelihood in conflict with precepts. If the great bodhisattvas learn this way, they will not be reborn as deaf, blind, or dumb; with contracted hands and feet, incomplete limbs, bent back, epilepsy, carbuncle, ulcers, scabies, piles, or any filthy and ugly boils; nor will they be reborn as very short, tall, or dark ones.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas learn this way, they will always have perfect family and associates in all future lives to come. They will have perfect appearances and physical features, speak solemnly and with authority, and will be respected and loved by others. Wherever they are reborn, they will stay away from killing, stealing, and so forth, and incorrect views. They will not accept and absorb deluded evil dharmas, earn their living by using evil methods, nor make friends with ones who violate precepts, embrace incorrect views, and slander correct dharma.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas learn this way, they will not be reborn in the heaven of longevity where pleasures are abundant while wisdom is rare. Why? These great bodhisattvas have already achieved the powers of skillful means, they are able to enter the meditations, immeasurable mind, and formless concentration frequently without being dominated by their influence in rebirth. They thus will not be reborn in the heaven of longevity, so they do not abandon the cultivation of the bodhisattva actions.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas learn this way, they will attain the purity of the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, four unhindered understandings, great loving-kindness, great compassion, great joy, great equanimity, eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power, and the rest of numberless and boundless

wonderful Buddha dharmas. They will not fall into the stage of voice-hearer or the stage of self-enlightened one owing to this purity."

At that time, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "World-Honored One, if the natures of all dharmas are inherently pure, why should the great bodhisattvas attain the purity of various wonderful Buddha dharmas?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "You asked a good question. The self-natures of the dharams are inherently pure. When diligently and attentively cultivating and learning the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas will fully and accurately understand them without sinking or stagnation. They thus will stay far away from all vexations and contaminations. It is said that the bodhisattvas have gained the purity once again.

(The Buddha explained the meaning of purification.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the self-natures of all dharmas are inherently pure, but the ordinary sentient beings are not aware of or awakened to this truth. In order to assist them to become aware of or awakened to this truth, the great bodhisattvas cultivate giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita; dwell peacefully in internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature; dwell peacefully in realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable; dwell peacefully in the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering; cultivate the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path; cultivate the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations; cultivate the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration; cultivate the stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilements, and so forth, and stage of dharma cloud; cultivate the five eyes and six supernatural powers; cultivate the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power; cultivate to stay in correct mindfulness and always dwell in equanimity; cultivate all dharani gates and all smadhi gates; and cultivate the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena. As these great bodhisattvas learn the purity of inherent self-natures of all dharmas this way and thus attain the purity of the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so

forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power as well as the rest of numberless and boundless Buddha dharmas, they will not fall into the stage of voice-hearer or the stage of self-enlightened one. They will know the different actions and minds of the sentient beings perfectly. They will expediently and skillfully assist the sentient beings to realize and attain the inherent purity of the self-natures of all dharmas and let them acquire the ultimate peace and happiness of nirvana.

"Well-Appearing One, you must know that on this earth, gold and silvers appear only in few places, but sands and rocks appear almost everywhere. So do the sentient beings. Very few of them are dedicated to learning the fathomless prajna paramita, while most are only interested in the path of voice-hearer or self-enlightened one for their own benefits.

"Well-Appearing One, you must know, in the realm of the human beings, very few are dedicated to cultivating the karmas leading to wheel-turning king, while most of them are interested in the karmas leading to small kings. Very few of the sentient beings are dedicated to cultivating the path of the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, while many are interested in the path of voice-hearer or self-enlightened one.

"Well-Appearing One, you must know that many bodhisattvas are aspiring to pursue the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, but very few can realize and attain it. Most of them will fall into the stage of voice-hearer or self-enlightened one.

"You must know, Well-Appearing One, those dwelling in the bodhisattva vehicle definitely will achieve the stage of nonregression if they do not stay away from the skillful means of the fathomless prajna paramita. Without it, they will regress in the pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. Therefore, if the great bodhisattvas would like to achieve the bodhisattva stage of nonregression, they should cultivate and learn the skillful means skillfulness of the fathomless prajna paramita diligently and tirelessly.

(The Buddha concluded that the sentient beings should learn the skillful means of prajna paramita diligently and tirelessly to become a bodhisattva without regression.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas cultivate the skillful means of the fathomless prajna paramita this way, they will not allow a mind of greed and stinginess,

precept violation, anger and hatred, tiredness and laziness, restlessness, and wisdom abuse to arise concomitantly; a mind of greed, anger, ignorance, and arrogance to arise concomitantly; a mind of no self-restraint, fallacy, and other mistakes to arise concomitantly. They will not allow a mind attached to matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness to arise concomitantly. They will not allow a mind attached to the eye sphere, ear sphere, and so forth, and conscious sphere; attached to the sight sphere, sound sphere, and so forth, and mental-image sphere; attached to the eye realm, ear realm, and so forth, and conscious realm; attached to the sight realm, sound realm, and so forth, and mental-image realm; attached to the eye consciousness realm, ear consciousness realm, and so forth, and conscious consciousness realm; attached to the eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact; attached to the feelings produced by eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact; attached to the earth realm, water realm, and so forth, and consciousness realm; attached to ignorance, action, and so forth, and old age and death; attached to giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita; attached to internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature; attached to realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable; attached to the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering; attached to the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations; attached to the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations; attached to the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path; attached to the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration; attached to the stage of pure contemplation, stage of embryonic Buddha nature, and so forth, and stage of Thus-Comer; attached to the stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilements, and so forth, and stage of dharma cloud; attached to the five eyes and six supernatural powers; attached to the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power; attached to the thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features; attached to staying in correct mindfulness and always dwelling in equanimity; attached to the dharani gates and samadhi gates; attached to the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena; attached to stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi; attached to all great bodhisattva actions; and attached to the

unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas to arise concomitantly. Why? When practicing the skillful means of the fathomless prajna paramita, these great bodhisattvas do not see any dharma attainable. Because of this reason, no thoughts of attachment to the dharmas, such as matter, feeling, and so forth will arise concomitantly."

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Chapter 62

Being with the Same Nature

Section 2

(In the Second Assembly)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas cultivate and learn the fathomless prajna paramita this way, they will be able to absorb all paramitas, foster all paramitas, and guide all paramitas because of the powers caused by the authority and virtues of skillful means. Why? Well-Appearing One, in the fathomless prajna paramita all kinds of paramitas are contained. Well-Appearing One, in the incorrect belief that one's body is real and permanent, sixty-two incorrect views are contained; while in the fathomless prajna paramita, all paramitas are contained. Well-Appearing One, it is like a dying person, whose fundamental root of life extinguishes preceding all other roots, so the fathomless prajna paramita disappears preceding all other paramitas. Where there is no prajna paramita, there are no other paramitas. Therefore, Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas would like to reach the ultimate other shore of all paramitas, they should learn the fathomless prajna paramita.

(The Buddha taught that in prajna paramita, all other paramits are contained.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas learn the fathomless prajna paramita, they will be the most venerable and the superior ones among all sentient beings. Why? It is because these great bodhisattvas are able to cultivate and learn the highest level of dharma now.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, what do you think about this? Are there many sentient beings in this large threefold thousand-world?"

Well-Appearing One replied, "Yes, there are countless sentient beings in the continent of Jambudvipa, let alone in the large threefold thousand-world."

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, “It is as you say. Suppose that all sentient beings in this large threefold thousand-world have attained human bodies simultaneously, and after that, they have all initiated aspiration to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi and cultivate all great bodhisattva actions simultaneously. After fulfilling them, they have all attained the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi simultaneously. Meanwhile, there are some great bodhisattvas who have in the rest of their lifespan made various most wonderful wreaths, spread fragrances, powdered incenses, clothes, necklaces, treasure banners, canopies, entertainments, lamps, houses, beds, bedding, food, drinks, and medicines as offerings respectfully to esteem and acclaim these Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones. What do you think about this? Will these great bodhisattvas be much blessed because of such cause and condition?”

Well-Appearing One replied, “They will be very much blessed, World-Honored One.”

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, “Suppose that, on the other hand, there are some great bodhisattvas who love to listen to, accept, embrace, read, recite, thoroughly understand, reasonably reflect on, cultivate as they are taught, write, and disseminate such fathomless prajna paramita, then the blessings gained by these great bodhisattvas will be much more than the former ones by innumerable times. Why? The fathomless prajna paramita, with its great justice and usefulness, enables great bodhisattvas to realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly.

(The Buddha said that ones who love to learn and disseminate the fathomless prajna paramita will gain more blessings than those who make offerings respectfully to esteem and acclaim Thus-Comers.)

“Therefore, Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas would like to serve as the leaders of all sentient beings; universally benefit all sentient beings; serve as rescue, refuges, and destinations for all in need; become eyes and ears for the blind and the deaf; bring lamps for the ones in darkness; show correct path for those who get lost; and assist those who have not yet attained to attain nirvana, they should learn prajna paramita.

(It is because learning prajna paramita will enable one to help and benefit many sentient beings and this really matters.)

"Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas would like to attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, practice in the same spiritual level of the Thus-Comer, play in where the Buddha plays, roar as the great lion of the Thus-Comer roars, hit the unsurpassed dharma drum of the Buddhas, strike the unsurpassed dharma bell of the Buddhas, blow the unsurpassed dharma conch of the Buddhas, ascend to sit on the unsurpassed dharma throne of the Buddhas, lecture on the unsurpassed dharma meanings of the Buddhas, remove the net of puzzles of all sentient beings, enter the nectar-like dharma realm of the Buddhas, receive and enjoy the subtle and exquisite dharma pleasure of the Buddhas, and realize the superior merits and virtues of the Thus-Comers, they should learn this fathomless prajna paramita.

(Learning prajna paramita will allow great bodhisattvas to be well established and ready in the job of helping all sentient beings.)

"Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas can learn this fathomless prajna paramita, there are no merits, virtues, and virtuous roots that they cannot absorb or attain. Why? All kinds of merits, virtues, and virtuous roots rely on the fathomless prajna paramita."

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "World-Honored One, as the great bodhisattvas learn the fathomless prajna paramita, can they also absorb and attain all merits, virtues, and virtuous roots of voice-hearers and self-enlightened ones?"

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, "The great bodhisattvas can also absorb and attain all merits, virtues, and virtuous toots of voice-hearers and self-enlightened ones; however, they are not be attached to or dwell in them. After correctly contemplating them with superior knowledge and views, they will transcend both the stage of voice-hearer and the stage of self-enlightened one and enter onto the bodhisattva path of nonarising. Because of this reason, these great bodhisattvas can absorb and attain whatever merits, virtues, and virtuous roots they want to. Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas can learn the fathomless prajna paramita this way, they are very close to the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, and will realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi before long.

"Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas can learn such fathomless prajna paramita, they will become the real field of bliss for all heavenly beings, human beings, asuras, and so forth of the world. This field of bliss will be superior to the fields of bliss of sramana, celibacy practitioners, voice-hearers, and self-enlightened ones. It will allow great bodhisattvas to attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge soon. Wherever they are reborn, they will not turn away from prajna paramita; instead, they will always practice prajna paramita.

(In these paragraphs, the Buddha elaborated the superior virtuous benefits gained by great bodhisattvas through the learning of the fathomless prajna paramita.)

"Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas learn the fathomless prajna paramita this way, they must have reached the stage of nonregression in the pursuit of the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. They have been awakened to and aware of all dharmas correctly. They are far away from the stage of voice-hearer and the stage of self-enlightened one, but very close to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.

"Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas think, 'This is prajna paramita; this is the time of cultivation; this is the place of cultivation; I can cultivate this fathomless prajna paramita; I have discarded all dharmas that I should discard because of this fathomless prajna paramita; I definitely will realize and attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge,' then these great bodhisattvas do not practice prajna paramita, nor do they understand prajna paramita. Why? The fathomless prajna paramita will not think: 'I am prajna paramita; this is the time of cultivation; this is the place of cultivation; these are the dharmas that prajna paramita has stayed far away from; these are the dharmas that prajna paramita has illuminated; this is the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi that prajna paramita realizes.' To develop such understanding is practicing prajna paramita.

"Well-Appearing One, some great bodhisattvas think, 'This is not prajna paramita; this is not the time of cultivation; this is not the place of cultivation; this is not the practitioner; it is not because of prajna paramita that one should stay far away from the dharmas that must be discarded; it is not because of prajna paramita that one definitely can realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. Why? All dharmas dwell in realness, dharma realm, dharma nature, the realm of nonillusion, realm of changelessness, realm of equality, realm of

nonarising, dharma concentration, dharma dwelling, reality, the realm of empty space, and the realm of the inconceivable. No dharma is different from other dharmas.' Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas can practice this way, they do practice prajna paramita."

(The Buddha taught how to distinguish the genuine prajna paramita practitioners from those who are not.)

Chapter 63

No Differences

(In the Second Assembly)

At that time, Heavenly Emperor Indra thought to himself, "If the great bodhisattvas cultivate prajna paramita, meditation paramita, and so forth, and giving paramita; dwell peacefully in internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature; dwell peacefully in realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable; dwell peacefully in the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering; cultivate the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path; cultivate the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations; cultivate the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations; cultivate the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration; cultivate the stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilements, and so forth, and stage of dharma cloud; cultivate all dharani gates and all samadhi gates; cultivate the five eyes and supernatural powers; cultivate the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power; cultivate to stay in correct mindfulness and always dwell in equanimity; cultivate the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all

phenomena; cultivate all great bodhisattva actions; and cultivate the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas, then they will not only transcend all sentient beings, but also attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.

"If the sentient beings hear the name of the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge and thus develop a belief in and understanding of it, they will gain virtuous and beneficial things of the world, including a long life, not to mention if they initiate an aspiration to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, or if they consistently listen to the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita. If the sentient beings can initiate an aspiration to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi and listen to the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita, the rest of sentient beings will also be inspired to do so. Their merits and virtues will exceed those of heavenly beings, human beings, asuras, and so forth of the world."

After having these thoughts, Heavenly Emperor Indra made the subtle and exquisite heavenly sound flowers as offerings to the Thus-Comer and various bodhisattvas and spread around them. After dispersing the flowers, he took this vow, "If the good gentlemen and gentlewomen of the bodhisattva vehicle are determined to aspire to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, I am willing to assist them with all my virtuous roots, merits, and virtues, so they will quickly fulfill their aspiration, realize the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge and the unsurpassed Buddha dharma that they are pursuing, fulfill the natural human dharma that they are pursuing, fulfill the real flawless dharma that they are pursuing, and can hear all the dharmas they are longing for. The pursuers of the voice-hearer vehicle and the self-enlightened one vehicle will also have their aspirations fulfilled soon."

After making such a wish, he said to the Buddha, "If the good gentlemen and gentlewomen have initiated an aspiration to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal enlightenment, I will never have a thought of letting them regress in the pursuit of the great bodhi, or a thought of making them disgusted with and thus stay far away from the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi and regress to the stage of voice-hearer or the stage of self-enlightened one.

"World-Honored One, if the great bodhisattvas have very keen interest in the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, I wish their aspirations will become doubly intense so

that they can realize the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi soon. I wish these great bodhisattvas, after seeing various kinds of suffering in birth and death and being determined to bring benefits and happiness to all heavenly beings, human beings, asuras, and so forth of the world, will take a solid great vow, 'As I have already delivered myself to ferry over the great ocean of birth and death, I should further work diligently to rescue those who have not be ferried. As I have already untied myself from the bondage of birth and death, I should work hard to liberate those who are not liberated yet. As I have already calmed myself down in the terrors of the birth and death, I should also work hard to soothe those who are not in rest. As I have already realized ultimate nirvana, I should also work hard to assist those who have not yet realized.'

(Heavenly Emperor Indra made vows to help great bodhisattvas so that they could realize and attain the unsurpassed bodhi soon to help the sentient being still suffering in the ocean of birth and death.)

"World-Honored One, how many blessings will be gained by the good gentlemen and gentlewomen if they have joyfully participated in the merits, virtues, and virtuous roots of the novice bodhisattvas who have just initiated the aspiration to the great bodhi? How many blessings will be gained by the good gentlemen and gentlewomen if they have joyfully participated in the merits, virtues, and virtuous roots of the bodhisattvas who have aspired to the great bodhi for a long time? How many blessings will be gained by the good gentlemen and gentlewomen if they have joyfully participated in the merits, virtues, and virtuous roots of the nonregressive bodhisattvas? How many blessings will be gained by the good gentlemen and gentlewomen if they have joyfully participated in the merits, virtues, and virtuous roots of the bodhisattvas who have reached the final phase before becoming a Buddha?"

At that time, the Buddha replied to Heavenly Emperor Indra, "Kausika, the realm of the four continents is measurable, but the merits and virtues caused by the joyful participation of these good gentlemen and gentlewomen are immeasurable. Kausika, the small thousand-world, the medium thousand-world, and the threefold thousand-world are measurable, but the merits and virtues caused by the joyful participation of these good gentlemen and gentlewomen are immeasurable. Furthermore, Kausika, if we turn the entire large threefold thousand-world into an ocean, divide each hair into one hundred small pieces, and use each point to dip into the ocean's

water, it is possible to measure the number of drops present in the ocean. However, the merits and virtues caused by the joyful participation of these good gentlemen and gentlewomen are immeasurable. Why? Kausika, it is because the merits and virtues caused by joyful participation of these good gentlemen and gentlewomen are boundless."

(The Buddha replied to Indra that the merits and virtues caused by joyful participation in great bodhisattvas are immeasurable and boundless.)

In the meantime, Heavenly Emperor Indra said to the Buddha, "If the sentient beings do not joyfully participate in the superior merits, virtues, and virtuous roots of the bodhisattvas, we must know that these sentient beings are captivated and bewitched by demons, or they are the gang members of the demons, or they are reborn from the realm of demons. Why? As the great bodhisattvas are pursuing the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi and cultivating the great bodhisattva actions, all demonic armies, palaces, and their followers will be defeated and ruined suppose that some sentient beings joyfully participate in the merits, virtues, and virtuous roots of these great bodhisattvas. World-Honored One, if the sentient beings deeply respect and love the gems of the Buddha, the dharma, and the sangha, they would always like to see the Buddha, hear the dharma, and meet the sangha wherever they are born. They would also be delighted to take a part in the merits, virtues, and virtuous roots of the great bodhisattvas. After that, they will transfer the merits, virtues, and virtuous roots toward the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi without having a thought about duality or nonduality. If they do this, they will realize the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi before long, bring benefits to all sentient beings, and defeat demonic armies and the followers of demons."

At that time, the Buddha said to Heavenly Emperor Indra, "It is as you say, Kausika. If the sentient beings have deep, great, and empathetic joys over the merits, virtues, and virtuous roots of the great bodhisattvas and transfer them toward the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, these sentient beings will fulfill various great bodhisattva actions quickly and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi before long. If the sentient beings have deep, great, and empathetic joys over the merits, virtues, and virtuous roots of the great bodhisattvas and transfer them toward the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, these sentient beings will gain great powers and imposing dignity, and are able to offer services to all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of

Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones as well as the virtuous intellectuals often. They will hear the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita consistently and understand their essential meanings well. Kausika, as the sentient beings have developed empathetic joys over others' merits, virtues, virtuous roots and undertake the transference, all heavenly beings, human beings, asuras, and so forth of the world will esteem, acclaim, and make offerings respectfully to them. They will not see any ugly matters, hear unpleasant sounds, smell bad odors, eat tasteless food, touch unpleasant surfaces, and think of any bad dharma. They will always stay with various Buddhas, the World-Honored Ones, from one Buddha country to the other, keep an infinite relationship with various Buddhas, plant various virtuous roots, assist the sentient beings to mature, and dignify and purify the Buddha lands. Why?

"Kausika, as these various sentient beings have deep, great, and empathic joys over the merits, virtues, and virtuous roots of numberless novice great bodhisattvas, they will further transfer the merits, virtues, and virtuous roots thus derived toward the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. As they have deep, great, and empathic joys over the merits, virtues, and virtuous roots of numberless great bodhisattvas who are dwelling in the first stage, second stage, and so forth, and tenth stage, they will further transfer the merits, virtues, and virtuous roots thus derived toward the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. As they have deep, great, and empathic joys over the merits, virtues, and virtuous roots of numberless great bodhisattvas who have already reached the last stage before becoming a Buddha, they will transfer the merits, virtues, and virtuous roots thus derived toward the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. Because of this cause and condition, the virtuous roots of these sentient beings will increase, and they will realize the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi soon. After that they will bring benefits and happiness to immeasurable, countless, and boundless sentient beings in the endless future, enabling them to dwell in the nirvana without remainder. Therefore, Kausika, the good gentlemen and gentlewomen who are dwelling in the bodhisattva vehicle should joyfully celebrate and take part in the merits, virtues, and virtuous roots of the novice bodhisattva aspirants, the bodhisattvas of nonregression, and the bodhisattvas who are in the final phase of cultivation before becoming a Buddha and transfer the merits, virtues, and virtuous roots thus derived toward the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. When they undertake joyfully participation and transference, they should not be attached to the thought that whether their

minds are with or apart from the joyful participation and transference, or whether their minds are with or apart from the cultivation. If they can cultivate great bodhisattva actions through such joyful participation and transference without attachment, they will be able to realize the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly and deliver various heavenly beings, human beings, asuras, and so forth, so let them get rid of birth and death and attain nirvana."

(The Budha confirmed Indra's statement and said that to joyfully participate in various levels of great bodhisattvas and transfer the merits and virtues thus derived toward the unsurpassed bodhi without attachment will realize and attain the unsurpassed bodhi soon.)

At that time, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "World-Honored One, as the Buddha has said, all dharmas are like illusions, dreams, and so forth, and transformed things. How can great bodhisattvas realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi with the illusion-like mind?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One by asking him, "What do you think about this? Have you seen the illusion-like minds of the great bodhisattvas?"

Well-Appearing One replied, "No, World-Honored One, I have never seen illusions or the illusion-like mind."

The Buddha asked Well-Appearing One again, "What do you think about this? If there are neither illusions nor the illusion-like minds, can you see the mind attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi??"

Well-Appearing One replied, "No, World-Honored One. As we cannot see illusions and the illusion-like mind, it does not make sense to say the mind can realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi."

The Buddha asked Well-Appearing One, "What do you think about this? Have you seen any dharma realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi apart from illusions and the illusion-like mind?"

Well-Appearing One replied, “No, World-Honored One. As we cannot see the dharmas apart from the illusions or the illusion-like mind, it does not make sense to say that any dharma can realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.

“World-Honored One, as I cannot see any dharma with or apart from the mind, how can I say that the dharma is existent or nonexistent? As all dharmas are far away in the final analysis, we should not establish dharmas as they are existent or nonexistent. If no dharmas can be established as existent or nonexistent, we should not say that one can realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. It is because no nonexistent dharma can realize and attain the bodhi. Why? All dharmas are nonexistent, and their nature is unattainable. They are without arising and extinction, and without contamination and purification. Why?

“World-Honored One, prajna paramita, meditation paramita, and so forth, and giving paramita are in the final analysis far away. Internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature are in the final analysis far away. Realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable are in the final analysis far away. The noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering are in the final analysis far away. The four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path are in the final analysis far away. The four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations are in the final analysis far away. The eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations are in the final analysis far away. The liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration are in the final analysis far away. The stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilements, and so forth, and stage of dharma cloud are in the final analysis far away. All dharani gates and all samadhi gates are in the final analysis far away. The five eyes and the six supernatural powers are in the final analysis far away. The Buddha’s ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha’s wisdom and power are in the final analysis far away. Staying in correct mindfulness and always dwelling in equanimity are in the final analysis far away. The perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena are in the final analysis far away. All great bodhisattva actions are in the final analysis far away. The unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas is in

the final analysis far away. The perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge is in the final analysis far away.

"World-Honored One, if all dharmas are in the final analysis far away, they should not be cultivated or cast off; they should not be elicited either. As the fathomless prajna paramita is also in the final analysis far away, it should not elicit any dharma.

"World-Honored One, if the fathomless prajna paramita is in the final analysis far away, how can we say that the great bodhisattvas will realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi based on the fathomless prajna paramita? If the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas is in the final analysis far away, how can the faraway dharma realize and attain the faraway dharma? Therefore, we should not say that prajna paramita can realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi."

(Well-Appearing One commented dialectically that we cannot realize and attain the unsurpassed bodhi based on prajna paramita because all dharmas are in the final analysis far away and we cannot establish them as existent or nonexistent.")

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, "Excellent, excellent! It is as you say. Why? The fathomless prajna paramita, meditation paramita, and so forth, and giving paramita are in the final analysis far away; and so on, all great bodhisattva actions, the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas, and the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge are also in the final analysis far away. Well-Appearing One, because the fathomless prajna paramita, meditation paramita, and so forth, and giving paramita are in the final analysis far away, the great bodhisattvas can realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi that is in the final analysis far away. And so on, because the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge is in the final analysis far away, the great bodhisattvas can realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi that is in the final analysis far away. If the fathomless prajna paramita, meditation paramita, and so forth, and giving paramita are not in the final analysis far away, they should not be prajna paramita, meditation paramita, and so forth, and giving paramita. And so on, if the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge is not in the final analysis far away, it should not be the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. Well-Appearing One, because the fathomless prajna paramita, meditation paramita, and so forth, and giving paramita

are in the final analysis far away, they are named prajna paramita, meditation paramita, and so forth, and giving paramita. And so on, because the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge is in the final analysis far away, it is named the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. Therefore, Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas cannot realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi without relying on the fathomless prajna paramita. Well-Appearing One, although the faraway dharma cannot realize and attain the faraway dharma, one cannot realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi without relying on the fathomless prajna paramita. Therefore, if the great bodhisattvas would like to attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, they should diligently cultivate and learn the fathomless prajna paramita."

(The Buddha explained why all dharmas are in the final analysis far away, but the great bodhisattvas cannot realize and attain the unsurpassed bodhi without relying on prajna paramita.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One said, "World-Honored One, the meanings of the dharma practiced by the great bodhisattvas are very profound."

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, "Yes, the meanings of the dharma that great bodhisattvas practice are very profound. They are too fathomless for one to perceive or be awakened to. They go beyond one's reflection; only those with subtle, meticulous knowledge can realize them from within. So, they are unspeakable. You must know, Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas can do difficult things. They can practice and understand such fathomless meanings of the dharma and refrain from staying in the stage of voice-hearer or self-enlightened one."

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One said to the Buddha, "If my understanding of the meanings that the Buddha teaches is correct, the things that the great bodhisattvas practice are not difficult. We should not say that they do difficult things. Why? The meanings of the dharma that the great bodhisattvas realize and attain are unattainable; the prajna paramita that they realize and attain is also unattainable. The ways of realization, the ones who realize, the place where the realization happens, and the time of realization are also unattainable.

(But Well-Appearing One said that the meanings of the dharma are not difficult to understand. He explained why.)

"World-Honored One, the great bodhisattvas have contemplated all dharmas and known that they are all unattainable. Given this truth, how can the meanings of the dharma be realized and attained? How can prajna paramita be realized and attained? How can the ways of realization, the ones who realize, the place where the realization happens, and the time of realization be established? And how can one realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi? As the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi cannot be realized and attained, not to mention the stage of voice-hearer and the stage of self-enlightened one can be realized and attained. World-Honored One, to practice this way is named practicing unattainable actions. If the great bodhisattvas can practice unattainable actions this way, they will not encounter hindrances in all dharmas.

"World-Honored One, if the great bodhisattvas are not frightened, shocked, terrified, worried, regretful, drowned, and sinking when hearing these words, they do practice prajna paramita. World-Honored One, when practicing this way, the great bodhisattvas do not see various phenomena. They do not see that they are practicing; they are not practicing; they are practicing prajna paramita; they are realizing the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi; and the time of realization and the place where the realization happens.

"World-Honored One, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas do not think, 'I am far away from the stages of voice-hearer or self-enlightened one, while I am very close to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.'

"World-Honored One, just like empty space that does not think, 'I am far away or close to that dharma.' Why? Empty space is unmovable and without differentiation. So are the great bodhisattvas, who will practice the fathomless prajna paramita without thinking, 'I am far away from the stage of voice-hearer or the stage of self-enlightened one, while I am close to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.' Why? The fathomless prajna paramita does not differentiate among all dharmas.

(Prajna paramita does not differentiate.)

"World-Honored One, like the transformed person who does not think, 'I am close to or far away from the real things, the magician, and the audience.' So the great bodhisattvas who do

not think, ‘I am far away from the stage of voice-hearer or the stage of self-enlightened one, while I am very close to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.’ Why? The fathomless prajna paramita does not differentiate among all dharmas.

“World-Honored One, like the reflected images that do not think, ‘I am very close to or far away from the original reality and the relevant things.’ Why? The reflected images do not differentiate among all dharmas. So do the great bodhisattvas. When practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, they do not think, ‘I am far away from the stage of voice-hearer or the stage of self-enlightened one, while I am very close to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.’ Why? The fathomless prajna paramita does not differentiate among all dharmas.

“World-Honored One, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas do not have preference or dislike. Why? In the fathomless prajna paramita, love, hatred, and the self-natures of the phenomena are unattainable.

“World-Honored One, like the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones who do not have love or hatred, so the great bodhisattvas who do not have love and hatred. Why? The fathomless prajna paramita of the Buddhas and bodhisattvas has terminated love and hatred.

(Prajna paramita does not love or hate.)

“World-Honored One, the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones have terminated all differentiations, particular differentiations, and universal differentiations. Why? The fathomless prajna paramita of the Buddhas and bodhisattvas do not have differentiations among all dharmas.

“World-Honored One, the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Ones do not think, ‘I am far away from the stage of voice-hearer or the stage of self-enlightened one, while I am close to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.’ So the great bodhisattvas who are practicing fathomless prajna paramita do not think, ‘I am far away from the stage of voice-hearer or the stage of self-enlightened one, while I am close to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.’ Why? The fathomless prajna paramita of the Buddhas and bodhisattvas does not differentiate among all dharmas.

"World-Honored One, the transformed ones made by the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones do not think, 'I am far away from the stage of voice-hearer or the stage of self-enlightened one, while I am very close to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.' Why? All Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones and the transformed ones do not differentiate. So the great bodhisattvas who are practicing the fathomless prajna paramita do not think, 'I am far away from the stage of voice-hearer and or stage of self-enlightened one, while I am very close to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.' Why? The fathomless prajna paramita does not differentiate among all dharmas.

(Well-Appearing One reiterated that prajna paramita does not differentiate among dharmas.)

"World-Honored One, the Buddhas make transformed ones on their behalf to offer services. The transformed ones do not think, 'I can perform such services.' Why? These transformed ones do not differentiate when they perform the services. The great bodhisattvas cultivate and learn diligently to achieve some purposes. As they accomplish what they intend to do, they do not differentiate among their actions. Why? The fathomless prajna paramita inherently do not differentiate among all dharmas.

"World-Honored One, a skillful craftsman or disciple made some art crafts, such as women, men, elephants, or horses without differentiation. Why? The crafts inherently do not differentiate. So do the great bodhisattvas who are practicing the fathomless prajna paramita. They do not differentiate what they have performed. Why? The fathomless prajna paramita inherently does not differentiate among all dharmas.

In the meantime, Sariputra asked Well-Appearing One, "Does only prajna paramita not differentiate among all dharmas? Do meditation, diligence, forbearance, pure precept, and giving paramitas not differentiate among all dharmas?"

Well-Appearing One replied, "Prajna paramita does not differentiate among all dharmas; neither do meditation, diligence, forbearance, pure precept, and giving paramitas.

Sariputra asked, "Do only the six paramitas not differentiate among all dharmas? Do other dharmas, such as matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness not differentiate

among all dharmas? Do the eye, ear, and so forth, and conscious spheres differentiate among all dharmas? Do the sight, sound, and so forth, and mental-image spheres differentiate among all dharmas? Do the eye, ear, and so forth, and conscious realms differentiate among all dharmas? Do the sight, sound, and so forth, and mental-image realms differentiate among all dharmas? Do the eye consciousness, ear consciousness, and so forth, and conscious consciousness realms differentiate among all dharmas? Do the feelings produced by eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact not differentiate among all dharmas? Do the earth, water, and so forth, and consciousness realms differentiate among all dharmas? Do ignorance, action, consciousness, and so forth, and old age and death differentiate among all dharmas? Do internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature differentiate among all dharmas? Do realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable differentiate among all dharmas? Do the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering differentiate among all dharmas? Do the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations differentiate among all dharmas? Do the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations differentiate among all dharmas? Do the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path differentiate among all dharmas? Do the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration differentiate among all dharmas? Do the stages of pure contemplation, embryonic Buddha nature, and so forth, and Thus-Comer differentiate among all dharmas? Do the stages of ecstasy, freedom from defilements, and so forth, and dharma cloud differentiate among all dharmas? Do all dharani gates and all samadhi gates differentiate among all dharmas? Do the five eyes and the six supernatural powers differentiate among all dharmas? Do the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power differentiate among all dharmas? Do staying in correct mindfulness and always dwelling in equanimity differentiate among all dharmas? Do the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena differentiate among all dharmas? Do stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi differentiate among all dharmas? Do all great bodhisattva actions differentiate among all dharmas? Does the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of

the Buddhas differentiate among all dharmas? Does the conditioned realm differentiate among all dharmas? Does the unconditioned realm differentiate among all dharmas?”

Well-Appearing One replied, “Not only the six paramitas but also matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness, and so forth, and the conditioned realm and the unconditioned realm do not differentiate among all dharmas.”

(Well-Appearing One replied to Sariputra that not only prajna paramita and other five paramitas, but also matter, feeling, thinking, and so forth, and the conditioned realm and unconditioned realm do not differentiate among all dharmas.)

Sariputra asked, "If all dharmas are undifferentiated, why do the five destinies—hells, animals, ghosts, humans, and heavenly beings—and the levels of holy ones—stream-enterers, once-returners, nonreturners, arhats, self-enlightened ones, bodhisattvas, and Thus-Comers—differ?"

Well-Appearing One replied, “Because of the upside-down vexations of the sentient beings, various kinds of body, speech, and mind karmas are initiated. The effects fundamentally caused by desires are brought about in different ways at different times. It is in this accord that the five destinies: hells, animals, hungry ghosts, human beings, and heavenly beings, are established. You also asked why the different stages of holy effects are established. Sariputra, because there are no differentiations, the stream-enterers and stream-entry effect are established. Because there are no differentiations, the once-returners and once-return effect are established. Because there are no differentiations, the nonreturners and nonreturn effect are established. Because there are no differentiations, the arhats and arhat effect are established. Because there are no differentiations, the great bodhisattvas and the great bodhisattva actions are established. Because there are no differentiations, the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas are established.

“Sariputra, the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones in the past established the existent beings because of nondifferentiation and the termination of differentiation. The Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and

Universally Enlightened Ones in the future will establish the existent beings because of nondifferentiation and the termination of differentiation. All Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones in various Buddha worlds of the ten directions in the present are establishing the existent beings because of nondifferentiation and the termination of differentiation. Sariputra, because of this cause and condition, we must know that all dharmas are free from differentiation by virtue of realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable of nondifferentiation.

(Well-Appearing One explained for Sariputra why the five destinies and various holy effects are established as all dharmas are not differentiated.)

"Sariputra, great bodhisattvas should practice the fathomless prajna paramita of nondifferentiation. If the great bodhisattvas can practice the fathomless prajna paramita that is without differentiation, they will realize and attain the subtle and exquisite unsurpassed, perfect and universal bodhi that is without differentiation, and become awakened to the nature of nondifferentiation of all dharmas to bring benefits and happiness to all sentient beings in endless future."

Chapter 64

The Solid and the Not Solid

Section 1

(In the Second Assembly)

In the meantime, Sariputra asked Well-Appearing One, "When cultivating prajna paramita, do the great bodhisattvas practice solid dharmas or nonsolid dharmas?"

Well-Appearing One replied, “When cultivating prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas practice nonsolid dharmas rather than solid dharma. Why? Sariputra, prajna paramita, meditation paramita, and so forth, and giving paramita are not solid dharmas. Internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature are not solid dharmas. Realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable are not solid dharmas. The noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering are not solid dharmas. The four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path are not solid dharmas. The four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations are not solid dharmas. The eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations are not solid dharmas. The liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration are not solid dharmas. The stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilements, and so forth, and stage of dharma cloud are not solid dharmas. All dharani gates and all smadhi gates are not solid dharmas. The five eyes and six supernatural powers are not solid dharmas. The Buddha’s ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha’s wisdom and power are not solid dharmas. Staying in correct mindfulness and always dwelling in equanimity are not solid dharmas. The perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena are not solid dharmas. All great bodhisattva actions are not solid dharmas. The unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas is not solid dharma. The perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge is not solid dharma either. Why? When practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, meditation paramita, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, the great bodhisattvas do not see any nonsolid dharma attainable in prajna paramita, meditation paramita, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, let alone they can see the attainable solid dharmas.”

Meanwhile, numberless heavenly sons from the realm of desire and the realm of form thought, “If the good gentlemen and gentlewomen dwelling in the bodhisattva vehicle can initiate an aspiration to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal enlightenment and practice justice actions as taught by the fathomless prajna paramita without realizing the reality and thus will not fall into the stage of voice-hearer or self-enlightened one, then these good gentlemen and

gentlewomen are very rare and unusual because they can do difficult things, so we should pay homage to them."

At that time, Well-Appearing One knew what various heavenly sons were thinking, so said to them, "These good gentlemen and gentlewomen do not realize the reality and the dharma nature of equality and thus will not fall into the stage of voice-hearer or self-enlightened one. They are not very rare, and what they do is not very difficult. If the great bodhisattvas know that all dharmas and sentient beings are unattainable and still initiate an aspiration to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal enlightenment, wear the armors of diligence, and swear to deliver numberless and countless sentient beings to let them enter the nirvana without remainder, then these great bodhisattvas are really rare and unusual; they can do very difficult things.

(Well-Appearing One commented that the great bodhisattvas are rare and unusual as knowing that all dharmas and sentient beings are unattainable, they still aspire to the unsurpassed bodhi to deliver numberless sentient beings and let them enter nirvana.)

"You must know, heavenly sons, although knowing that the sentient beings are unattainable, the great bodhisattvas still initiate an aspiration to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal enlightenment. They wear armors of diligence to tame sentient beings as taming empty space. Why? Heavenly sons! As empty space is apart, empty, not solid, and nonexistent, so all sentient beings are also apart, empty, not sold, and nonexistent. Because of this cause and condition, these great bodhisattvas are very rare and can do very difficult things.

(Well-Appearing One explained why these great bodhisattvas are rare and unusual as they remain working diligently to realize the unsurpassed bodhi to deliver sentient beings when realizing that all these dharmas are empty and unattainable.)

"You must know, heavenly sons, these great bodhisattvas put on great armor of great compassion to tame all sentient beings. As various sentient beings are nonexistent, the great bodhisattvas don armor working hard to deliver sentient beings as fighting with empty space.

"You must know, heavenly sons, these great bodhisattvas put on great armor of great compassion to benefit all sentient beings while various sentient beings and the great armor of great compassion are unattainable. Why? As the sentient beings are apart, so is the great armor of

great compassion; as the sentient beings are empty, so is the great armor of great compassion; as the sentient beings are not solid, so is the great armor of great compassion; as the sentient beings are nonexistent, so is the great armor of great compassion.

"You must know, heavenly sons, even the task itself that the great bodhisattvas have accomplished to tame and benefit the sentient beings is unattainable. Why? As the sentient beings are apart, empty, not solid, and nonexistent, so is the task of taming and benefiting the sentient beings, which is also apart, empty, not solid, and nonexistent.

"You must know, heavenly beings, these great bodhisattvas are also nonexistent. Why? As the sentient beings are apart, empty, not solid, and nonexistent, so are the bodhisattvas.

"You must know, heavenly beings, if the great bodhisattvas are not shocked, scarred, terrified, worried, regretful, sinking, or drowned when hearing these things, they are really practicing the fathomless prajna paramita.

"Why? As matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness are apart, so the sentient beings are apart. As the eye sphere, ear sphere, and so forth, and conscious sphere are apart, so the sentient beings are apart. As the sight sphere, sound sphere, and so forth, and mental-image sphere are apart, so the sentient beings are apart. As the eye realm, ear realm, and so forth, and conscious realm are apart, so the sentient beings are apart. As the sight realm, sound realm, and so forth, and mental-image realm are apart, so the sentient beings are apart. As the eye consciousness realm, ear consciousness realm, and so forth, and conscious consciousness realm are apart, so the sentient beings are apart. As the feelings produced by eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact are apart, so the sentient beings are apart. As the earth realm, water realm, and so forth, and consciousness realm are apart, so the sentient beings are apart. As cause and condition, consecutive thoughts, the conditions that stimulate the mind, and the conditions that reinforce main causes are apart, so the sentient beings are apart. As ignorance, action, consciousness, and so forth, and old age and death are apart, so the sentient beings are apart. As giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita are apart, so the sentient beings are apart. As internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature are apart, so the sentient beings are apart. As realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable are apart, so the sentient beings are apart.

As the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering are apart, so the sentient beings are apart. As the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path are apart, so the sentient beings are apart. As the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations are apart, so the sentient beings are apart. As the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations are apart, so the sentient beings are apart. As the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration are apart, so the sentient beings are apart. As the stage of pure contemplation, stage of embryonic Buddha nature, and so forth, and stage of dharma cloud are apart, so the sentient beings are apart. As all dharani gates and all samadhi gates are apart, so the sentient beings are apart. As the five eyes and six supernatural powers are apart, so the sentient beings are apart. As the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power are apart, so the sentient beings are apart. As the thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features are apart, so the sentient beings are apart. As staying in correct mindfulness and always dwelling in equanimity are apart, so the sentient beings are apart. As the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena are apart, so the sentient beings are apart. As stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi are apart, so the sentient beings are apart. As all great bodhisattva actions are apart, so the sentient beings are apart. As the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas is apart, so the sentient beings are apart. As the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge is apart, so the sentient beings are apart."

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Chapter 64

The Solid and the Not Solid

Section 2

(In the Second Assembly)

"You must know, heavenly beings, as matter is apart, giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita are apart; as feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness are apart, giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita are apart. And so on, as matter is apart, the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge is apart; as feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness are apart, the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge is also apart.

"You must know, heavenly beings, as the eye sphere is apart, giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita are apart; as the ear, nose, tongue, body, and conscious spheres are apart, giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita are apart. And so on, as the eye sphere is apart, the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge is apart; as the ear, nose, tongue, body, and conscious spheres are apart, the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge is also apart.

"You must know, heavenly beings, as the sight sphere is apart, giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita are apart; as the sound, smell, taste, touch, and mental-image spheres are apart, giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita are apart. And so on, as the sight sphere is apart, the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge is apart; as the sound, smell, taste, touch, and mental-image spheres are apart, the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge is also apart.

"You must know, heavenly beings, as the eye realm is apart, giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita are apart; as the ear, nose, tongue, body, and

conscious realms are apart, giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita are apart. And so on, as the eye realm is apart, the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge is apart; as the ear, nose, tongue, body, and conscious realms are apart, the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge is also apart.

"You must know, heavenly beings, as the sight realm is apart, giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita are apart; as the sound, smell, taste, touch, and mental-image realms are apart, giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita are apart. And so on, as the sight realm is apart, the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge is apart; as the sound, smell, taste, touch, and mental-image realms are apart, the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge is also apart.

"You must know, heavenly beings, as the eye consciousness realm is apart, giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita are apart; as the ear consciousness, nose consciousness, tongue consciousness, body consciousness, and conscious consciousness realms are apart, giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita are apart. And so on, as the eye consciousness realm is apart, the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge is apart; as the ear consciousness, nose consciousness, tongue consciousness, body consciousness, and conscious consciousness realms are apart, the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge is also apart.

"You must know, heavenly beings, as the eye contact is apart, giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita are apart; as the ear, nose, tongue, body, and conscious contacts are apart, giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita are apart. And so on, as the eye contact is apart, the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge is apart; as the ear, nose, tongue, body, and conscious contacts are apart, the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge is also apart.

"You must know, heavenly beings, as the feelings produced by eye contact are apart, giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita are apart; as the feelings produced by ear, nose, tongue, body, and conscious contacts are apart, giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita are apart. And so on, as the feelings produced by eye contact are apart, the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge is apart; as the

feelings produced by ear, nose, tongue, body, and conscious contacts are apart, the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge is also apart.

"You must know, heavenly beings, as the earth realm is apart, giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita are apart; as the water, fire, wind, space, and consciousness realms are apart, giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita are apart. And so on, as the earth realm is apart, the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge is apart; as the water, fire, wind, space, and consciousness realms are apart, the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge is also apart.

"You must know, heavenly beings, as cause and condition are apart, giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita are apart; as consecutive thoughts, the conditions that stimulate the mind, and the conditions that reinforce main causes are apart, giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita are apart. And so on, as cause and condition are apart, the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge is apart; as consecutive thoughts, the conditions that stimulate the mind, and the conditions that reinforce main causes are apart, the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge is also apart.

"You must know, heavenly beings, as ignorance is apart, giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita are apart; as action, consciousness, and so forth, and old age and death are apart, giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita are apart. And so on, as ignorance is apart, the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge is apart; as action, consciousness, and so forth, and old age and death are apart, the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge is also apart.

"You must know, heavenly beings, as giving paramita is apart, internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature are apart; as pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna paramitas are apart, internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature are apart. And so on, as giving paramita is apart, the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge is apart; as pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna paramitas are apart, the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge is also apart.

“You must know, heavenly beings, as internal emptiness is apart, giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita are apart; as external emptiness, internal-external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature are apart, giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita are apart. And so on, as internal emptiness is apart, the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge is apart; as external emptiness, internal-external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature are apart, the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge is also apart.

“You must know, heavenly beings, as realness is apart, giving praamita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita are apart; as dharma realm, dharma nature, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable are apart, giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita are apart. And so on, as realness is apart, the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge is apart; as dharma realm, dharma nature, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable are apart, the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge is also apart.

“You must know, heavenly beings, as the noble truth of suffering is apart, giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita are apart; as the noble truths of the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering are apart, giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita are apart. And so on, as the noble truth of suffering is apart, the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge is apart; as the noble truths of the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering are apart, the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge is also apart.

“You must know, heavenly beings, as the four bases of mindfulness are apart, giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita are apart; as the four correct endeavors, four bases of power, and so forth, and noble eightfold path are apart, giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita are apart. And so on, as the four bases of mindfulness are apart, the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge is apart; as the four correct endeavors, four bases of power, and so forth, and noble eightfold path are apart, the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge is also apart.

“You must know, heavenly beings, as the four meditations are apart, giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita are apart; as the four immeasurable

minds and four formless concentrations are apart, giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita are apart. And so on, as the four meditations are apart, the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge is apart; as the four immeasurable minds and four formless concentrations are apart, the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge is also apart.

"You must know, heavenly beings, as the eight liberations are apart, giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita are apart; as the eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations are apart, giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita are apart. And so on, as the eight liberations are apart, the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge is apart; as the eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations are apart, the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge is also apart.

"You must know, heavenly beings, the liberation gate of emptiness is apart, giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita are apart; as the liberation gates of formlessness and nonaspiration are apart, giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita are apart. And so on, as the liberation gate of emptiness is apart, the knowledge of all perfect knowledge is apart; as the liberation gates of formlessness and nonaspiration are apart, the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge is also apart.

"You must know, heavenly beings, as the stage of pure contemplation is apart, giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita are apart; as the stage of embryo Buddha nature, stage of eight-forbearance, and so forth, and stage of Thus-Comer are apart, giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita are apart. And so on, as the stage of pure contemplation is apart, the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge is apart; as the stage of embryo Buddha nature, stage of eight-forbearance, and so forth, and stage of Thus-Comer are apart, the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge is also apart.

"You must know, heavenly beings, as the stage of ecstasy is apart, giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita are apart; as the stage of freedom from defilements, stage of emitting light, and so forth, and stage of dharma cloud are apart, giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita are apart. And so on, as the stage of ecstasy is apart, the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge is apart; as the stage of

freedom from defilements, stage of emitting light, and so forth, and stage of dharma cloud are apart, the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge is also apart.

"You must know, heavenly beings, as the dharani gates are apart, giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita are apart; as the samadhi gates are apart, giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita are apart. And so on, as the dharani gates are apart, the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge is apart; as the samadhi gates are apart, the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge is also apart.

"You must know, heavenly beings, as the five eyes are apart, giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita are apart; as the six supernatural powers are apart, giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita are apart. And so on, as the five eyes are apart, the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge is apart; as the six supernatural powers are apart, the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge is also apart.

"You must know, heavenly beings, as the Buddha's ten abilities are apart, giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita are apart; as the four kinds of fearlessness, four unhindered understandings, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power are apart, giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita are apart. And so on, as the Buddha's ten abilities are apart, the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge is apart; as the four kinds of fearlessness, four unhindered understandings, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power are apart, the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge is also apart.

"You must know, heavenly beings, as the thirty-two perfect major marks are apart, giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita are apart; as the eighty distinguishing minor features are apart, giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita are apart. And so on, as the thirty-two perfect major marks are apart, the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge is apart; as the eighty distinguishing minor features are apart, the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge is also apart.

"You must know, heavenly beings, as staying in correct mindfulness is apart, giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita are apart; as always dwelling

in equanimity is apart, giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita are apart. And so on, as staying in correct mindfulness is apart, the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge is apart; as always dwelling in equanimity is apart, the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge is also apart.

"You must know, heavenly beings, as the perfect knowledge of everything is apart, giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita are apart; as the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths and perfect knowledge of all phenomena are apart, giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita are apart. And so on, as the perfect knowledge of everything is apart, the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge is apart; as the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths and perfect knowledge of all phenomena are apart, the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge is also apart.

"You must know, heavenly beings, as stream-entry effect is apart, giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita are apart; as once-return effect, nonreturn effect, arhat effect, and self-enlightenment bodhi are apart, giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita are apart. And so on, as stream-entry effect is apart, the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge is apart; as once-return effect, nonreturn effect, arhat effect, and self-enlightenment bodhi are apart, the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge is also apart.

"You must know, heavenly beings, as all great bodhisattva actions are apart, giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita are apart. As all great bodhisattva actions are apart, the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge is also apart.

"You must know, heavenly beings, as the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas is apart, giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita are apart. As the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas is apart, the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge is also apart.

"You must know, heavenly beings, as the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge is apart, giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita are apart. As the

perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge is apart, the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas is also apart.

"You must know, heavenly beings, if the great bodhisattvas hear that all dharmas are apart and are not frightened, terrified, scared, worried, regretful, or overwhelmed, these great bodhisattvas are indeed practicing the fathomless prajna paramita."

At that time, the World-Honored One asked Well-Appearing One, "Why are the great bodhisattvas not overwhelmed by the fathomless prajna paramita?"

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One replied, "World-Honored One, it is because all dharmas are nonexistent, far away, tranquil, possessing nothing, and without arising and extinction.

"World-Honored One, because of these various causes and conditions, the great bodhisattvas are not overwhelmed by the fathomless prajna paramita. Why? It is because for the great bodhisattvas, the dharmas that cause overwhelm, the dharmas that can be overwhelmed, and the time, place, and causes of overwhelm are all unattainable. Why? All dharmas are unattainable.

(Well-Appearing One responded to Buddha's question, explaining why the great bodhisattvas are not overwhelmed when they hear all dharmas are apart.)

"World-Honored One, when hearing these words, if the great bodhisattvas are not frightened, scared, terrified, worried, regretful, and overwhelmed, we must know that these great bodhisattvas are practicing the fathomless prajna paramita. Why? These great bodhisattvas have contemplated and realized that all dharmas are unattainable; one who can overwhelm, one who is overwhelmed, and the time, place, and cause of overwhelm cannot be established. Because of this cause and condition, the great bodhisattvas are not frightened, scared, terrified, worried, regretful, and overwhelmed when hearing this saying.

"World-Honored One, if the great bodhisattvas can practice the fathomless prajna paramita this way, Heavenly Emperor Indra, Great Brahma King, and the lords of various sentient beings will pay homage to them."

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, “If the great bodhisattvas can practice the fathomless prajna paramita this way, they will be always respected and esteemed not only by Heavenly Emperor Indra, Great Brahma King, and the lords of sentient beings, but also by the heavenly beings from the Heaven of Extremely Great Brightness and Purity, Heaven of Universal Purity, Heaven of Extensive Rewards, Heaven of Pure Residence, and the rest of heavenly beings. These great bodhisattvas will also be protected by and kept in the minds of all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones in innumerable, countless, and boundless worlds of the ten directions.

“You must know, Well-Appearing One, because these great bodhisattvas can practice the fathomless prajna paramita this way, they will be able to fulfill giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita quickly. They will fulfill internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature; realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable; the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering; the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path; the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations; the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations; and the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration quickly. They will fulfill the stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilements, and so forth, and stage of dharma cloud; all dharani gates and samadhi gates; the five eyes and six supernatural powers; the Buddha’s ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha’s wisdom and power; staying in correct mindfulness and always dwelling in equanimity; the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena quickly. They will fulfill all great bodhisattva actions, the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas, and the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge quickly.

“You must know, Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas practice the fathomless prajna paramita this way, they will always be protected by and kept in the minds of the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones and great bodhisattvas. They will be able to fulfill all merits and virtues quickly. You must know, these

great bodhisattvas have practiced and cultivated as the Buddha has done; they are just like the Buddhas, the World-Honored Ones.

(The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One that if the great bodhisattvas can practice prajna paramita this way, they will be respected by heavenly beings, protected by Thus-Comers, and fulfill various superior dharmas quickly. The so-called "this way" means that the great bodhisattvas are aware that all dharmas are unattainable and cannot be established, and they are not overwhelmed when hearing this truth.)

"You must know, Well-Appearing One, these great bodhisattvas have solid minds. Suppose that as many sentient beings in the Buddha worlds of the ten directions as the sands of the Ganges are evil demons. Each evil demon made as many transformed evil demons as the sands of the Ganges, and all these evil demons had immeasurable and boundless supernatural powers, then all these evil demons, by using all their powers, could not successfully stop these great bodhisattvas from practicing the fathomless prajna paramita or realizing and attaining the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. Why? It is because these great bodhisattvas have attained the expedient skillfulness of prajna paramita and have thoroughly realized that all dharmas are unattainable.

"Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas can successfully use two methods, all evil demons cannot hinder them from practicing fathomless prajna paramita and attaining the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. What are the two methods? One is to contemplate all dharmas and become aware that they are empty in the final analysis. The other is never to turn away from the sentient beings.

"Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas achieve two things, all evil demons cannot hinder them from practicing fathomless prajna paramita and attaining the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. What are the two things? One is they have practiced as the Buddha teaches, and the other is they are always protected by and kept in the minds of various Buddhas.

"Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas practice the fathomless prajna paramita this way, various heavenly deities will come to pay homage to them. They will stay with them, make offerings to them, and often encourage them to do something. They will say, 'Excellent,

great bodhisattvas. To realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, one should work diligently to dwell in emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration. Why? If the great bodhisattvas dwell in emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration, the sentient beings who could not rely on any one now can rely on them; those who could not take refuge now can take refuge in them; those who were not rescued and protected now are rescued and protected; those who had no houses now have houses; those who had no isles now have isles; those who were in darkness now are illuminated; and those who were deaf and blind now can hear and see. Why? Great bodhisattvas, dwelling in emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration is equivalent to dwelling peacefully in the fathomless prajna paramita. Once dwelling peacefully in the fathomless prajna paramita, they will realize the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi before long.'

"Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas dwell in the fathomless prajna paramita this way, they will be spontaneously liked, admired, and acclaimed by the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones in numberless, countless, and boundless worlds of the ten directions when teaching correct dharma to a big crowd of people. The names, origins, and merits and virtues of these great bodhisattvas will also be mentioned by the Thus-Comers. These are subtle and wonderful merits and virtues derived from dwelling in the fathomless prajna paramita.

"You must know, Well-Appearing One, as I am here and now lecturing on the fathomless prajna paramita for the public, I spontaneously and joyfully admire and acclaim the names, origins, merits, and the virtues of various great bodhisattvas, such as Treasure Banner Great Bodhisattva, Topknot Great Bodhisattva, and the rest of the great bodhisattvas, who are staying in the Unmovable Buddha's place, cultivating pure actions of celibacy, and dwelling in the fathomless prajna paramita, the subtle and wonderful merits and virtues of the fathomless prajna paramita. In the numberless, countless, and boundless worlds in the east, all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones are also lecturing on the fathomless prajna paramita for the public. The great bodhisattvas in these worlds who are cultivating pure celibacy and dwelling in the fathomless prajna paramita are admired and acclaimed by the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones; their names, origins, merits, and virtues will be mentioned. Meanwhile, in as

many Buddha worlds as the sands of the Ganges in the south, west, north, northeast, southeast, northwest, southwest, zenith, and nadir, the similar wonderful things also happen.

"You must know, Well-Appearing One, some great bodhisattvas have practiced the fathomless prajna paramita since the time of aspiring to the great bodhi. They have step by step fulfilled the path of the great bodhi, the fathomless prajna paramita, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena. All Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones in the numberless, countless, and boundless worlds of the ten directions will joyfully, publicly, and spontaneously admire and acclaim these great bodhisattvas. Their subtle and wonderful merits and virtues, and their names and origins will be mentioned. Why? These great bodhisattvas can do very difficult things to keep the seeds of the Buddha from discontinuation to bring benefits to all sentient beings endlessly."

(The Buddha articulated the subtle and exquisite merits and virtues gained by the great bodhisattvas who dwell in the fathomless prajna paramita with deep compassion for sentient beings, follow Thus-Comer's teachings, and realize that all dharmas in the final analysis are empty and unattainable.)

At that time, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "World-Honored One, what kinds of great bodhisattvas will be admired and acclaimed spontaneously and joyfully, and their names, origins, merits, and virtues will be mentioned by the Thus-Comers when they teach the correct dharma? Are these great bodhisattvas nonregressive or regressive?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "Some great bodhisattvas have dwelled in nonregression when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita. They are admired and acclaimed joyfully and spontaneously by the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones; their names, origins, merits, and virtues are mentioned when Thus-Comers teach correct dharma. Some great bodhisattvas have not yet been conferred the prophecy of achieving nonregression but have cultivated prajna paramita. They are also admired and acclaimed by the Thus-Comers; their names, origins, merits, and virtues are mentioned by Thus-Comers.

At that time, Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, “Who are these great bodhisattvas?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “Some great bodhisattvas learn the way the Unmovable Buddha practiced as he was still a bodhisattva. Having dwelled in the stage of nonregression, these great bodhisattvas will be delightfully and publicly admired and acclaimed by various Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones who are teaching correct dharma. The names, origins, merits, and virtues of these great bodhisattvas are also mentioned by the Thus-Comers. On the other hand, some great bodhisattvas learn the way Treasure Banner Great Bodhisattva and Topknot Great Bodhisattva did. Although they have not been conferred the prophecy by the Buddha, they have practiced the fathomless prajna paramita diligently, so they are also admired and acclaimed delightfully, and their names, origins, merits, and virtues are mentioned by the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones when teaching the correct dharma.

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, some great bodhisattvas have practiced the fathomless prajna paramita. They deeply believe in and understand the nature of nonarising of all dharmas but have not realized the forbearance of nonarising. They deeply believe and understand that all dharmas are empty in the final analysis but have not realized the forbearance of nonarising. They deeply believe in and understand that the nature of all dharmas is tranquil but have not realized the forbearance of nonarising. They deeply believe in and understand that the nature of all dharmas is far away but have not realized the forbearance of nonarising. They deeply believe in and understand that the nature of all dharmas is illusory but have not realized the forbearance of nonarising. They deeply believe in and understand that the nature of all dharmas is empty but have not realized the forbearance of nonarising. They deeply believe and understand that the nature of all dharmas is not at ease but have not realized the forbearance of nonarising. They deeply believe and understand that the nature of all dharmas is not solid but have not realized the forbearance of nonarising.

“Well-Appearing One, these great bodhisattvas are also spontaneously and publicly admired and acclaimed by the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones when giving the teaching of correct dharma; their names, origins,

merits, and virtues are so mentioned. It means that these great bodhisattvas have transcended the stage of voice-hearer or self-enlightenment bodhi, and they will attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. If the great bodhisattvas practice the fathomless prajna paramita and are admired and acclaimed publicly by the Thus-Comers when teaching the correct dharma, it is certain that these great bodhisattvas will dwell peacefully in the stage of nonregression; after that, they will realize the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi soon.

(The Buddha listed various kinds of great bodhisattvas who are admired and acclaimed by the Thus-Comers.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, if the good gentlemen and gentlewomen of the bodhisattva vehicle hear the fathomless prajna paramita, and are not skeptical or puzzled about its essential meanings, nor do they get lost or feel suffocated in it, but thinking, 'The meanings of the fathomless prajna paramita taught by the Buddha definitely are not upside down,' then these good gentlemen and gentlewomen will develop a pure and deep belief in prajna paramita through hearing, and gradually they will hear more about prajna paramita in the Unmovable Buddha's place and various great bodhisattvas' places. They will thus form a deep belief in and insightful understanding of the essential meanings of prajna paramita, dwell in the stage of nonregression, and realize the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly.

(The Buddha taught how the great bodhisattvas develop a belief in and insightful understanding of the essential meanings of prajna paramita.)

"Well-Appearing One, if the good gentlemen and gentlewomen are not skeptical or puzzled when hearing the fathomless prajna paramita, and do not get lost or misunderstand it, rather, they develop a deep belief in and understanding of prajna paramita instead of slandering it, then they will gain innumerable subtle and wonderful virtuous roots, not to mention if they can accept, embrace, read, recite, thoroughly understand, and reasonably reflect on prajna paramita based on realness, and further diligently cultivate it by dwelling in realness. These good gentlemen and gentlewomen thus will dwell in the stage of nonregression, realize the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly, and turn the wonderful dharma wheel to deliver sentient beings."

(The Buddha taught how the great bodhisattvas learn to dwell in nonregression through dwelling in realness.)

At that time, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, “World-Honored One, as the real nature of all dharmas is unattainable, how can we say that the great bodhisattvas will dwell peacefully in realness, cultivate diligently to dwell peacefully in the stage of nonregression, realize the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly, and turn the wonderful dharma wheel to deliver sentient beings?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “As the transformed persons made by the Buddha can dwell peacefully in realness to cultivate bodhisattva actions, stay firmly in the stage of nonregression, realize the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly, and turn the wonderful dharma wheel to deliver sentient beings, the great bodhisattvas can also dwell peacefully in realness to cultivate bodhisattva actions, stay firmly in the stage of nonregression, realize the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly, and turn the wonderful dharma wheel to deliver sentient beings.”

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, “The transformed ones made by the Buddhas are nonexistent, and the dharmas apart from realness are also unattainable, then, who will dwell in realness and cultivate bodhisattva actions? Who will stay firmly in the stage of nonregression? Who will realize the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi? Who will turn the dharma wheel? What dharma will be taught? And what sentient beings will be delivered? World-Honored One, as realness is unattainable, not to mention the things such as dwelling peacefully in realness to cultivate bodhisattva actions, staying in the stage of nonregression, realizing the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly, and turning the wonderful dharma wheel to deliver sentient beings. It does not make sense to say that these things are real and existent.”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “Yes, it is as you say. As the transformed ones made by the Buddhas are nonexistent, and the dharmas apart from realness are also unattainable, then who will dwell in realness to cultivate bodhisattva actions? Who will stay firmly in the stage of nonregression? Who will realize the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi? Who will turn the dharma wheel? What dharma will be taught? What sentient beings will

be delivered? Well-Appearing One, as realness is unattainable, how can the things such as dwelling in realness to cultivate bodhisattva actions, staying in the stage of nonregression, realizing the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly, and turning the wonderful dharma wheel to deliver sentient beings be attainable? It does not make sense if these things are real and existent. Why? Regardless of the presence of Buddhas in the worlds, all dharmas remain as they have always been; they are not apart from realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable. Well-Appearing One it is certain that there are no such things as dwelling in realness to cultivate bodhisattva actions, staying in the stage of nonregression, and so forth, and turning the wonderful dharma wheel to deliver sentient beings. Why? Well-Appearing One, the realness of all dharmas has neither arising and extinction, nor duration and decay. Well-Appearing One, if the dharmas have neither arising and extinction nor duration and decay, then who will dwell in them to cultivate bodhisattva actions? Who will stay firmly in the stage of nonregression? Who will realize the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi? Who will turn the dharma wheel? What dharma will be taught? And who will be delivered? All these things are nonexistent. So, it does not make sense to say that they are real and existent. It is in terms of the worldly views to establish the existence of these things."

(The Buddha taught that as realness and all dharmas have neither arising an extinction nor duration and decay, all dharmas such as the cultivation, realization, nonregression, and unsurpassed bodhi are unreal and nonexistent. It is in terms of the worldly views to establish these things; it is an expedient and skillful way for teaching and guiding sentient beings.)

At that time, Heavenly Emperor Indra said to the Buddha, "World-Honored One, prajna paramita is extremely profound and difficult to believe and understand. The great bodhisattvas have known that all dharmas are unattainable, but they still practice the fathomless prajna paramita and aspire to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi to teach correct dharma for sentient beings. This is a very difficult task. Why? World-Honored One, it is certain that there are no such things as dwelling peacefully in realness to cultivate the bodhisattva actions, realizing the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, and teaching the correct dharma to various sentient beings. When practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas have contemplated and become aware that all dharmas are nonexistent, but they are not scared,

frightened, terrified, skeptical, hesitated, sinking, drowned, getting lost, or suffocated. What they do is very rare and unique!"

Well-Appearing One said to Heavenly Emperor Indra, "Kausika, as you say, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas have contemplated and become aware that all dharmas are nonexistent. But these great bodhisattvas are not scared, frightened, and terrified, nor are they skeptical, hesitated, sinking, drowned, getting lost, or suffocated. So, they are undertaking unusual and unique things, as you say. Kausika, the great bodhisattvas have practiced the fathomless prajna paramita and contemplated all dharmas, and get to know that the self-natures of all dharmas are empty, and in emptiness nothing is existent, so why should one be scared, frightened, skeptical, and suffocated? Therefore, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas should not be scared, frightened, terrified, skeptical, hesitated, sinking, drowned, getting lost, or suffocated. It is not so rare and unique."

In the meantime, Heavenly Emperor Indra said to Well-Appearing One, "Great virtuous one, you can always speak in accord with emptiness, so what you say are always without hindrance. Your speaking is like shooting an arrow into empty space; it can fly far or near without hindrance. What you say is incomparable."

Chapter 65

Speaking Real Words

Section 1

(In the Second Assembly)

At that time, Heavenly Emperor Indra said to the Buddha, “World-Honored One, does what I say admire, record, and in accord with the World-Honored One’s real dharma words?”

The Buddha replied, “Yes, Kausika, what you say admires, records, and is in accord with the World-Honored One’s real dharma words.”

Meanwhile, Heavenly Emperor Indra said to the Buddha again, “It is very rare and unique, World-Honored One. What the great virtuous Well-Appearing One says is based on emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration. It is based on the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path; the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations; the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, and so forth, and ten universal contemplations; the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering; giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita; internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature; realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable; the stages of bodhisattva; all dharani gates and all samadhi gates; the five eyes and the six supernatural powers; the Buddha’s ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha’s wisdom and power; staying in correct mindfulness and always dwelling in equanimity; the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena; and all great bodhisattva actions and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas.”

At that time, the Buddha said to Heavenly Emperor Indra, “Kausika, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One has dwelled in emptiness of all dharmas and contemplated giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita as unattainable, so how can ones who practice giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita be attainable? He has contemplated the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path as unattainable, so how can ones who cultivate the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path be attainable? He has contemplated the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations as unattainable, so how can ones who cultivate the four meditations, four immeasurable minds,

and four formless concentrations be attainable? He has contemplated the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations as unattainable, so how can ones who cultivate the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations be attainable? He has contemplated the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering as unattainable, so how can ones who dwell in the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering be attainable? He has contemplated internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature as unattainable, so how can ones who dwell in internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature be attainable? He has contemplated realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable as unattainable, so how can ones who dwell in realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable be attainable? He has contemplated the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration as unattainable, so how can ones who cultivate the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration be attainable? He has contemplated the stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilements, and so forth, and the stage of dharma cloud as unattainable, so how can ones who cultivate the stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilements, and so forth, and the stage of dharma cloud be attainable? He has contemplated all dharani gates and all samadhi gates as unattainable, so how can ones who cultivate all dharani gates and all samadhi gates be attainable? He has contemplated the five eyes and the six supernatural powers as unattainable, so how can ones who cultivate the five eyes and the six supernatural powers be attainable? He has contemplated the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power as unattainable, so how can ones who cultivate the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power be attainable? He has contemplated staying in correct mindfulness and always dwelling in equanimity as unattainable, so how can the ones who cultivate staying in correct mindfulness and always dwelling in equanimity be attainable? He has contemplated the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena as unattainable, so how can ones who activate the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of

all phenomena be attainable? He has contemplated all great bodhisattva actions as unattainable, so how can ones who practice all great bodhisattva actions be attainable? He has contemplated the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas as unattainable, so how can ones who realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas be attainable? He has contemplated the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge as unattainable, so how can ones who attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge be attainable? He has contemplated the correct dharma wheel as unattainable, so how can ones who turn the correct dharma wheel be attainable? He has contemplated the thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features as unattainable, so how can ones who use these marks and features to dignify themselves be attainable? He has contemplated the dharmas without arising and extinction as unattainable, so how can ones who realize the dharmas without arising and extinction be attainable? Why?

"Kausika, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One has dwelled in the abodes of getting far away, tranquility, nonexistence, nonattainment, emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration. Kausika, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One has dwelled in numberless superior abodes.

"Kausika, Well-Appearing One has dwelled in numberless superior abodes. But in comparison, the great bodhisattvas dwelling in the abode of the profound actions of prajna paramita are more superior to his dwelling one hundred, one thousand, and so forth, and one upanisadam times. Why? The abode of the profound actions of prajna paramita is incomparable; it is only second to the abode of various Buddhas, but superior to, higher, nobler, more wonderful, subtler, and upper than the abode of voice-hearers or self-enlightened ones. Therefore, Kausika, if the great bodhisattvas would like to dwell in an abode higher than all sentient beings, they should learn to dwell in the fathomless actions of prajna paramita. Why? If the great bodhisattvas dwell in this abode, they will surpass the stage of voice-hearer and the stage of self-enlightened one, enter onto the bodhisattva path of nonarising, fulfill all Buddha dharma quickly, permanently terminate the enduring disposition of vexations, realize and attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, and thus will be named Thus-Comer, One Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened One, and always bring benefits and happiness to all sentient beings."

(The Buddha said to Kausika that residing in fathomless actions of parjna paramita is superior to the dwelling of voice-hearers or self-enlightened ones.)

At that time, numberless and countless heavenly beings from the Heaven of the Thirty-Three Smaller Heavens rejoiced, danced, and jumped and made the most fragrant heavenly flowers as offerings to spread on Thus-Comer and the monastics. In the meantime, six hundred bhiksus in the assembly stood up from their seats, bowed to the Buddha, knelt before the Buddha's feet with right knees touching the ground and left shoulders covered. Their bodies bent respectfully with their palms joined together and stared at the Buddha's face without blinking their eyes. Because of the Buddha's supernatural powers, all fragrant heavenly flowers spontaneously filled each bhiksu's palm. These bhiksus had never been so delighted before. They presented the flowers to spread over the Buddha and various bodhisattvas, and all vowed, "We would like to always dwell based on these virtuous roots in the abode of the exquisite and subtle actions of the fathomless prajna paramita, in which the voice-hearers and self-enlightened ones cannot dwell. We also would like to approach the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly and transcend the stage of voice-hearer or self-enlightened one."

At that time, knowing that these bhiksus had unwavering intentions to aspire to the great bodhi and would not regress, so the World-Honored One smiled. As usual, various colorful lights, such as blue, yellow, scarlet, white, red, violet, fresh green, gold, silver, and crystal, emitted from his face, shining over the large threefold thousand-world. These lights returned slowly, circled three times around the Buddha's body after traveling far away, and then were absorbed into the top of the Buddha's head.

At that time, witnessing what was happening, Joyfully Celebrating One rejoiced. He danced and jumped, bowed to the Buddha with his palms joined together and said, "World-Honored One, what cause has made you smile? Various Buddhas do not smile without cause and condition. I beseech your mercy to tell us.

The Buddha replied to Joyfully Celebrating One, "These bhiksus will become the Buddhas in the Kalpa of Stellar with the same names: Spreading Flowers Thus-Comer, One Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened One, One Perfect in Wisdom and Actions, Well-Gone One, One Who Knows the World, Unsurpassed Great Person, the Taming

and Guiding One, the Teacher of Heavenly and Human Beings, Buddha, and Bhagavat. They will have similar lifespans, lands, and monastic disciples. When they are born, leave the family, become the monks, and after becoming the Buddhas, the exquisite flowers will rain on them in five colors day and night wherever they are. I smiled because of this cause and condition. Therefore, Joyfully Celebrating One, if the great bodhisattvas would like to dwell peacefully in superior abode, they should practice prajna paramita. If the great bodhisattvas would like to dwell peacefully in the abode of the Thus-Comer, they should practice prajna paramita.

"You must know, Joyfully Celebrating One, if the good gentlemen and gentlewomen diligently and attentively cultivate and learn the fathomless prajna paramita, they must have been reborn from the human world or from the Heaven of Tusita. In their previous lives in heaven or the human world, they must have heard extensively the fathomless prajna paramita so they are able to cultivate and learn the fathomless prajna paramita diligently in present life. You must know, Joyfully Celebrating One, when observing that these good gentlemen and gentlewomen cultivate and learn the fathomless prajna paramita diligently without regarding for their own bodies, lives, and properties, it is clear that these good gentlemen and gentlewomen are great bodhisattvas."

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Chapter 65

Speaking Real Words

Section 2

(In the Second Assembly)

"You must know, Joyfully Celebrating One, some good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth love to hear the teachings of the fathomless prajna paramita. They accept and embrace it, and further read, recite, investigate thoroughly, cultivate and learn diligently, and reflect reasonably on it. After that, they lecture on, explain, manifest, interpret, and give cautions to various good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth of the bodhisattva vehicle. These people must have heard in their previous lives the teachings of the fathomless prajna paramita given by the Buddhas. They also had in the past accepted, embraced, read, recited, investigated thoroughly, cultivated and learned diligently, reflected reasonably on prajna paramita, and taught and gave cautions of it to others.

"You must know, Joyfully Celebrating One, these good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth are able to do this in current life because they had in the past planted various virtuous roots. They should think, 'I have not heard this fathomless prajna paramita from voice-hearers or self-enlightened ones. I must have in the past heard it from the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones. I have not planted virtuous roots by following the directions of voice-hearers and self-enlightened ones, but I have followed the directions of the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones. Because of this cause and condition, I am fond of the fathomless prajna paramita and can accept, embrace, read, recite, investigate thoroughly, cultivate and learn diligently, reflect reasonably on, and teach it to others tirelessly.'

"You must know, Joyfully Celebrating One, if the good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth love to hear the fathomless prajna paramita, and accept, embrace, read, recite, investigate

thoroughly, cultivate and learn diligently, and reflect reasonably on it to fully understand its meanings, words, dharmas, implications, and precepts, then these good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth will be able to perceive intuitively all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones in the present.

"You must know, Joyfully Celebrating One, if the good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth can develop a pure belief in and deep understanding of prajna paramita after hearing its very profound essential meanings, avoid to slander, destroy, harm, or hinder it, then these good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth must have made offerings to numberless Buddhas, made grand vows in various Buddhas' places, planted a lot of virtuous roots, and been absorbed by innumerable real, virtuous intellectuals.

(The Buddha told Ananda why the good gentlepersons could form pure belief in and deep understanding of prajna paramita after hearing its profound essential meanings.)

"You must know, Joyfully Celebrating One, if the good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth can plant various virtuous roots in the superior fields of bliss of the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones, then they will realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi either through voice-hearer effect or self-enlightened one effect, or through the Thus-Comer effect. But first they must study and understand the profound aims and meanings of prajna paramita thoroughly. They should cultivate diligently to fulfill giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita. They should dwell peacefully in internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature. They should dwell peacefully in realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable. They should dwell peacefully in the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering. They should cultivate and fulfill the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path. They should cultivate and fulfill the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations. They should cultivate and fulfill the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations. They should cultivate and fulfill the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration. They should cultivate and fulfill the stage of ecstasy, the stage

of freedom from defilements, and so forth, and the stage of dharma cloud. They should cultivate and fulfill all dharani gates and all samadhi gates. They should cultivate and fulfill the five eyes and the six supernatural powers. They should cultivate and fulfill the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power. They should cultivate and fulfill staying in correct mindfulness and always dwelling in equanimity. They should cultivate and fulfill the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena.

(The Buddha further taught how the good gentlepersons cultivate and fulfill various superior dharmas to realize the unsurpassed bodhi through the three vehicles. But first, they should understand the profound essential meanings of prajna paramita thoroughly without hindrance.)

"You must know, Joyfully Celebrating One, if the great bodhisattvas can study and become aware of the profound essential meanings of prajna paramita thoroughly without hindrance, and cultivate and fulfill giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna paramitas, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena, then these great bodhisattvas will not stay in the stage of voice-hearer or self-enlightened one; rather, they will advance toward the realization and attainment of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. Therefore, if the great bodhisattvas would like to realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, they should learn to become aware of the fathomless essential meanings of prajna paramita thoroughly without hindrance, and cultivate and fulfill giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna paramitas, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena. Joyfully Celebrating One, now I am entrusting you with prajna paramita. You should correctly accept, embrace, read, recite, study, and understand it thoroughly and do not forget or lose it.

"You must know, Joyfully Celebrating One, if you forget or lose the rest of dharmas that I have taught you, your sins are not so severe as forgetting even one sentence in the sutras of prajna paramita. If you can uphold the profound sutras of prajna paramita well and do not forget even a sentence, the blessings thus gained will be immeasurable. If you cannot uphold the

profound sutras of prajna paramita well or if you forget even a sentence, the sins to be blamed for will be as great as the blessings mentioned above. Joyfully Celebrating One, I am now entrusting you sincerely with the profound sutras of prajna paramita, you should correctly and attentively embrace, read, recite, understand thoroughly, reflect reasonably on it, and further lecture on, explain, and demonstrate it for others, so that the hearers will fully understand the essential meanings of the sutras and further teach others about prajna paramita.

(The Buddha was entrusting Ananda with the profound sutras of prajna paramita to correctly and attentively embrace, read, recite, understand thoroughly, reflect reasonably on it, and further lecture on, explain, and demonstrate it for others, so that the hearers will fully understand the essential meanings of the sutras, and further teach others about prajna paramita.)

"You must know, Joyfully Celebrating One, if the good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth accept, embrace, read, recite, understand thoroughly, and reflect reasonably on the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita, and further lecture on them for others, then they must have accepted, practiced, and absorbed the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi realized and attained by all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones in the past, future, and present.

"You must know, Joyfully Celebrating One, if the good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth want to initiate a sincere and pure mind here and now to respect, acclaim, and make offerings with various most wonderful flower wreaths and ornaments, spread fragrances and powdered incenses, clothes, jewel necklaces, treasure banners, canopies, entertainment and music, and lamps to me, they should first of all wholeheartedly listen to, accept, embrace, read, recite, understand thoroughly, reflect reasonably on, and lecture on the profound sutras of prajna paramita for others, or write them and decorate them magnificently with various treasures. After that, they will further make various most wonderful flower wreathes and ornaments, spread and powdered incenses and fragrances, clothes, jewel necklaces, treasure banners, canopies, music and entertainment, and brilliant lamps as offerings respectfully to, esteem, and acclaim the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita tirelessly.

(The Buddha encouraged good gentlepersons to hear, accept, read, recite, reflect reasonably on the profound sutras of prajna paramita first before making offerings to them.)

"You must know, Joyfully Celebrating One, as the good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth make offerings respectfully to esteem and acclaim the fathomless prajna paramita, they equally make offerings respectfully to esteem and acclaim me. They equally make offerings respectfully to esteem and acclaim all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones in the worlds of the ten directions who are currently teaching the dharma. They also equally make offerings respectfully to esteem and acclaim various Buddhas in the past and future.

(The Buddha taught that making offerings respectfully to esteem and acclaim prajna paramita is considered equivalent to making offerings to esteem and acclaim all Buddhas across three phases of time in all worlds.)

"You must know, Joyfully Celebrating One, if the good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth hear the fathomless prajna paramita and initiate a pure belief with respect, joy, and love in it, they equally initiate a deep belief with respect, joy, and love in the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi that all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones in the past, future, and present realize and attain.

(The Buddha further said that to initiate a pure belief in prajna paramita is equivalent to initiate a deep belief in the unsurpassed bodhi.)

"Joyfully Celebrating One, if you respect, love, and are fond of me and do not want to turn away from me, you should respect and love the fathomless prajna paramita doubly. You should not abandon it and never forget even one sentence in its sutras.

"Joyfully Celebrating One, the causes and conditions that explain why I am entrusting you with the profound sutras of prajna paramita are numberless. Let me give you some instances. As I am your grand master, you must know that the fathomless prajna paramita is also your grand master. As I am respected by the heavenly and human beings, you should also equally respect the fathomless prajna paramita. Joyfully Celebrating One, I am now expediently and skillfully entrusting you with the profound sutras of prajna paramita. You should carefully accept and embrace them, and do not lose or forget them. Now, in front of the heavenly beings, human beings, asuras, and so forth, I am entrusting you with the fathomless prajna paramita.

(The Buddha explained why he entrusted Ananda with the fathomless prajna paramita.)

"Let me tell you this sincerely and honestly, Joyfully Celebrating One. If the pure believers are not willing to turn away from the Buddha, the dharma, and the sangha and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi that various Buddhas in the past, future, and present realize and attain, they will also be extremely reluctant to turn away from the fathomless prajna paramita. This is how the Buddhas have taught and given cautions to their disciples.

"You must know, Joyfully Celebrating One, if the good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth love to hear, accept, embrace, read, recite, understand thoroughly, and reflect reasonably on the fathomless prajna paramita, and further extensively lecture on it, explain and interpret it respectively, so that others can easily understand and cultivate and learn it diligently, then these good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth will realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly. They will be very close to the fulfillment of the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. Why? Joyfully Celebrating One, the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi attained by all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones arises because of the fathomless prajna paramita.

"You must know, Joyfully Celebrating One, the Buddhas in the past, future, and present can give birth to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi because of the fathomless prajna paramita. Therefore, Joyfully Celebrating One, if the great bodhisattvas would like to attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, they should diligently and attentively cultivate and learn the fathomless prajna paramita. Why? Joyfully Celebrating One, the fathomless prajna paramita is the mother of great bodhisattva; it gives birth to various great bodhisattvas.

(The Buddha said that the fathomless prajna paramita is the mother of great bodhisattvas.)

"You must know, Joyfully Celebrating One, if the great bodhisattvas diligently cultivate and learn giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna paramitas, they will realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly. Therefore, Joyfully Celebrating One, I am now entrusting you with these six paramitas, you should uphold them well, and do not lose or forget them. Why? The six paramitas are the inexhaustible dharma

storage of various Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones, from which, all Buddha dharmas are born.

(The six paramitas are the inexhaustible storage of Buddha dharma.)

"You must know, Joyfully Celebrating One, the essential meanings of the dharma taught by the Buddhas in the past, future, and present flow from this inexhaustible dharma storage of the six paramitas. You must know, Joyfully Celebrating One, the Buddhas in the past, future, and present realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi because of their diligent and attentive cultivation and learning of this inexhaustible dharma storage of the six paramitas. You must know, Joyfully Celebrating One, the Buddhas, voice-hearers, and the monastics in the past, future, and present enter nirvana without remainder because of their diligent and attentive cultivation and learning of this inexhaustible dharma storage of the six paramitas.

(The Buddha taught that the essential meanings of the dharma, the Buddhas across the three phases of time, and various effects arise out of the inexhaustible storage of six paramitas.)

"Furthermore, Joyfully Celebrating One, if you teach the dharma of the voice-hearer for all practitioners of the voice-hearer vehicle and all sentient beings in the large threefold thousand-world to let them attain arhat effect because of this dharma, then you still have not done the services that the Buddha's disciples should do. If you can teach the bodhisattva vehicle practitioners even one sentence of the dharma correspondent with the fathomless prajna paramita, you indeed do what a Buddha's disciple should do. I will be deeply glad and celebrate you if you can do this. It is superior to teaching all sentient beings in the large threefold thousand-world to attain arhat effect.

(The Buddha reiterated the supreme importance of prajna paramita in comparison to other dharma gates for attaining unsurpassed bodhi.)

"Furthermore, Joyfully Celebrating One, suppose that all sentient beings in the large threefold thousand-world have been reborn as human beings simultaneously, and all have further realized and attained the arhat effect along with the blessings thus caused by practicing giving, observing precepts, and other bliss-inviting dharmas. What do you think about this? Will these sentient beings be much blessed?"

Joyfully Celebrating One replied, “They will be very much blessed, World-Honored One. Their blessings caused by practicing positive karmas are innumerable and boundless.

The Buddha said to Joyfully Celebrating One, “If the Buddha’s voice-hearer disciples can teach the bodhisattvas the dharmas correspondent with prajna paramita, the blessings thus accumulated one day and one night will be much more than the former ones. Joyfully Celebrating One, now let us put one day and night, one day, half day, one hour, the time for eating one meal, an instant, or a very short instant aside. If the voice-hearers can teach the bodhisattvas the dharmas correspondent with prajna paramita for even as brief as a blink, they will be blessed much more than the ones who have attained arhat effect. Why? It is because these voice-hearer practitioners will gain more blessings than other voice-hearers or self-enlightened ones.

(The Buddha said that teaching bodhisattvas the dharma correspondent with prajna paramita for a very short time will gain more blessings than teaching all sentient beings in the large threefold thousand-world to attain arhat effect.)

“Furthermore, Joyfully Celebrating One, if the great bodhisattvas lecture on the dharma of voice-hearer vehicle to let all sentient beings in the large threefold thousand-world realize and attain the arhat effect and possess various superior merits and virtues, then what do you think about this? Will the great bodhisattvas gain many blessings because of this cause and condition?”

Joyfully Celebrating One replied, “World-Honored One, the blessings thus gained will be numberless and boundless.”

The Buddha said to Joyfully Celebrating One, “If the great bodhisattvas lecture on the dharma in accord with prajna paramita for the voice-hearer vehicle pursuers, the self-enlightened one vehicle pursuers, or the good gentlemen, gentlewomen who are pursuing the unsurpassed vehicle for one day and one night, then the blessings thus derived will be much more than the former ones. Joyfully Celebrating One, let us put one day and one night, one day, half a day, one hour, one mealtime, or one instant aside. If the great bodhisattvas lecture on the dharma in accord with prajna paramita for the three-vehicle pursuers for as short as a blink, the blessings thus accumulated also will be much more than the former ones by numberless and countless

times. Why? It is because the dharma teaching in accord with prajna paramita surpasses that in accord with voice-hearer and self-enlightened one; it also surpasses the merits and virtues of the voice-hearer and self-enlightened one. Why? These great bodhisattvas have pursued the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi themselves. They have also demonstrated, manifested, taught, guided, encouraged, and celebrated sentient beings to let them achieve nonregression in the pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.

"You must know, Joyfully Celebrating One, these great bodhisattvas have not only cultivated giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita themselves but have also taught others to do so. They have not only cultivated the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path themselves but have also taught others to do so. They have not only dwelled in internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature themselves but have also taught others to do so. They have not only dwelled in realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable themselves but have also taught others to do so. They have not only dwelled in the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering themselves but have also taught others to do so. They have not only cultivated the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations themselves but have also taught others to do so. They have not only cultivated the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations themselves but have also taught others to do so. They have not only cultivated the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration themselves but have also taught others to do so. They have not only cultivated the stages of bodhisattva themselves but have also taught others to do so. They have not only cultivated all dharani gates and samadhi gates themselves but have also taught others to do so. They have not only cultivated the five eyes and the six supernatural power themselves but have also taught others to do so. They have not only cultivated the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power themselves but have also taught others to do so. They have not only cultivated the thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features themselves but have also taught others to do so. They have not only cultivated staying in correct mindfulness and always dwelling in equanimity themselves but have also

taught others to do so. They have not only cultivated the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena themselves but have also taught others to do so. They have not only cultivated all great bodhisattva actions themselves but have also taught others to do so. They have not only cultivated the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas themselves but have also taught others to do so. They have not only cultivated the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge themselves but have also taught others to do so. Because of this cause and condition, their virtuous roots grow and increase. It is nonsensical to say that these great bodhisattvas will regress in the pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi."

(The Buddha taught that the great bodhisattvas are superior because they not only pursue the unsurpassed bodhi themselves but also encourage others to do so; they not only cultivate and dwell in various holy dharmas themselves but also encourage others to do so.)

At that time, surrounded by the four groups of people, the Thus-Comer acclaimed prajna paramita and entrusted it to Joyfully Celebrating One. After it was accepted and embraced by Joyfully Celebrating One, the Buddha again used his supernatural powers to show all heavenly beings, dragons, yaksas, and so forth, and all humans and nonhumans in the assembly the Unmovable Thus-Comer, so that all could see the Unmovable Thus-Comer, who was also surrounded by the voice-hearers and the bodhisattvas and teaching the wonderful dharma to the ocean-like crowd. They saw how dignified and purified the pure land of the Unmovable Thus-Comer was. The voice-hearer monastics in that land were all arhats, who had no more flaws or vexations. They had obtained real self-ease and freedom, and both their minds and wisdom were well liberated. They were like wise horses or great dragons that had been well tamed and could adjust to all excellently. They had accomplished all that should be done and had gotten rid of all heavy burdens. Their bondages were detached; they became liberated because of correct knowledge. They all enjoyed the ultimate and uppermost self-ease. The monastic bodhisattvas in that assembly were well known. They had acquired dharani and could debate and speak without hindrance, and their merits, virtues, and wisdom were as vast and deep as the ocean. As the Buddha withdrew his supernatural powers, all participants in the assembly could not see the Unmovable Thus-Comer, One Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened One, the voice-hearers, the bodhisattvas, other participants, and the magnificent pure Buddha land.

The sentient beings in this land could not see them with their physical eyes. Why? As the Buddha withdrew his supernatural powers, the conditions serving to support their sights for seeing the objects far away were absent.

At that time, the Buddha asked the long-lived Joyfully Celebrating One, “Can you see the land of the Unmovable Thus-Comer, One Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened One and the participants in the assembly now?”

Joyfully Celebrating One replied, “My physical eyes cannot see them now.”

The Buddha said to Joyfully Celebrating One, “As the physical eyes in this land cannot see the phenomena in that land, so the eye roots cannot see the dharmas because the physical eye roots are not within the range of the dharmas. The dharma cannot practice the dharma, and the dharma cannot see the dharma. The dharma does not know the dharma, and the dharma cannot realize the dharma.

“You must know, Joyfully Celebrating One, no one can practice, see, know, or realize the dharma nature; the dharma nature is without movement and making. Why? All dharmas are like empty space, which has no operation. The nature of the ones who can grasp or the ones to be grasped is far away. Why? All dharmas are unimaginable. The nature of the ones who can imagine or the ones to be imagined is far away. All dharmas are like illusions, dreams, and so forth. They look as if they were existent, but they are not in actuality. They are caused by the combination of causes and conditions. All dharmas have no makers and receivers; they appear in a deluded existence without solidity. You must know, Joyfully Celebrating One, if the great bodhisattvas practice, see, know, and realize this way, they do practice prajna paramita without an attachment to various phenomena of the dharmas. You must know, Joyfully Celebrating One, when the great bodhisattvas learn this way, they indeed learn prajna paramita.

(The Buddha taught about the nature of all dharmas by showing the world of the Unmovable Thus-Comer for all participants to explain human physical roots cannot see the nature of the dharmas. The dharmas look existent but they are not because they are the combination of causes and conditions and are always in change. To realize this truth is learning prajna paramita.)

“Joyfully Celebrating One, if the great bodhisattvas would like to fulfill all paramitas perfectly and quickly, they should learn prajna paramita. Why? Those who learn this way are the superior, noblest, highest, most wonderful, subtlest, utmost, incomparable, and incomparably equal learners of all. They will bring benefits and happiness to all sentient beings and serve as reliance, refuge, destination, houses, rescue, and protection for all in need. The Buddhas, the World-Honored Ones, are happy to approve, admire, and acclaim those who cultivate and learn prajna paramita this way.

“You must know, Joyfully Celebrating One, the great bodhisattvas and the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones, who are dwelling in this learning, are able to move entire large threefold thousand-world with one hand, one finger, or one toe to other place, and put it back to its original location without disturbing, doing harm to, or frightening the sentient beings within it. Why? The merits, virtues, and powers of the fathomless prajna paramita are unimaginable.

“You must know, Joyfully Celebrating One, if the Buddhas and the great bodhisattvas in the past, future, and present learn this prajna paramita, they will all attain unhindered knowledge and views of the unconditioned dharmas and the dharmas of the three phases of time. Therefore, Joyfully Celebrating One, I say that the learning of the fathomless prajna paramita is the superior, noblest, highest, most wonderful, subtlest, upper, uppermost, incomparable, and incomparably equal one among all kinds of learning.

(The Buddha explained why the learning of prajna paramita is the superior and highest one of all kinds of learning.)

“You must know, Joyfully Celebrating One, those who would like to measure the quantity and edge of the fathomless prajna paramita are as foolish as those who want to measure the quantity and edge of empty space. Why? It is because the fathomless prajna paramita has numberless merits and virtues and is boundless.

“You must know, Joyfully Celebrating One, I will not say that the fathomless prajna paramita is measurable and has boundaries as the designated names. Why? All designated names, sentences, and words are measurable, while the fathomless prajna paramita is

immeasurable. No names, sentences, and words can be used to measure the merits, virtues, and the superior benefits of prajna paramita; no merits, virtues, and superior benefits of prajna paramita can be measured by names, sentences, and words."

(The Buddha taught what prajna paramita was like. No names and words can accurately describe it.)

At that time, Joyfully Celebrating One said to the Buddha, "World-Honored One, why is it said that the fathomless prajna paramita is immeasurable?"

The Buddha replied to Joyfully Celebrating One, "Because nature is inexhaustible, the fathomless prajna paramita is immeasurable. Because nature is far away, the fathomless prajna paramita is immeasurable. Because nature is tranquil, the fathomless prajna paramita is immeasurable. Because the fathomless prajna paramita is like reality, it is immeasurable. Because the fathomless prajna paramita is like empty space, it is immeasurable. You must know, Joyfully Celebrating One, all Buddhas, World-Honored Ones, in the past, future, and present had learned, will learn, and are learning prajna paramita, so they could attain, will attain, and are attaining the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi fully and perfectly to teach, explain, and demonstrate it for the sentient beings, while prajna paramita has never exhausted. Why? It is because the fathomless prajna paramita is as inexhaustible as empty space. Those who would like to find out the boundaries of the fathomless prajna paramita are like trying to find out the boundaries of empty space.

(The Buddha explained why prajna paramita was immeasurable.)

"You must know, Joyfully Celebrating One, the fathomless prajna paramita, meditation paramita, and so forth, and giving paramita had not been exhausted, are not exhausted, and will not be exhausted. Internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature had not been exhausted, are not exhausted, and will not be exhausted. Realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable had not been exhausted, are not exhausted, and will not be exhausted. The noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering had not been exhausted, are not exhausted, and will not be exhausted. The four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and

so forth, and noble eightfold path had not been exhausted, are not exhausted, and will not be exhausted. The four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations had not been exhausted, are not exhausted, and will not be exhausted. The eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations had not been exhausted, are not exhausted, and will not be exhausted. The liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration had not been exhausted, are not exhausted, and will not be exhausted. The stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilements, and so forth, and stage of dharma cloud had not been exhausted, are not exhausted, and will not be exhausted. All dharani gates and all samadhi gates had not been exhausted, are not exhausted, and will not be exhausted. The five eyes and the six supernatural powers had not been exhausted, are not exhausted, and will not be exhausted. The Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power had not been exhausted, are not exhausted, and will not be exhausted. The thirty-two perfect major marks and the eighty distinguishing minor features had not been exhausted, are not exhausted, and will not be exhausted. Staying in correct mindfulness and always dwelling in equanimity had not been exhausted, are not exhausted, and will not be exhausted. The perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena had not been exhausted, are not exhausted, and will not be exhausted. All great bodhisattva actions had not been exhausted, are not exhausted, and will not be exhausted. The unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas had not been exhausted, is not exhausted, and will not be exhausted. And the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge had not been exhausted, is not exhausted, and will not be exhausted. Why? All these dharmas have no arising, extinction, duration, or decay, so how can they be established as exhaustible?"

(The Buddha taught as all dharmas are without arising, extinction, duration, and decay, they should not be established as exhausted.)

At that time, the World-Honored One extended his broad and long tongue to cover his face. After showing the form of his tongue, the Buddha retracted it into his mouth. Then, the Buddha asked Joyfully Celebrating One, "What do you think about this? Does someone with such a long tongue tell lies?"

Joyfully Celebrating One replied, “No, World-Honored One.”

The Buddha said to Joyfully Celebrating One, “From this day on, you should go to lecture extensively on the fathomless prajna paramita to the four groups of people. You should analyze, explain, and organize it to make it understandable for them. You must know, Joyfully Celebrating One, in the profound sutras of prajna paramita, all factors for the bodhi and all phenomena of the dharmas are comprehensively contained. Therefore, all pursuers of voice-hearer vehicle, self-enlightened one vehicle, and the unsurpassed vehicle should diligently and tirelessly cultivate and learn the dharma gates based on the fathomless prajna paramita. If they can do this, they will realize and attain what they pursue before long.

(This is a key aspect of Buddha’s teachings, stating that all factors for bodhi and all phenomena of the dharmas are included in the sutras of prajna paramita.)

“Furthermore, Joyfully Celebrating One, the fathomless prajna paramita will enable one to insightfully understand all dharma forms, all words and writings, and the dharani gate. The great bodhisattvas should continually cultivate and learn the dharani gate. By accepting and incorporating the dharani gate, the great bodhisattvas can rapidly acquire and develop an eloquent and unimpeded ability in debate. You must know, Joyfully Celebrating One, the fathomless prajna paramita is an inexhaustible treasure of dharma storage of various Buddhas, the World-Honored Ones, in the past, future, and present. So let me tell you clearly today, those who can accept, embrace, read, recite, understand thoroughly, and reflect reasonably on the fathomless prajna paramita equally can accept and embrace the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of various Buddhas in the past, future, and present. You must know, Joyfully Celebrating One, I say that this fathomless prajna paramita is a powerful foot that can support one to travel on the path leading toward the bodhi. It is also the great dharani for all unsurpassed Buddha dharma. If all of you can accept and embrace the dharani of the fathomless prajna paramita, you equally embrace and retain all Buddha dharma and will not forget or lose it, so that you will be able to bring great benefits to all sentient beings in the endless future.”

(The Buddha offered an inspiring advice to great bodhisattvas to conclude this chapter.)

Chapter 66

The Inexhaustible

(In the Second Assembly)

At that time, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One thought to himself, “Such prajna paramita is extremely profound. So is the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas. I would like to inquire about the very profound meanings in this regard. So, he said to the Buddha, “World-Honored One, the fathomless prajna paramita is the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas, and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas is the fathomless prajna paramita. Both prajna paramita and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas are extremely profound and inexhaustible. Based on what cause and condition do we say that both are inexhaustible?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “The fathomless prajna paramita and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi are like empty space, so they are said inexhaustible.”

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, “How should the great bodhisattvas initiate and activate prajna paramita?”

The Buddha replied, “Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas should contemplate matter, feeling, thinking action, and consciousness as inexhaustible to initiate and activate prajna paramita. The great bodhisattvas should contemplate the eye sphere, ear sphere, and so forth, and the conscious sphere as inexhaustible to initiate and activate prajna paramita. They should contemplate the sight sphere, sound sphere, and so forth, and mental-image sphere as inexhaustible to initiate and activate prajna paramita. They should contemplate the eye realm, ear realm, and so forth, and conscious realm as inexhaustible to initiate and activate prajna paramita. They should contemplate the sight realm, sound realm, and so forth, and mental-image realm as inexhaustible to initiate and activate prajna paramita. They should contemplate the eye consciousness realm, ear consciousness realm, and so forth, and conscious consciousness realm as inexhaustible to initiate and activate prajna paramita. They should contemplate the eye

contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact as inexhaustible to initiate and activate prajna paramita. They should contemplate the feelings produced by eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact as inexhaustible to initiate and activate prajna paramita. They should contemplate the earth realm, water realm, and so forth, and consciousness realm as inexhaustible to initiate and activate prajna paramita. They should contemplate cause and condition, consecutive thoughts, the conditions that stimulate the mind, and the conditions that reinforce main causes as inexhaustible to initiate and activate prajna paramita. They should contemplate ignorance, action, consciousness, and so forth, and old age and death as inexhaustible to initiate and activate prajna paramita. They should contemplate giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita as inexhaustible to initiate and activate prajna paramita. They should contemplate internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature as inexhaustible to initiate and activate prajna paramita. They should contemplate realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable as inexhaustible to initiate and activate prajna paramita. They should contemplate the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering as inexhaustible to initiate and activate prajna paramita. They should contemplate the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path as inexhaustible to initiate and activate prajna paramita. They should contemplate the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations as inexhaustible to initiate and activate prajna paramita. They should contemplate the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations as inexhaustible to initiate and activate prajna paramita. They should contemplate the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration as inexhaustible to initiate and activate prajna paramita. They should contemplate the stage of pure contemplation, stage of embryonic Buddha nature, and so forth, and stage of Thus-Comer as inexhaustible to initiate and activate prajna paramita. They should contemplate the stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilements, and so forth, and stage of dharma cloud as inexhaustible to initiate and activate prajna paramita. They should contemplate all dharani gates and samadhi gates as inexhaustible to initiate and activate prajna paramita. They should contemplate the five eyes and six supernatural powers as inexhaustible to initiate and activate prajna paramita. They should contemplate the Buddha’s ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness,

and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power as inexhaustible to initiate and activate prajna paramita. They should contemplate the thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features as inexhaustible to initiate and activate prajna paramita. They should contemplate staying in correct mindfulness and dwelling in equanimity at all times as inexhaustible to initiate and activate prajna paramita. They should contemplate the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena as inexhaustible to initiate and activate prajna paramita. They should contemplate stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi as inexhaustible to initiate and activate prajna paramita. They should contemplate all great bodhisattva actions as inexhaustible to initiate and activate prajna paramita. They should contemplate the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi as inexhaustible to initiate and activate prajna paramita. And they should contemplate the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge as inexhaustible to initiate and activate prajna paramita.

(The Buddha taught that both prajna paramita and the unsurpassed bodhi are inexhaustible. The great bodhisattvas should contemplate various dharmas as inexhaustible to initiate and activate prajna paramita.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas should contemplate matter, feeling, thinking, action, consciousness, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge as inexhaustible empty space to initiate and activate prajna paramita.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the twelve chains of dependent origination indicate a sequence of cause and effect connections; namely, ignorance causes action, action causes consciousness, consciousness causes name and form, name and form cause six sense spheres, six sense spheres cause contact, contact causes reception, reception causes craving, craving causes grasping, grasping causes existence, existence causes birth, and birth causes old age, death, worry, sorrow, misery, anxiety, and upset. The great bodhisattvas should contemplate the twelve chains of dependent origination as inexhaustible empty space to initiate and activate prajna paramita.

(The great bodhisattvas should contemplate the twelve chains of dependent origination as inexhaustible empty space to initiate and activate prajna paramita.)

"Well-Appearing One, great bodhisattvas should initiate and activate prajna paramita this way. Well-Appearing One, as the great bodhisattvas contemplate and investigate the twelve chains of dependent origination and stay far away from the two extremes, they do undertake a wonderful contemplation not shared by other vehicles. Well-Appearing One, as the great bodhisattvas sit on the diamond throne under the bodhi tree to contemplate the twelve chains of dependent origination as inexhaustible empty space as they really are, they will be able to realize and attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas initiate and activate prajna paramita by viewing the dharmas as inexhaustible empty space and contemplate the twelve chains of dependent origination as they really are, they will not fall into the stage of voice-hearer or self-enlightened one; rather, they will realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly.

(The Buddha said that the great bodhisattvas will not fall into the two small vehicles but will attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge if they contemplate the twelve chains of dependent origination as they really are.)

"Well-Appearing One, some bodhisattva-vehicle practitioners have regressed in the pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi because they cannot activate prajna paramita with skillful and expedient intentions. How can the great bodhisattvas without expedient skillfulness view all dharmas as empty space and thus activate prajna paramita and contemplate the twelve chains of dependent origination as they really are when cultivating prajna paramita? Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas stay far away from expedient skillfulness and cannot initiate and activate prajna paramita, they will regress in the pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. They should cultivate prajna paramita based on such expedient skillfulness to contemplate the twelve chains of dependent origination as inexhaustible actions of empty space, so that they will fulfill prajna paramita quickly.

"Well-Appearing One, when contemplating dependent origination, the great bodhisattvas do not see any dharma arise without causes, or see any dharma extinguish without causes. They do not see any dharma nature or dharma form endure forever without arising and extinction. They do not see any dharma as connected with the 'I,' the sentient being, and so forth, and the knower and the viewer. They do not see any dharma as permanent or impermanent, pleasant or

painful, with or without selfness, pure or impure, tranquil or not tranquil, and far away or not far away. Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas should contemplate and investigate dependent origination this way to cultivate prajna paramita.

(The Buddha taught the right way to contemplate dharmas when one cultivates prajna paramita with expedient skillfulness.)

"Well-Appearing One, when the great bodhisattvas cultivate prajna paramita and contemplate the dharma gate of dependent origination as it really is, they do not see matter as permanent or impermanent, pleasant or painful, with or without selfness, pure or impure, tranquil or not tranquil, and far away or not far away; nor do they see feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness as permanent or impermanent, pleasant or painful, with or without selfness, pure or impure, tranquil or not tranquil, and far away or not far away. And so on, they do not see the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge as permanent or impermanent, pleasant or painful, with or without selfness, pure or impure, tranquil or not tranquil, and far away or not far away.

"Well-Appearing One, when the great bodhisattvas cultivate the fathomless prajna paramita this way, they will not see the prajna paramita that they are practicing; they will not see any person who can see the prajna paramita that he is practicing; they even cannot see the nonseeing. When the great bodhisattvas practice meditation, diligence, forbearance, pure precept, and giving paramitas, they will not see meditation paramita, diligence paramita, and so forth, and giving paramita that they are practicing; they will not see any person who can see meditation paramita, diligence paramita, and so forth, and giving paramita that he is practicing; they even cannot see the nonseeing. And so on, when they cultivate the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, they will not see the perfect knowledge that they are cultivating; they will not see any person who can see the perfect knowledge that he is cultivating; they even cannot see the nonseeing or any dharma that can terminate the enduring disposition of all vexations. Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas should practice prajna paramita by adopting nonattainment as skillful means in all dharmas. Well-Appearing One, as they do this way, all evil demons will be worried and anxious as if they were shot by tens of thousands of arrows. They will be tortured mentally and physically as if their parents had passed away abruptly."

Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, “World-Honored One, will only one evil demon be worried and anxious as if he were shot by tens of thousands of arrows when seeing various great bodhisattvas cultivate prajna paramita by adopting nonattainment as skillful means, or will all evil demons in the large threefold thousand-world be so worried and anxious?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “Not only one but all evil demons in the threefold thousand-world will be worried and anxious. They will not be able to remain at ease. Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas should always dwell peacefully in the wonderful and subtle abode of the fathomless prajna paramita. If the great bodhisattvas dwell this way, no heavenly beings, human beings, asuras, and so forth can take advantage of their weaknesses to disturb and hinder them. Therefore, Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas would like to realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, they should dwell peacefully in the wonderful and subtle abode of the fathomless prajna paramita.

“Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas can dwell peacefully in the wonderful and subtle abode of the fathomless prajna paramita, they will be able to cultivate giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna paramitas to their perfection. If the great bodhisattvas can correctly cultivate the fathomless prajna paramita, they will be able to cultivate all paramitas to their perfection.”

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, “World-Honored One, how do great bodhisattvas cultivate giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna paramitas to their perfection if they correctly cultivate the fathomless prajna paramita?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “When cultivating the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas should practice giving with a mind correspondent with the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, and further transfer the merits and virtues thus derived along with various sentient beings equally toward the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. Well-Appearing One, this is the right way for great bodhisattvas to cultivate the fathomless prajna paramita to fulfill giving paramita. If the great bodhisattvas practice pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna with a mind correspondent with the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, and further transfer the merits and virtues thus derived along with various sentient beings equally toward the perfect knowledge of all perfect

knowledge, they do cultivate the fathomless prajna paramita correctly. They will be able to fulfill pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna paramitas. Well-Appearing One, this is how the great bodhisattvas correctly cultivate the fathomless prajna paramita to fulfill giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna paramitas."

(The Buddha concluded the correct way of fulfilling six paramitas for great bodhisattvas.)

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Chapter 67

Absorbing Each Other

(In the Second Assembly)

At that time, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, “World-Honored One, how should great bodhisattvas dwell peacefully in giving paramita and absorb pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna paramitas?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “The great bodhisattvas should cultivate giving with a mind apart from greed and stinginess and transfer this giving along with all sentient beings equally toward the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. They should also dwell in loving-kindness of body, speech, and mind toward all sentient beings and stay far away from all sins. This is how great bodhisattvas dwell peacefully in giving paramita to absorb pure-precept paramita.

“Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas should practice giving with a mind apart from greed and stinginess and transfer this giving along with all sentient beings equally toward the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. The bodhisattvas should not hate the receivers or other evil sentient beings, who have unreasonably scorned, complained about, harmed, and insulted the givers. Rather, they should treat these wicked sentient beings with loving-kindness, compassion, and pity, and speak kind, humble, and grateful words to them, as usual. Well-Appearing One, this is how great bodhisattvas dwell in giving paramita to absorb forbearance paramita.

“Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas should cultivate giving with a mind apart from greed and stinginess and transfer this giving along with all sentient beings equally toward the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. As the evil sentient beings receive the giving but respond with criticism, complaints, harmful actions, or insults, the bodhisattvas will think: ‘Those who make such karma will face consequences. I should not focus on how they treat me. I

must remember to take care of my own karma.' They will think: 'I should give more to these and other sentient beings. I should not indulge in self-pity or worry.' After having these thoughts, these great bodhisattvas continue to practice giving and do it more diligently and extensively. This is how great bodhisattvas dwell peacefully in giving paramita and absorb diligence paramita.

"Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas should cultivate giving with a mind apart from greed and stinginess and transfer this giving along with all sentient beings equally toward the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. They should not be distracted by the receivers, the level of cultivation that they have achieved, the three realms, or the two vehicles; they rather should stay in a concentrative and tranquil mind to aspire wholeheartedly to the Buddha effect. Well-Appearing One, this is how great bodhisattvas dwell peacefully in giving paramita and absorb meditation paramita.

"Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas should cultivate giving with a mind apart from greed and stinginess and transfer this giving along with all sentient beings equally toward the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. They should contemplate the almsgiving receivers, the givers, and the things given as illusions. They do not view this giving as beneficial or harmful for sentient beings because they have achieved emptiness of all dharmas by virtue of understanding the ultimate meanings. Well-Appearing One, this is how great bodhisattvas dwell peacefully in giving paramita and absorb prajna paramita."

(The Buddha taught how great bodhisattvas should cultivate and dwell in giving paramita and simultaneously absorb pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna paramitas.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, "World-Honored One, how should great bodhisattvas dwell peacefully in pure-precept paramita and absorb giving, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna paramitas?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "The great bodhisattvas should dwell peacefully in pure-precept paramita to make the three bliss-inviting karmas of body, speech, and mind, and terminate the view of discontinuation, the view of permanence, and so forth, and other incorrect views. They should not aspire to the vehicle of voice-hearer or self-enlightened one, but

they should aspire to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. When dwelling peacefully in pure precept, the bodhisattvas should practice giving extensively for all sentient beings in need and transfer the virtuous roots of giving along with all sentient beings equally toward the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. They should not pursue the effects of the voice-hearer and self-enlightened one. Well-Appearing One, this is how great bodhisattvas dwell peacefully in pure-precept paramita and absorb giving paramita.

"Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas have dwelled peacefully in pure-precept paramita. As sentient beings come to cut the bodhisattvas' bodies into pieces and take them away, these great bodhisattvas will not hate or get angry. They will rather think: 'I have benefitted greatly because they took my dirty, smelly, and invulnerable body away. Now I have gained a pure and diamond-like body of the Buddha.' Well-Appearing One, this is how great bodhisattvas dwell peacefully in pure-precept paramita and absorb forbearance paramita.

"Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas have dwelled peacefully in pure-precept paramita and worked diligently physically and mentally without interruption. They put on the great armor of compassion and swore, 'All sentient beings have indulged in terrible and violent evils and cannot get rid of the suffering in the ocean of birth and death. I should guide them to the realm where there is no birth and death.' Well-Appearing One, this is how great bodhisattvas dwell peacefully in pure-precept paramita and absorb diligence paramita.

"Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas have dwelled peacefully in pure-precept paramita and entered the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, four formless concentrations, or the concentration of extinction, but they do not fall into the stage of voice-hearer or self-enlightened one, nor do they realize and attain the reality. They rather follow their original aspiration and think: 'All sentient beings have indulged in the dreadful and violent evils and cannot get out of the ocean of birth and death. Now I have dwelled in pure precept, I should expediently activate pure meditation to lead them to a realm in which there is no birth and death.' Well-Appearing One, this is how great bodhisattvas dwell peacefully in pure-precept paramita and absorb meditation paramita.

"Well-Appearing One, when dwelling peacefully in pure-precept paramita, the great bodhisattvas do not see any dharma that is virtuous or not virtuous, morally related or unrelated,

flawed or flawless, belonging to the world or beyond the world, conditioned or unconditioned, measurable or immeasurable, and with or without form. They have contemplated all dharmas without being apart from realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable while realness, dharma realm, and so forth are unattainable. Because of the expedient skillfulness of prajna paramita, they do not fall into the stage of voice-hearer or self-enlightened one. They have just wholeheartedly aspired to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. This is how great bodhisattvas dwell peacefully in pure-precept paramita and absorb prajna paramita."

(The Buddha taught how great bodhisattvas should cultivate and dwell in pure-precept paramita and simultaneously absorb giving, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna paramitas.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, "World-Honored One, how should great bodhisattvas dwell peacefully in forbearance paramita and absorb giving, pure precept, diligence, meditation, and prajna paramitas?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "The great bodhisattvas have dwelled peacefully in forbearance paramita from their initial aspiration to unsurpassed bodhi until sitting on the exquisite throne of the bodhi. During this time, if the sentient beings unreasonably scorn, blame, condemn, harm, or insult the great bodhisattvas, these great bodhisattvas will not be angry with hatred; rather, they will think: 'These sentient beings are pitiful. They are disturbed by various vexations, ghosts, or illness. They are not at ease and cannot rely on anyone. They are not protected or kept by someone but are driven by poverty and suffering. I must give them food, drinks, clothes, properties, and living supplies that they need so they will not be in shortage.' The great bodhisattvas will further transfer the virtuous roots of giving along with all sentient beings equally toward the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. When they undertake transference, they will not have a thought lingering on such questions: Who is doing the transference? What is transferred? Well-Appearing One, this is how great bodhisattvas dwell peacefully in forbearance paramita and absorb giving paramita.

"Well-Appearing One, from their initial aspiration to the great bodhi until sitting on the exquisite throne of the bodhi, the great bodhisattvas have dwelled peacefully in forbearance paramita. Throughout this period, the great bodhisattvas do not harm sentient beings or let any

evil idea or incorrect view arise to save their own lives. As they cultivate pure precept this way, they do not pursue the stage of voice-hearer or self-enlightened one, but transfer the virtuous roots caused by practicing pure precept along with all sentient beings equally toward the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. When they undertake the transference, they do not have such questions arise in their minds: Who is doing the transference? What is transferred? Well-Appearing One, this is how great bodhisattvas dwell peacefully in forbearance paramita and absorb pure-precept paramita.

"Well-Appearing One, when dwelling peacefully in forbearance paramita, the great bodhisattvas initiate a brave and intensified diligence, and always think: 'If there is only one sentient being whom I think I can assist, I will go to teach him or her expediently and tirelessly no matter how far this sentient being lives: one yojana, ten yojanas, one hundred yojanas, or numberless yojanas away; one world, ten worlds, one hundred worlds, or numberless worlds away. I will teach this sentient being so he or she can accept and embrace the eight precepts, five precepts, ten precepts, or all precepts simultaneously; dwell peacefully in the stages of pure contemplation, embryonic Buddha nature, eight-forbearance, stream-entry, once-return, nonreturn, arhat, or self-enlightenment bodhi; dwell peacefully in various stages of bodhisattva or in the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, not to mention if there are innumerable, countless, and boundless sentient beings who are looking for my teaching. I will without reluctance go to teach them tirelessly and bring them great benefits and happiness.' They will furthermore transfer the virtuous roots of practicing diligence along with all sentient beings equally toward the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. When they undertake the transference, they will not think who is doing the transference and what is transferred. Well-Appearing One, this is how great bodhisattvas dwell peacefully in forbearance paramita and absorb diligence paramita.

"Well-Appearing One, when dwelling peacefully in forbearance, the great bodhisattvas will stay in concentration, avoiding the not virtuous dharmas or evil desires to arise in minds. With general contemplation and specific investigation, their joy and pleasure arise owing to getting away. They thus enter the first meditation. They further enter the rest of concentrations and finally achieve the stage of the extinction of thinking. In this process, they assemble all minds, the associated images, and the virtuous roots arising in various concentrations, and adopt

nonattainment as skillful means to transfer them along with all sentient beings equally toward the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. When undertaking the transference, they do not think who is doing the transference and what is transferred. Well-Appearing One, this is how great bodhisattvas dwell peacefully in forbearance paramita and absorb meditation paramita.

"Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas have dwelled peacefully in forbearance paramita to contemplate dharmas. When contemplating the dharmas with the far away, tranquil, inexhaustible, and the permanently extinguishing mental images, they refrain from attaining tranquility until sitting on the throne of the wonderful bodhi and realizing the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. As they rise from the throne, they will turn the wonderful dharma wheel to bring benefits and happiness to all sentient beings. They will further adopt nonattainment as skillful means to transfer the virtuous roots of exquisite wisdom along with all sentient beings equally toward the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. They do not think who is doing the transference and what is transferred when undertaking the transference. Well-Appearing One, this is how great bodhisattvas dwell peacefully in forbearance paramita and absorb prajna paramita."

(The Buddha taught how great bodhisattvas should cultivate and dwell in forbearance paramita and simultaneously absorb giving, pure precept, diligence, meditation, and prajna paramitas.)

The ling-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, "World-Honored One, how should great bodhisattvas absorb giving, pure precept, forbearance, meditation, and prajna paramitas when dwelling peacefully in diligence paramita?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "As great bodhisattvas dwell peacefully in diligence paramita and pursue various virtuous dharmas tirelessly, they always think: 'I must attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. There is no reason that I cannot do this.' In order to benefit all sentient beings, they swear: 'If there is one sentient being who is convertible but lives as far as one yojana, ten yojanas, one hundred yojanas, or numberless yojanas away or lives as far as one world, ten worlds, one hundred worlds, or numberless worlds away, I definitely will go to teach him or her expediently so this person can dwell in voice-hearer vehicle, self-enlightened one vehicle, or the unsurpassed vehicle, or can accept and practice the path of the ten virtuous karmas. The great bodhisattvas will also provide all kinds of dharma

giving and property giving to guide and absorb this sentient being expediently. They will further adopt nonattainment as skillful means to transfer the virtuous roots produced by practicing giving along with all sentient beings equally toward the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. When undertaking the transference, they do not think who is doing the transference and what is transferred. Well-Appearing One, this is how great bodhisattvas dwell peacefully in diligence paramita and absorb giving paramita.

"Well-Appearing One, some great bodhisattvas have dwelled peacefully in diligence paramita since their initial aspiration to the great bodhi until sitting on the throne of the wonderful bodhi. They have not only avoided killing but also advised others not to kill. They have publicly praised the correct ways of no killing and joyfully admired and acclaimed those who do not kill. And so on, they have not only stayed away from incorrect views themselves but also advised others to do so. They have publicly praised the correct ways of eliminating incorrect views and joyfully admired and acclaimed those who stay away from incorrect views. These great bodhisattvas will not pursue the three realms and the effects of the two vehicles but will adopt nonattainment as skillful means to transfer pure precept along with all sentient beings equally toward the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. When undertaking the transference, they do not think who is doing the transference and what is transferred. Well-Appearing One, this is how great bodhisattvas dwell peacefully in diligence paramita and absorb pure-precept paramita.

"Well-Appearing One, some great bodhisattvas have dwelled peacefully in diligence paramita since their initial aspiration to the great bodhi until sitting on the throne of the wonderful bodhi. When they are disturbed by humans and nonhumans, threatening to pierce them, cutting their bodies into pieces and carrying them away, they will not focus on thinking who is trying to pierce them, or who will cut their bodies into pieces and carry those pieces away. They will just think: 'I have now benefited very much. They come to cut my body into pieces to benefit me. I received this body for the sake of all sentient beings. Now they have fulfilled my wish.' These bodhisattvas have cultivated forbearance by contemplating and reflecting on the real phenomena of the dharmas. They do not aspire to the stage of voice-hearer or self-enlightened one; they rather adopt nonattainment as skillful means to transfer this forbearance paramita along with all sentient beings equally toward the perfect knowledge of all

perfect knowledge. When undertaking the transference, they do not think who is doing the transference and what is transferred. Well-Appearing One, this is how great bodhisattvas dwell peacefully in diligence paramita and absorb forbearance paramita.

"Well-Appearing One, some great bodhisattvas have dwelled peacefully in diligence paramita to assiduously cultivate various concentrations. They have stayed away from the not virtuous dharmas and evil desires. With general contemplation and specific investigation, their joy and pleasure arise owing to getting away. They enter the first meditation, and so on, and the fourth meditation. They initiate loving-kind thought for all sentient beings, so they deliberately enter the mind of immeasurable loving-kindness, immeasurable compassion, immeasurable joy, and immeasurable equanimity. As they become disgusted with all kinds of matters, they deliberately enter the concentration of boundless emptiness, boundless consciousness, nonthinking and not nonthinking, and the extinction of thinking. Although they have cultivated meditation, immeasurable minds, formless concentration, and the concentration of extinction, they do not absorb or grasp the effects that mature in different types at different times. They will be reborn in the places where the sentient beings are convertible and bring benefits and happiness to them. They adopt the four approaches of absorption to absorb these sentient beings and establish them well, let them diligently cultivate and learn giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita. These great bodhisattvas also activate their superior supernatural powers caused by meditations to travel from one Buddha land to the other, stay close to various Buddhas, make offerings to them, ask for their instructions about the fathomless natures and phenomena of the dharmas, and diligently and assiduously elicit more virtuous roots. They further adopt nonattainment as skillful means to transfer the virtuous roots along with all sentient beings equally toward the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. When undertaking the transference, they do not think who is doing the transference and what is transferred. Well-Appearing One, this is how great bodhisattvas dwell peacefully in diligence paramita and absorb meditation paramita.

"Well-Appearing One, when dwelling peacefully in diligence paramita, the great bodhisattvas do not see the names, things, natures, and the forms of giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita. They do not see the names, things, natures, and the forms of the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble

eightfold path. They do not see the names, things, natures, and the forms of internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature either. They do not see the names, things, natures, and the forms of realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable. They do not see the names, things, natures, and forms of the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering. They do not see the names, things, natures, and the forms of the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations. They do not see the names, things, natures, and the forms of the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations. They do not see the names, things, natures, and the forms of the stage of pure contemplation, stage of embryonic Buddha nature, and so forth, and stage of Thus-Comer. They do not see the names, things, natures, and the forms of the stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilements, and so forth, and stage of dharma cloud. They do not see the names, things, natures, and the forms of all dharani gates and all samadhi gates. They do not see the names, things, natures, and the forms of the five eyes and six supernatural powers. They do not see the names, things, natures, and the forms of the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power. They do not see the names, things, natures, and the forms of the thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features. They do not see the names, things, natures, and the forms of staying in correct mindfulness and always dwelling in equanimity. They do not see the names, things, natures, and the forms of the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena. They do not see the names, things, natures, and the forms of stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi. They do not see the names, things, natures, and the forms of all great bodhisattva actions. They do not see the name, thing, nature, and the form of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. They do not see the name, thing, nature, and the form of the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge either. They even do not see the names, things, natures, and the forms of all dharmas. They do not stay in a mindfulness of all dharmas, nor are attached to them, while they can practice them as they are taught by the Buddha. They further transfer the virtuous roots thus accumulated along with all sentient beings equally toward the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. When undertaking the transference, they do not think who is doing the transference and what is transferred. Well-

Appearing One, this is how great bodhisattvas dwell peacefully in diligence paramita and absorb prajna paramita."

(The Buddha taught how great bodhisattvas should cultivate and dwell in diligence paramita and simultaneously absorb giving, pure precept, forbearance, meditation, and prajna paramitas.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, "World-Honored One, how should great bodhisattvas absorb giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, and prajna paramitas when they dwell peacefully in meditation paramita?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "When dwelling peacefully in meditation paramita, the great bodhisattvas can also focus on practicing various kinds of property giving and dharma giving. They have stayed away from the not virtuous dharmas and evil desires. With general contemplation and specific investigation, their joy and pleasure arise owing to getting away. They enter the first meditation, and so on, and the fourth meditation. They initiate loving-kind thought for all sentient beings, deliberately enter the mind of immeasurable loving-kindness, immeasurable compassion, immeasurable joy, and immeasurable equanimity. As they become disgusted with all kinds of matters, they deliberately enter the concentration of boundless emptiness, boundless consciousness, nonthinking and not nonthinking, or the concentration of the extinction of thinking. When dwelling peacefully in meditation paramita, the great bodhisattvas further lecture on correct dharma with tranquil mind for various sentient beings in addition to practicing property giving. The great bodhisattvas have not only practiced both property giving and dharma giving themselves but also advised and encouraged others to do so. They have always praised publicly the correct ways of practicing property giving and dharma giving and admired and acclaimed those who practice both kinds of giving. They adopt nonattainment as skillful means to transfer the virtuous roots along with all sentient beings equally toward the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, while they do not aspire to the stage of voice-hearer or self-enlightened one. When undertaking the transference, they do not think who is doing the transference and what is transferred. Well-Appearing One, this is how great bodhisattvas dwell peacefully in meditation paramita and absorb giving paramita.

"Well-Appearing One, some great bodhisattvas have dwelled peacefully in meditation and observed pure precept. They do not have the minds and actions of greed, hatred, ignorance,

doing harm, stinginess, jealousy, and precept violation arise. They always initiate minds and actions in accord with the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. They further adopt nonattainment as skillful means to transfer the virtuous roots caused by observing pure precept along with all sentient beings equally toward the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, while they do not aspire to the stage of voice-hearer or self-enlightened one. When undertaking the transference, they do not think who is doing the transference and what is transferred. Well-Appearing One, this is how great bodhisattvas dwell peacefully in meditation paramita and absorb pure-precept paramita.

"Well-Appearing One, when dwelling peacefully in meditation paramita, the great bodhisattvas can also cultivate forbearance. They contemplate matter as the froths, feeling as the floating bubbles, thinking as the illusory images of water under sunlight, action as a plantain, and consciousness as an illusion. When contemplating this way, the thought of the not solid five aggregates always appear in their minds. They further think, 'All dharmas are empty and are without selfness and the associated images. So, who can cut me off? Who will be cut off? Who can scorn others? Who will be scorned? Who will be angry? Whose matter is the matter? Who can receive and feel? Who can think? Who can act? Whose consciousness is the consciousness?' The great bodhisattvas thus contemplate all dharmas with forbearance when dwelling peacefully in meditation paramita. They further adopt nonattainment as skillful means to transfer the virtuous roots thus accumulated along with all sentient beings equally toward the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. When undertaking the transference, they do not think who is doing the transference and what is transferred. Well-Appearing One, this is how great bodhisattvas dwell peacefully in meditation paramita and absorb forbearance paramita.

"Well-Appearing One, when dwelling peacefully in meditation paramita, the great bodhisattvas have initiated diligent cultivation. They have cultivated and got rid of desires, evils, and the not virtuous dharmas; they have also undertaken general contemplation and specific investigation. With the joys and pleasures produced by getting away of their minds, they enter and fully dwell in the first meditation. Then general contemplation and specific investigation cease, they begin to stay in inner purity of equality. Their minds concentrate with no more contemplation and investigation, and with the joys and pleasures produced by concentration they enter the second meditation. When leaving joy and dwelling in equanimity owing to correct

mindfulness and knowledge, they experience the pleasures caused by correct mindfulness. Although physical pleasures remain, the holy ones will choose to enjoy them or leave them behind. They thus enter and fully dwell in the third meditation. When pleasures and pains are terminated, the previously existent joys and worries disappear. They stay in equanimity and purity and enter and fully dwell in the fourth meditation. When cultivating all kinds of meditation, liberation, samadhi, and samapatti, they refrain from grasping all phenomena. As they initiate the supernatural power of transformation, they can undertake boundless great magic changes. When initiating the supernatural power of the heavenly ear, they can hear all sounds of sentient and insentient beings in the worlds of the ten directions as they really are because of their hearing ability is superior to human ear. When they initiate the supernatural power of knowing others' minds, they can read the minds and the associated images of all sentient beings in the worlds of the ten directions. When initiating the supernatural power of knowing previous lives, they can remember and know what the numberless sentient beings in the worlds of the ten directions did in their previous lives. When they initiate the supernatural power of the heavenly eye, which is superior to the human eye, they can see clearly the images of all sentient beings in the worlds of the ten directions including those of their karmas and effects. The great bodhisattvas can travel from one Buddha country to the other with such five kinds of supernatural power to stay close to and make offerings respectfully to the Thus-Comers. They will ask the Thus-Comers about the fathomless meanings of the dharma, extensively plant numberless exquisite virtuous toots, assist the sentient beings to mature, dignify the Buddha lands, and diligently cultivate all bodhisattva actions. They will adopt nonattainment as skillful means to transfer all these virtuous roots along with all sentient beings equally toward the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, while they do not aspire to the stage of voice-hearer or self-enlightened one. When undertaking the transference, they do not think who is doing the transference and what is transferred. Well-Appearing One, this is how great bodhisattvas dwell in meditation paramita and absorb diligence paramita.

"Well-Appearing One, when dwelling peacefully in meditation paramita, the great bodhisattvas contemplate matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness as unattainable. They contemplate the eye sphere, ear sphere, and so forth, and conscious sphere as unattainable. They contemplate the sight sphere, sound sphere, and so forth, and mental-image sphere as

unattainable. They contemplate the eye realm, ear realm, and so forth, and conscious realm as unattainable. They contemplate the sight realm, sound realm, and so forth, and mental-image realm as unattainable. They contemplate the eye consciousness realm, ear consciousness realm, and so forth, and conscious consciousness realm as unattainable. They contemplate the eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact as unattainable. They contemplate the feelings produced by eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact as unattainable. They contemplate the earth realm, water realm, and so forth, and consciousness realm as unattainable. They contemplate cause and condition, consecutive thoughts, the conditions that stimulate the mind, and the conditions that reinforce main causes as unattainable. They contemplate ignorance, action, consciousness, and so forth, and old age and death as unattainable. They contemplate giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita as unattainable. They contemplate internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature as unattainable. They contemplate realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable as unattainable. They contemplate the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering as unattainable. They contemplate the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path as unattainable. They contemplate the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations as unattainable. They contemplate the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations, and ten universal contemplations as unattainable. They contemplate the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration as unattainable. They contemplate the stage of pure contemplation, stage of embryonic Buddha nature, and so forth, and stage of Thus-Comer as unattainable. They contemplate the stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilements, and so forth, and stage of dharma cloud as unattainable. They contemplate all dharani gates and all samadhi gates as unattainable. They contemplate the five eyes and six supernatural powers as unattainable. They contemplate the Buddha’s ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha’s Wisdom and Power as unattainable. They contemplate thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features as unattainable. They contemplate staying in correct mindfulness and always dwelling in equanimity as unattainable. They contemplate the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena as unattainable.

They contemplate stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi as unattainable. They contemplate all great bodhisattva actions as unattainable. They contemplate the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi as unattainable. They contemplate the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge as unattainable. They contemplate the conditioned realm and the unconditioned realm as unattainable.

"The great bodhisattvas have contemplated all dharmas as unattainable and as without doing, making, arising, extinction, and grasping, so all dharmas are pure in the final analysis; they always stay as they have always done, and are changeless. Why? Whether the Buddha appears in the world or not, all dharmas always dwell peacefully in dharma nature, dharma realm, or dharma dwelling. They are without arising and extinction. They are changeless. These great bodhisattvas have always dwelled in an intention correspondent with the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, stayed in a mind without restlessness, contemplated and investigated all dharma natures as they really are and become aware that they are nonexistent. They further adopt nonattainment as skillful means to transfer the virtuous roots thus accumulated along with all sentient beings equally toward the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. When undertaking the transference, they do not think who is doing the transference and what is transferred. Well-Appearing One, this is how great bodhisattvas dwell peacefully in meditation paramita and absorb prajna paramita."

(The Buddha taught how the great bodhisattvas should dwell peacefully in meditation paramita and simultaneously absorb giving, pure-precept, forbearance, diligence, and prajna paramitas.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, "World-Honored One, how should great bodhisattvas absorb giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, and meditation paramitas when dwelling peacefully in prajna paramita?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "When dwelling peacefully in prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas contemplate all dharmas as empty and nonexistent."

"World-Honored One, how do the great bodhisattvas contemplate all dharmas as empty and nonexistent when dwelling peacefully in prajna paramita?"

"Well-Appearing One, when dwelling peacefully in prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas contemplate internal emptiness and the nature of internal emptiness as unattainable; external emptiness and the nature of external emptiness as unattainable; internal-external emptiness and the nature of internal-external emptiness as unattainable; emptiness of emptiness and the nature of emptiness of emptiness as unattainable; emptiness of space and the nature of emptiness of space as unattainable; emptiness of ultimate truth and the nature of emptiness of ultimate truth as unattainable; emptiness of conditioned phenomena and the nature of emptiness of conditioned phenomena as unattainable; emptiness of unconditioned reality and the nature of emptiness of unconditioned reality as unattainable; emptiness in the final analysis and the nature of emptiness in the final analysis as unattainable; emptiness of nontemporality and the nature of emptiness of nontemporality as unattainable; emptiness of deconstruction and nondeconstruction and the nature of emptiness of deconstruction and nondeconstruction as unattainable; emptiness of original nature and the nature of emptiness of original nature as unattainable; emptiness of particular and common characteristics and the nature of emptiness of particular and common characteristics as unattainable; and emptiness of all dharmas and the nature of emptiness of all dharmas as unattainable. When dwelling peacefully in such fourteen kinds of emptiness, the great bodhisattvas do not attain matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness whether they are empty or not empty. They do not attain the eye sphere, ear sphere, and so forth, and conscious sphere whether they are empty or not empty. They do not attain the sight sphere, sound sphere, and so forth, and mental-image sphere whether they are empty or not empty. They do not attain the eye realm, ear realm, and so forth, and conscious realm whether they are empty or not empty. They do not attain the sight realm, sound realm, and so forth, and mental-image realm whether they are empty or not empty. They do not attain the eye consciousness realm, ear consciousness realm, and so forth, and conscious consciousness realm whether they are empty or not empty. They do not attain the eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact whether they are empty or not empty. They do not attain the feelings produced by eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact whether they are empty or not empty. They do not attain the earth realm, water realm, and so forth, and conscious realm whether they are empty or not empty. They do not attain cause and condition, consecutive thoughts, the conditions that stimulate the mind, and the conditions that reinforce main causes whether they are empty or not empty. They do not attain ignorance, action, consciousness, and so forth, and old age and death

whether they are empty or not empty. They do not attain giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita whether they are empty or not empty. They do not attain internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature whether they are empty or not empty. They do not attain realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable whether they are empty or not empty. They do not attain the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering whether they are empty or not empty. They do not attain the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path whether they are empty or not empty. They do not attain the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations whether they are empty or not empty. They do not attain the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations whether they are empty or not empty. They do not attain the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration whether they are empty or not empty. They do not attain the stage of pure contemplation, stage of embryonic Buddha nature, and so forth, and stage of Thus-Comer whether they are empty or not empty. They do not attain the stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilements, and so forth, and stage of dharma cloud whether they are empty or not empty. They do not attain all dharani gates and all samadhi gates whether they are empty or not empty. They do not attain the five eyes and six supernatural powers whether they are empty or not empty. They do not attain the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power whether they are empty or not empty. They do not attain the thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features whether they are empty or not empty. They do not attain staying in correct mindfulness and always dwelling in equanimity whether they are empty or not empty. They do not attain the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena whether they are empty or not empty. They do not attain stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi whether they are empty or not empty. They do not attain all great bodhisattva actions whether they are empty or not empty. They do not attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas whether it is empty or not empty. They do not attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge whether it is empty or not empty. They do not attain the conditioned realm whether it is empty or not empty. They do not attain the unconditioned realm whether it is

empty or not empty. As dwelling peacefully in prajna paramita, these great bodhisattvas also view all kinds of almsgiving, such as giving food, drinks, and other living supplies, as empty. They view the ones who give, the things given, the bliss caused by giving, and the effect of giving as empty.

"As dwelling in the contemplation of emptiness, no greed or stinginess is allowed to arise. Why? When cultivating prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas do not allow differentiation to arise from their initial aspiration to the great bodhi until sitting on the throne of the wonderful bodhi. Like various Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones who have never allowed a mind of greedy attachment or stinginess to arise even briefly, so do the great bodhisattvas refrain from allowing a mind of greedy attachment or stinginess to arise when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita. You must know that prajna paramita is the teacher of all great bodhisattvas. It does not allow the great bodhisattvas to have any kind of delusion in differentiation arise to contaminate the giving that they practice. These great bodhisattvas further adopt nonattainment as skillful means to transfer the virtuous roots thus derived along with all sentient beings equally toward the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. When undertaking the transference, they do not think who is doing the transference and what is transferred. Well-Appearing One, this is how great bodhisattvas dwell peacefully in prajna paramita and absorb giving paramita.

"Well-Appearing One, when dwelling peacefully in prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas observe pure precept, so the mind of aspiring to voice-hearer and self-enlightened one will not be allowed to arise. Why? These great bodhisattvas have contemplated the stage of voice-hearer and the stage of self-enlightened one and realize that these two stages are unattainable; the transference toward these two stages is unattainable; and the rituals, rules, and demeanors of body and speech applied in the transference toward these stages are also unattainable. When dwelling peacefully in prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas, from their initial aspiration to the great bodhi until sitting on the throne of the wonderful bodhi, have not only stayed away from killing themselves but also advised others not to kill. They have publicly praised the correct ways of no killing and admired and acclaimed those who do not kill. And so on, they have not only stayed away from incorrect views themselves but also advised others to stay away from incorrect views. They have publicly praised the correct ways of staying away

from incorrect views and admired and acclaimed those who have stayed away from incorrect views. These great bodhisattvas further adopt nonattainment as skillful means to transfer the virtuous roots thus derived along with all sentient beings equally toward the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, while they do not aspire to the three realms and the effects of the two vehicles. When undertaking the transference, they do not think who is doing the transference and what is transferred. Well-Appearing One, this is how great bodhisattvas dwell peacefully in prajna paramita and absorb pure-precept paramita.

"Well-Appearing One, when dwelling peacefully in prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas initiate the forbearance compliant with conditions. After attaining this forbearance, they think, 'No dharma arises or extinguishes. No dharma is born, becoming old, ill, or dead. No dharma can scold or be scolded. No dharma can slander or be slandered. No dharma can cut, pierce, beat, bind, annoy, disturb, and harm or be cut, pierced, beaten, bound, annoyed, disturbed, and harmed. The nature and phenomena of the dharmas are empty, so we should not differentiate among them.' Because of this forbearance, the great bodhisattvas, since they began to aspire to the great bodhi until sitting on the throne of the wonderful bodhi, have remained unchanged even when they are scolded, slandered, and insulted by all sentient beings, or are beaten, pierced, cut, and killed with sticks, swords, tiles, and rocks. They just think, 'It is very strange that as there are no scolding, slander, insult, and harm in dharma nature, why are sentient beings obsessed with delusions and differentiation, insisting that these dharmas are real? They have thus suffered severely from various vexations caused by creating negative karmas.' These great bodhisattvas further adopt nonattainment as skillful means to transfer the virtuous roots thus derived along with all sentient beings equally toward the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. When undertaking this transference, they do not think who is doing the transference and what is transferred. Well-Appearing One, this is how great bodhisattvas dwell peacefully in prajna paramita and absorb forbearance paramita.

"Well-Appearing One, when dwelling peacefully in prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas lecture on the correct dharma for various sentient beings, letting them dwell in giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita; dwell in the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path; attain stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and arhat effect; attain self-enlightenment bodhi;

and achieve the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. Although they have worked diligently, they do not reside in the conditioned realm or unconditioned realm. They further adopt nonattainment as skillful means to transfer the virtuous roots thus accumulated along with all sentient beings equally toward the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. When undertaking the transference, they do not think who is doing the transference or what is transferred. Well-Appearing One, this is how great bodhisattvas dwell peacefully in prajna paramita and absorb diligence paramita.

"Well-Appearing One, when dwelling peacefully in prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas can freely enter all kinds of samadhi, including the samadhi of the voice-hearer, self-enlightened one, and the bodhisattva, except the samadhi of the Buddha. As they dwell peacefully in the samadhi of the bodhisattva, they can enter and get out of the eight liberations freely and at ease from the first liberation up to the eighth liberation, and from the opposite direction as well. What are the eight liberations? The first liberation is to contemplate the phenomena within the body. The second liberation is to contemplate the phenomena of the outer objects when internal images are absent. The third is to experience pure and superior liberation of the body. The fourth is the liberation of boundless emptiness, transcending all kinds of differentiation and thinking. The fifth is the liberation of boundless consciousness, transcending the level of boundless emptiness. The sixth is the liberation of nothingness, transcending the level of boundless consciousness. The seventh is the liberation of nonthinking and not nonthinking, transcending the level of nothingness. The eighth is the liberation of the extinction of all mental activities, transcending the level of nonthinking and not nonthinking. Then, the great bodhisattvas will freely enter and get out of the nine concentrations in sequence from both directions. What are the nine concentrations? They are the four meditations, four formless concentrations, and the concentration of the extinction of all thinking and feelings. After practicing entering and getting out of the eight liberations and the nine concentrations by following both directions well enough, they will be able to enter the Samadhi of Energetic and Swift Lion. What does the Samadhi of Energetic and Swift Lion mean? That means that the great bodhisattvas, staying away from evil desires and other not virtuous dharmas, with general contemplation and specific investigation as well as the joys and pleasures caused by getting far away, they enter the first meditation. They further enter the second meditation, third meditation,

and so forth, and the concentration of nonthinking and not nonthinking, and finally enter the concentration of extinction. They then get out of the concentration of extinction, enter the concentration of nonthinking and not nonthinking, the concentration of nothingness, and so forth, and the first meditation. This is Samadhi of Energetic and Swift Lion.
(The Buddha explained Samadhi of Energetic and Swift Lion.)

"Well-Appearing One, after mastering this Samadhi of Energetic and Swift Lion, the great bodhisattvas will enter the Transcendental Samadhi of Bodhisattva. What does Transcendental Samadhi of Bodhisattva mean? It means that the great bodhisattvas stay away from evil desires and the rest of not virtuous dharmas and enter the first meditation with general contemplation and specific investigation, as well as the joys and pleasures caused by getting away. They continue to enter the second meditation, third meditation, and so forth, and the concentration of extinction, in sequence. They then get out of the concentration of extinction, re-enter the first meditation, and then get out of the first meditation, and re-enter the concentration of extinction. After getting out of the concentration of extinction, they directly enter the second meditation. Leaving the second meditation, they again enter the concentration of extinction. They then leave the concentration of extinction and enter the third meditation directly. After leaving the third meditation, they re-enter the concentration of extinction. Once more they get out of the concentration of extinction and then enter the fourth meditation. After rising from the fourth meditation, they enter the concentration of extinction. After rising from the concentration of extinction, they enter the concentration of boundless emptiness. Rising from the concentration of boundless emptiness, they enter the concentration of extinction again. After rising from the concentration of extinction, they enter the concentration of boundless consciousness. Then they leave the concentration of boundless consciousness and again enter the concentration of extinction. After getting out of the concentration of extinction, they enter the concentration of nothingness. Then they again enter the concentration of extinction. After rising from the concentration of extinction, they enter the concentration of nonthinking and not nonthinking. Leaving the concentration of nonthinking and not nonthinking, they enter the concentration of extinction. They again enter the concentration of nonthinking and not nonthinking after rising from the concentration of extinction. After leaving the concentration of nonthinking and not nonthinking, they will fall into a restless mind. From the restless mind, they enter the

concentration of extinction. Rising from the concentration of extinction, they will dwell in a restless mind. Leaving the restless mind, they enter the concentration of nonthinking and not nonthinking. Rising from the concentration of nonthinking and not nonthinking, they will again dwell in restless mind. From restless mind they enter the concentration of nothingness. After rising from the concentration of nothingness, they return to restless mind. From restless mind, they enter the concentration of boundless consciousness. As rising from the concentration of boundless consciousness, they again fall into a restless mind. From the restless mind they enter the concentration of boundless emptiness; rising from this concentration, they fall into a restless mind again. From the restless mind they enter the fourth meditation; rising from the fourth meditation, they fall into a restless mind again. From the restless mind they enter the third meditation; rising from this meditation, they fall into a restless mind again. From the restless mind they enter the second meditation; rising from the second meditation they fall into a restless mind. From the restless mind they enter the first meditation; rising from the first meditation they fall into a restless mind. This is Transcendental Samadhi of Bodhisattva. When dwelling peacefully in this transcendental samadhi, the great bodhisattvas will attain the real nature of the equality of all dharmas. They will further adopt nonattainment as skillful means to transfer the virtuous roots thus derived along with all sentient beings equally toward the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. When undertaking the transference, they do not think who is doing the transference and what is transferred. Well-Appearing One, this is how great bodhisattvas dwell peacefully in prajna paramita and absorb meditation paramita."

(The Buddha taught how great bodhisattvas should dwell peacefully in prajna paramita to simultaneously absorb giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, and meditation paramitas.)

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Chapter 68

Skillful Means

Section 1

(In the Second Assembly)

At that time, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, “World-Honored One, if the great bodhisattvas have achieved the power of skillful means, how long have they initiated aspiration to the bodhi?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “These great bodhisattvas must have initiated aspiration to the bodhi for innumerable hundreds of thousands of koti nayuta kalpas.”

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, “World-Honored One, if the great bodhisattvas have achieved the power of skillful means, how many Buddhas have they stayed close and made offerings to?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “These great bodhisattvas must have stayed close and made offerings to as many Buddhas as the sands of the Ganges.”

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, “World-Honored One, if the great bodhisattvas have achieved the power of skillful means, what kinds of superior virtuous roots have they planted?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “Since the time of their initial aspiration to the bodhi, these great bodhisattvas have diligently and assiduously cultivated and learned giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna paramitas and thus accumulated many superior virtuous roots. Because of this cause and condition, they can achieve the power of skillful means.”

(The Buddha explained the causes and conditions of the great bodhisattvas who had achieved the power of skillful means.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One said to the Buddha, “World-Honored One, it is very rare and unique that the great bodhisattvas can achieve such power of skillful means!”

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, “Yes, it is as you say. These great bodhisattvas are very rare and unique. It is like the sun and moon that revolve to illuminate and soothe the four continents, enabling all sentient beings and insentient beings to perform what they should do by relying on the radiant powers. Similarly, prajna paramita can illuminate and soothe the other five paramitas, allowing giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth to perform what they should do by relying on the power of prajna paramita.

“You must know, Well-Appearing One, without the seven treasures, the wheel-turning king cannot be named wheel-turning king. So are the five paramitas; without prajna paramita, giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth cannot be named paramita.

“You must know, Well-Appearing One, a pretty and wealthy woman is easily harassed if not guarded and protected by her husband. So are giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth. Without the protection and absorption of prajna paramita, the five paramitas are easily disturbed and harmed by heavenly demons and their associates. With the protection of prajna paramita, all demons and their associates cannot do harm to the five paramitas.

“You must know, Well-Appearing One, it is like a capable general with expertise in military strategies and tactics, who is always prepared to provide effective weapons and solid armors, ensuring protection from any enemies. Similarly, if the five paramitas are closely aligned with prajna paramita, they will not be harmed by heavenly demons, their associates, arrogant human beings and bodhisattvas, and so forth, and candālas.

“You must know, Well-Appearing One, various small kings in the continent of Jambudvipa will often go to pay homage, attend, and offer services to the wheel-turning king to sustain their positions. Similarly, the five paramitas will always follow and assist prajna paramita to attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge quickly by relying on the leadership of prajna paramita.

(The Buddha used similes to explain the relationship between prajna paramita and the other five paramitas.)

"You must know, Well-Appearing One, the waters in the east of the continent of Jambudvipa will first flow to the Ganges, and then along with the Ganges, flow to the ocean. The five paramitas will be absorbed by the fathomless prajna paramita first so that they can realize and attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge.

"You must know, Well-Appearing One, like the right hands of humans can do a lot of things, so prajna paramita can inspire and activate all kinds of superior virtuous dharmas.

"You must know, Well-Appearing One, just as the left hands of humans cannot do things easily and smoothly, so the five paramitas alone cannot inspire and activate various superior virtuous dharmas.

"You must know, Well-Appearing One, all waters, large or small, flow into the sea to become salty, so the five paramitas will enter prajna paramita to reach the other shore.

"You must know, Well-Appearing One, when the wheel-turning king plans to go somewhere, his four armies guide the way with the wheel treasure. As the king and the four armies wish to eat and drink, the wheel treasure will stop. After eating and drinking and the king is ready to proceed, the wheel treasure continues in the direction set by the king until reaching the destination. So do the five paramitas and other virtuous dharmas. They follow prajna paramita when moving toward the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, and do not deviate until they reach the goal.

"You must know, Well-Appearing One, when the wheel-turning king intends to go somewhere, some of the four armies and seven treasures will lead the way while others will sound the king. Although the wheel treasure always precedes the procession, it does not imply it holds the position of leader. The five paramitas and other virtuous dharmas require prajna paramita for guidance. However, the prajna paramita does not think: 'I am the leader of the five paramitas, and they are my followers.' Nor do the five paramitas think: 'The fathomless prajna paramita is our leader, and we are the followers.' Why? The self-natures of these six paramitas and all dharmas are dull; they are not sharp; they are not active; they do not have a ruler. They

are illusory, empty, and nonexistent, and not at ease. Like the illusory images of water under sunlight, shadows, moon in the river, illusions, and dreams, the six paramitas do not differentiate, make, or act; they have no real entity."

(The Buddha described the features of the six paramitas.)

At that time, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "World-Honored One, if the self-natures of all dharams are empty, without real forms and functions, then how do the great bodhisattvas cultivate giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna paramitas to realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "When correctly cultivating the six paramitas, the great bodhisattvas will always think, 'The sentient beings of the world have an upside-down mind. They are sinking and drowned in the ocean of birth and death and cannot get rid of it. If I do not cultivate skillful and expedient superior actions, there is no way for me to rescue them. It is for the sake of these sentient beings that I diligently cultivate the superior, skillful, and expedient giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita, and aspire to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, so I can assist them to get rid of the severe suffering in birth and death.' After having this thought, these great bodhisattvas will be more willing to give all they have internally and externally. When practicing giving, they think: 'I have given nothing as a matter of fact. Why? All these internal and external matters are empty and without self-natures, so they cannot be given. Nor do they belong to me.' Based on this reflection, these great bodhisattvas will fulfill giving paramita, and realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly.

"In order to liberate the sentient beings from the suffering in birth and death, the great bodhisattvas will not violate pure precept. Why? These great bodhisattvas often think, 'In order to liberate all sentient beings from the suffering in birth and death, I have aspired to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. For this reason, I should not kill, steal, and so forth, and uphold incorrect views. I should not pursue the pleasures of desire, chase the heavenly wealth and happiness, and become a heavenly emperor, demon, or Brahma king. I should not aspire to the stage of voice-hearer or self-enlightened one for self-liberation.' Because of this

reflection, these great bodhisattvas will be able to cultivate and fulfill pure-precept paramita, and realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi before long.

"In order to liberate the sentient beings from the suffering in birth and death, these great bodhisattvas will not let hatred arise in their minds. Even if they are slandered, insulted, and scolded, and thus feel as painful as if they were pierced in their hearts and marrows, they will not be hateful and offensive. If they are further attacked, beaten, cut, pierced, or broken into pieces by sword, stick, tiles, rocks, or rod, they will not have an evil thought in their minds. Why? These great bodhisattvas have contemplated and realized that all dharmas are like the echoes in the valley or the temporarily gathering bubbles, they understand that they should not ruin the various virtuous things because of their hatred and anger. Owing to this reflection, these great bodhisattvas can cultivate to fulfill forbearance, and realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi before long.

"In order to liberate the sentient beings from the suffering in birth and death, the great bodhisattvas will diligently pursue all superior virtuous dharmas as well as the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi tirelessly. Why? These great bodhisattvas always think: 'If I get tired, there will be no way to rescue all sentient beings and assist them to get rid of the severe suffering of birth and death, nor can I realize and attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge.' Because of this reflection, these great bodhisattvas will cultivate and fulfill diligence, and realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi before long.

"In order to liberate the sentient beings from the suffering in birth and death, the great bodhisattvas will cultivate various superior concentrations as well as the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. They will not allow greed, anger, and ignorance to appear in their minds and to be followed by actions. Why? These great bodhisattvas have often thought: 'If I let the mind of greed, anger, and ignorance appear and then be followed by actions, I will not be able to accomplish the things beneficial for others, nor can I realize and attain the Buddha effect that I am pursuing.' Because of this reflection, these great bodhisattvas can cultivate and fulfill meditation, and realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi before long.

"In order to liberate the sentient beings from the suffering in birth and death, the great bodhisattvas will never stay away from prajna paramita as well as the unsurpassed, perfect, and

universal bodhi when diligently cultivating the exquisite, superior wisdom of the world and beyond the world. Why? These great bodhisattvas have often thought: 'If I stay away from prajna paramita, I will not be able to assist the sentient beings to mature and attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge.' Because of this reflection, these great bodhisattvas are able to cultivate and fulfill prajna paramita, and realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi before long. Well-Appearing One, because of this cause and condition, although the great bodhisattvas have realized that all dharmas have no real forms and functions and their self-natures are empty, they still cultivate the six paramitas diligently, assiduously, and tirelessly to realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi."

(The Buddha explained why the great bodhisattvas, after realizing that all dharmas have no real forms and functions and their self-natures are empty, still cultivate the six paramitas to attain the unsurpassed bodhi.)

At that time, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "World-Honored One, if the natures of all paramitas are not different, and if they are all absorbed by prajna paramita and can be fulfilled because of prajna paramita, then all these paramitas must be combined into one paramita that is named prajna paramita. Why are we bothered to say that prajna paramita is superior to, nobler, higher, more wonderful, and subtler than the other five paramitas? Why do we say that prajna paramita is the unsurpassed and incomparably equal one among all paramitas?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "Yes, it is as you say. The natures of these six paramitas are not different. They are all absorbed by prajna paramita. Without prajna paramita, the five paramitas are not entitled to the name paramita. The five paramitas rely on prajna paramita to be named paramita. These first five paramitas are absorbed by prajna paramita, and because of this paramita, all paramitas share the same nature. You must know, Well-Appearing One, the sentient beings have individual differences, but if they stand as high as Mount Sumeru, they will all look with the same color. The five paramitas have individual differences, but as they are absorbed by prajna paramita and are fulfilled because of prajna paramita, all will merge into prajna paramita and should not be established as with different names and natures. In addition, it is because of prajna paramita that giving paramita, pure-

precept paramita, and so forth, and meditation paramita can approach the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge and thus be named reaching the other shore. Therefore, these six paramitas now have shared the same taste and same nature. We should not establish that this is giving paramita, this is pure-precept paramita, and that is prajna paramita. Why? It is because these six paramitas will all approach the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge and reach the other shore; their natures do not differ. Because of this cause and condition, we should not establish these six paramitas as having different names and different natures."

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, "If it is in terms of ultimate meaning to say that the paramitas and all dharmas do not differ in superiority and inferiority, then why do we say that prajna paramita is superior to the five paramitas? Why do we say that prajna paramita is the superior, noblest, highest, most wonderful, subtlest, unsurpassed, and the incomparably equal one among all?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "It is in terms of ultimate meaning to say that they are not different in superiority and inferiority. But in terms of the worldly point of view, their differentiations exist. The six paramitas are established to liberate sentient beings from birth, old age, illness, and death. The birth, old age, illness, and death are not real; they are provisionally established. Why? As the sentient beings are nonexistent, so are all dharmas. The fathomless prajna paramita has demonstrated that all dharmas are nonexistent; it can liberate all sentient beings from the suffering of birth, old age, illness, and death. Therefore, it is said that prajna paramita is the superior, highest, noblest, most wonderful, subtlest, unsurpassed, and the incomparably equal one among all paramitas. You must know, Well-Appearing One, it is like the wheel-turning king who is the superior, noblest, highest, most wonderful, subtlest, unsurpassed, and incomparably equal one among all human beings, so prajna paramita is the superior, noblest, highest, most wonderful, subtlest, unsurpassed, and the incomparably equal one among all paramitas."

(The Buddha taught that it is in terms of the worldly meaning to differentiate among the six paramitas to liberate sentient beings from the suffering of birth, old age, illness, and death.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, "World-Honored One, why do the Buddha frequently admire and acclaim the fathomless prajna paramita as the best,

superior, noblest, highest, most wonderful, subtlest, and the unsurpassed equal one among all paramitas?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "It is because this prajna paramita has adopted nonattainment as skillful means to universally absorb all virtuous dharmas, merge them into and let them dwell peacefully and immovably in the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. That is why I have frequently admired and acclaimed prajna paramita."

(The Buddha explained why he frequently admired and acclaimed prajna paramita as superior to other paramitas.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, "Does the fathomless prajna paramita choose to grasp some dharmas and renounce other dharmas?"

The Buddha replied, "No, the fathomless prajna paramita neither grasps nor renounces the dharmas. Why? It is because all dharmas are neither graspable nor renounceable."

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, "What are the dharmas that the fathomless prajna paramita neither grasps nor renounces?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "The fathomless prajna paramita neither grasps nor renounces matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness. The fathomless prajna paramita neither grasps nor renounces the eye sphere, ear sphere, and so forth, and conscious spheres. It neither grasps nor renounces the sight sphere, sound sphere, and so forth, and mental-image sphere. It neither grasps nor renounces the eye realm, ear realm, and so forth, and conscious realm. It neither grasps nor renounces the sight realm, sound realm, and so forth, and mental-image realm. It neither grasps nor renounces the eye consciousness realm, ear consciousness realm, and so forth, and conscious consciousness realm. It neither grasps nor renounces the eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact. It neither grasps nor renounces the feelings produced by eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact. It neither grasps nor renounces the earth realm, water realm, and so forth, and consciousness realm. It neither grasps nor renounces cause and condition, consecutive thoughts, the conditions that stimulate the mind, and the conditions that reinforce main causes. It neither grasps nor renounces ignorance, action, consciousness, and so forth, and old age and death. It neither grasps

nor renounces giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita. It neither grasps nor renounces internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature. It neither grasp nor renounces realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable. It neither grasps nor renounces the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering. It neither grasps nor renounces the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path. It neither grasps nor renounces the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations. It neither grasps nor renounces the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations. It neither grasps nor renounces the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration. It neither grasps nor renounces the stage of pure contemplation, stage of embryonic Buddha nature, and so forth, and stage of Thus-Comer. It neither grasps nor renounces the stage of ecstasy, the stage of freedom from defilements, and so forth, and stage of dharma cloud. It neither grasps nor renounces all dharani gates and all samadhi gates. It neither grasps nor renounces the five eyes and six supernatural powers. It neither grasps nor renounces the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power. It neither grasps nor renounces the thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features. It neither grasps nor renounces staying in correct mindfulness and always dwelling in equanimity. It neither grasps nor renounces the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena. It neither grasps nor renounces stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi. It neither grasps nor renounces all great bodhisattva actions. It neither grasps nor renounces the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas. And it neither grasps nor renounces the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge."

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, "Why does the fathomless prajna paramita neither grasp nor renounce matter, feeling, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "The fathomless prajna paramita does not reflect on matter, feeling, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, so it

neither grasps nor renounces matter, feeling, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge."

(The Buddha taught that prajna paramita neither grasps nor renounces the five aggregates, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge because it does not reflect on these dharmas. Why does it not reflect on these dharmas? The Buddha explained in the following that because prajna paramita does not reflect on the phenomena and the relevant conditions of these dharmas.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, "Why does the fathomless prajna paramita not reflect on matter, feeling, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "It is because prajna paramita does not reflect on the phenomena and the relevant conditions of matter, feeling, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge."

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, "If the great bodhisattvas do not reflect on matter, feeling, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, how can their virtuous roots grow? If the virtuous roots that they plant do not grow, how can they perfectly fulfill paramitas? If they cannot perfectly fulfill paramitas, how can they realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi?"

(Well-Appearing One asked that if the great bodhisattvas do not reflect on various dharmas, how can they plant virtuous roots, fulfill prajna paramita, and further realize the unsurpassed bodhi?)

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "If the great bodhisattvas do not reflect on matter, feeling, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, they will be able to allow the virtuous roots to grow and fulfill paramitas. Because they can fulfill paramitas, they are able to realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. Why? Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas should not reflect on matter, feeling, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, so that they are able to cultivate various great bodhisattva actions, and further realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi."

(The Buddha explained that because the great bodhisattvas do not reflect on various dharmas, their virtuous dharmas will grow, and paramitas will be fulfilled, so they can realize the unsurpassed bodhi.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, “Why are the great bodhisattvas able to cultivate various great bodhisattva actions and further realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi if they do not reflect on matter, feeling, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “If the great bodhisattvas reflect on matter, feeling, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, they will have attainment. If they have attainment, they will be attached to the realms of desire, form, and formlessness. If they are attached to the realms of desire, form, and formlessness, they cannot cultivate various great bodhisattva actions, nor can they realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. If the great bodhisattvas do not reflect on matter, feeling, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, they will not have attainment, so they will not be attached to the realms of desire, form, and formlessness, thus they are able to cultivate the great bodhisattva actions and realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly. Therefore, Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas would like to cultivate all great bodhisattva actions and realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, they should diligently cultivate the fathomless prajna paramita but should not reflect on and be attached to all dharmas.”

(The Buddha replied that if the great bodhisattvas reflect on various dharmas, they will have attainment, and twill be attached to the three realms. Thus, they cannot realize the unsurpassed bodhi. On the contrary, if they do not reflect on various dharmas, they will be free from attainment and from the attachment to the three realms, they thus can realize the unsurpassed bodhi.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, “When diligently cultivating and learning the fathomless prajna paramita, where should the great bodhisattvas dwell?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “When diligently cultivating and learning the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas should not dwell in matter, feeling, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge.”

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, “Why should the great bodhisattvas not dwell in matter, feeling, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge when they diligently cultivate and learn the fathomless prajna paramita?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “If the great bodhisattvas diligently and assiduously cultivate and learn the fathomless prajna paramita, they will not be attached to all dharmas, so they will not dwell in matter, feeling, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. Why? Well-Appearing One, these great bodhisattvas do not see any dharma to which they can be attached or in which they can dwell. Well-Appearing One, these great bodhisattvas thus will adopt nonattainment and nondwelling as skillful means to diligently and assiduously cultivate and learn the fathomless prajna paramita.

(The Buddha further taught that when cultivating prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas should not dwell in the five aggregates, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge because they are not attached to them. They will adopt nonattainment and nondwelling as skillful means to learn and cultivate prajna paramita.)

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas think, ‘To cultivate the fathomless prajna paramita assiduously without attachment and dwelling is the real cultivation and practice of prajna paramita. If I can cultivate and practice prajna paramita without attachment and dwelling, I do cultivate and practice prajna paramita.’ Then, Well-Appearing One, these great bodhisattvas are attached to this thought and thus will be far away from prajna paramita. Because they are far away from prajna paramita, they are also far away from meditation, diligence, forbearance, pure precept, and giving paramitas. They will also be far away from internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature; far away from realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable; far away from the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering; far away from the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path; far away from the four meditations, four

immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations; far away from the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations; far away from the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration; far away from the stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilements, and so forth, and stage of dharma cloud; far away from all dharani gates and all samadhi gates; far away from the five eyes and six supernatural powers; far away from the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power; far away from staying in correct mindfulness and always dwelling in equanimity; far away from the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena; far away from all great bodhisattva actions; far away the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas; and far away from the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. Why? The fathomless prajna paramita does not adhere to all dharmas. In the fathomless prajna paramita, there is no individual with attachment, nor is there the nature of attachment. Why? The fathomless prajna paramita is without self-nature and is not attached to various dharmas. Therefore, if the great bodhisattvas cultivate prajna paramita and have this thought: 'This is prajna paramita, and I am practicing prajna paramita,' then they cultivate prajna paramita without any attachment to all dharmas and to the fathomless prajna paramita. Furthermore, if the great bodhisattvas cultivate prajna paramita and have this thought: 'This is prajna paramita. As I practice prajna paramita, I equally practice the real forms of various dharmas,' then they regress from prajna paramita. As they regress from prajna paramita, they also regress from various virtuous dharmas. Why? The fathomless prajna paramita is the basis of all virtuous dharmas. To regress from prajna paramita is regressing from all virtuous dharmas.

(But the Buddha cautioned that if one cultivates and practices prajna paramita with this thought, 'If I can cultivate and practice prajna paramita without attachment and dwelling, then I do cultivate and practice prajna paramita,' then he will stay far away from prajna paramita and from all superior virtuous dharmas. Why? This bodhisattva has been attached to and dwelled in this thought.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas think: 'The fathomless prajna paramita can absorb giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, and meditation

paramitas, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge,' then these great bodhisattvas have regressed from prajna paramita. If they regress from prajna paramita, they will not be able to absorb giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, forbearance paramita, diligence paramita, meditation paramita, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. Why? Well-Appearing One, one cannot universally absorb the factors for enlightenment or realize and attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge if they are apart from prajna paramita. Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas think: 'To dwell peacefully in prajna paramita is to be conferred by the Buddha the prophecy of attaining the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi in the future,' then these great bodhisattvas have already regressed from prajna paramita. If they regress from prajna paramita, they will not be conferred by the Buddha the prophecy of attaining the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi in the future. Why? No one who is far away from prajna paramita can be conferred by the Buddha the prophecy of attaining the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi in the future.

(The Buddha taught more about the great bodhisattvas who regress from prajna paramita. Subtle distinction was made between the great bodhisattvas who abide by expedient skillfulness of prajna paramita and those who stay far away from it.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas think: 'Dwelling in prajna paramita will enable one to activate giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and meditation paramita, so that he will activate more superior virtuous dharmas as well as great loving-kindness, great compassion, great joy, and great equanimity,' then these great bodhisattvas have regressed from prajna paramita. If they regress from prajna paramita, they will not be able to activate giving, pure-precept, forbearance, diligence, and meditation paramitas, and so forth, and great loving-kindness, great compassion, great joy, and great equanimity. Why? Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas cannot initiate and activate, and dwell peacefully in various superior holy dharmas if they are apart from prajna paramita. Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas think: 'The Buddhas realize the unsurpassed bodhi because they know that all dharmas do not have the forms of absorption. After realizing the bodhi, the Buddhas lecture on and demonstrate the real forms of all dharmas for all sentient beings,' then these great bodhisattvas have regressed from the fathomless prajna paramita. Why? Well-Appearing One, the Thus-Comers do not know the dharmas. They are not awakened to the

dharmas. They do not lecture on and demonstrate the dharmas. Why? The real essence of all dharmas cannot be known, realized, and established. How can the Thus-Comers understand, awaken to, and lecture on and demonstrate the dharmas?"

At that time, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "World-Honored One, how can the great bodhisattvas stay far away from all these kinds of faults when cultivating prajna paramita?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "If the great bodhisattvas cultivate prajna paramita and think: 'All dharmas are nonexistent and ungraspable. No one can become awakened insightfully to the dharmas, or teach and manifest them,' then they do practice prajna paramita and stay away from various faults. If the great bodhisattvas are attached to the nonexistent and ungraspable dharmas, they are away from prajna paramita. Why? The fathomless prajna paramita is not attached to all dharmas, nor does it absorb the dharmas. Once being attached to or absorbing the dharmas, the great bodhisattvas are apart from prajna paramita."

(The Buddha taught how great bodhisattvas avoid regression from prajna paramita.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, "World-Honored One, is prajna paramita far away or not far away from prajna paramita? Is giving paramita far away or not far away from giving paramita? And so on, is the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge far away or not far away from the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge? World-Honored One, how can the great bodhisattvas elicit prajna paramita without being attached to it as prajna paramita is far away or not far away from prajna paramita? How can the great bodhisattvas elicit giving paramita without being attached to it whether giving paramita is far away or not far away from giving paramita? And so on, how can the great bodhisattvas elicit the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge without being attached to it whether the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge is far away or not far away from the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "Prajna paramita, meditation paramita, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge are neither far away nor not far away from prajna paramita, meditation paramita, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all

perfect knowledge. Therefore, the great bodhisattvas can elicit prajna paramita, meditation paramita, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge without attachment. Why? Well-Appearing One, no one can dwell peacefully in and elicit self-nature either with self-nature or apart from self-nature.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, when cultivating prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas are not attached to matter and say that this is matter and this matter belongs to me; nor are they attached to feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness and say that these are feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness and these feeling, thinking, and so forth belong to me. And so on, they are not attached to the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge and say that this is the perfect knowledge of perfect knowledge, and this perfect knowledge of perfect knowledge belongs to me. Well-Appearing One, because these great bodhisattvas are not attached to all these dharmas, they are able to elicit prajna paramita, meditation paramita, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. Why? Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas cultivate prajna paramita and are attached to all dharmas and say that this dharma belongs to me, then they are unable to freely elicit and dwell in the superior and wonderful merits and virtues. Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, when cultivating prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas should not contemplate matter as permanent or impermanent, pleasant or painful, with or without selfness, pure or impure, tranquil or not tranquil, and far away or not far away. They should not contemplate feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness as permanent or impermanent, pleasant or painful, with or without selfness, pure or impure, tranquil or not tranquil, and far away or not far away either. And so on, they should not contemplate the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge as permanent or impermanent, pleasant or painful, with or without selfness, pure or impure, tranquil or not tranquil, and far away or not far away. If these great bodhisattvas contemplate all dharmas this way, they are able to elicit prajna paramita, meditation paramita, and so forth, and giving paramita. They are also able to elicit more superior virtuous dharmas and the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. Why? Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas cultivate prajna paramita and contemplate all dharmas as permanent or impermanent, pleasant or painful, with or without selfness, pure or impure, tranquil or not tranquil, and far away or not far away, they are unable to freely elicit and peacefully dwell in in the superior and wonderful merits and virtues.

(The Buddha taught that when cultivating prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas should not be attached to the five aggregates, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge and thought that they belonged to them. Being free from such attachment allows one to elicit the six paramitas, other superior virtuous dharmas, and the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, for the great bodhisattvas, to cultivate prajna paramita also means to cultivate meditation, diligence, forbearance, pure precept, and giving paramitas. To cultivate prajna paramita also means to dwell peacefully in internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature; realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable; and the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering. For great bodhisattvas, to cultivate prajna paramita also means to cultivate the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path; the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations; the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations; the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration; the ten stages of bodhisattva; all dharani gates and samadhi gates; the five eyes and six supernatural powers; the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power; staying in correct mindfulness and always dwelling in equanimity; the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena; all great bodhisattva actions; the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas; and the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge.

(The Buddha taught that cultivating prajna paramita means to cultivate all other virtuous holy dharmas.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, wherever the fathomless prajna paramita goes, all other paramitas and the rest of factors for enlightenment will go along with it. Wherever the fathomless prajna paramita stays, all other paramitas and the rest of factors for enlightenment will stay with it. Well-Appearing One, it is like the wheel-turning king, wherever he goes, the four armies will go with him; wherever he stops, the four armies will stop too. So, wherever the fathomless prajna paramita goes and stays, the rest of paramitas and other factors for

enlightenment will go and stay with it. They will all go to stay in the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge ultimately. A good driver will lead the chariot to avoid all dangerous roads and finally arrive at where they intend to go. Similarly, the fathomless prajna paramita can guide other paramitas and the rest of factors for enlightenment to avoid all dangerous roads and let them stay on the right path to benefit themselves and others and finally arrive at the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge that they pursue."

(The Buddha said that wherever prajna paramita goes and stops, other paramitas and the rest of factors for enlightenment will go or stop with it. They all will arrive at the same destination under the guidance of prajna paramita.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked, "World-Honored One, what is and what is not the right path for the great bodhisattvas?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "The path of ordinary sentient beings, the path of voice-hearers, and the path of self-enlightened ones are not the right paths for the great bodhisattvas. If they follow any of these paths, they will not be able to reach the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. The six paramitas initiated and activated by the fathomless prajna paramita are the right path for the great bodhisattvas. The six paramitas will guide them to reach the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge."

(The Buddha distinguished the right path from wrong path for the great bodhisattvas.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One said to the Buddha again, "As the fathomless prajna paramita appears in the world, it can accomplish one great thing, that is, it can manifest the characteristics of the path and nonpath for all great bodhisattvas to let them know what is and what is not the right path, so they can attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge quickly."

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, "Yes, it is as you say. The fathomless prajna paramita appears in the world to accomplish one great thing, that is, it can manifest the path and nonpath for all great bodhisattvas to let them know what is and what is not the right path, so they can attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge quickly. Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, another great thing that the fathomless prajna paramita can accomplish is to liberate and

deliver numberless, countless, and boundless sentient beings and bring them benefits, peace, and happiness. You must know, Well-Appearing One, the fathomless prajna paramita can do boundless beneficial things for others, but it does not become attached to or grasp these things.

(The Buddha said that there are two great things that prajna paramita appears in the world to accomplish. One is to tell the right path from the wrong path for the great bodhisattvas; the other is to liberate sentient beings and bring them great benefits, peace, and happiness. However, prajna paramita will not be attached to what it accomplishes.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the fathomless prajna paramita can manifest the things performed by matter, but it does not become attached to or grasp these things. The fathomless prajna paramita can manifest the things performed by feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness, but it does not become attached or grasp these things. And so on, the fathomless prajna paramita can manifest the things performed by the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, but it does not become attached to or grasp these things. The fathomless prajna paramita can manifest the things performed by voice-hearers and self-enlightened ones, but it does not become attached to or grasp these things. Well-Appearing One, the fathomless prajna paramita can guide all great bodhisattvas to approach the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, but it stays far away from the stages of voice-hearer, self-enlightened one, and so forth. It neither gives birth to all dharmas nor extinguishes them. It just measures the dharmas by virtue of their dharma natures."

The long-lived sage Well Appearing asked to the Buddha again, "If the fathomless prajna paramita neither gives birth to nor extinguishes all dharmas, how should the great bodhisattvas practice giving, observe pure precept, initiate forbearance, work diligently, dwell in meditation, and cultivate prajna for the sake of the sentient beings when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "When cultivating prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas should, for the sake of all sentient beings, practice giving, observe pure precept, initiate forbearance, work diligently, dwell in meditation, and cultivate prajna based on the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas should also transfer the virtuous roots thus derived along with all sentient beings equally toward the

perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. If they can do this transference, they will be able to fulfill the cultivation of the six paramitas perfectly and quickly. They will also be able to fulfill the cultivation of loving-kindness, compassion, joy, and equanimity perfectly and quickly. They will even be able to sit peacefully on the throne of the wonderful bodhi and never be far away from the six paramitas. Because they are not far away from the six paramitas, they will not be far away from the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge either. Therefore, Well-Appearing One, to realize and attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge quickly, the great bodhisattvas should diligently and assiduously learn, cultivate, and practice the six paramitas. If they can learn, cultivate, and practice the six paramitas diligently and assiduously, all their virtuous roots will be fulfilled perfectly and quickly, so they are able to realize and attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge before long. Therefore, Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas should always remain correspondent with the six paramitas. They should not leave them."

(The Buddha encouraged great bodhisattvas to always stay with, learn, cultivate, and practice the six paramitas to benefit greatly in their pursuit of the unsurpassed bodhi.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "World-Honored One, how can the great bodhisattvas be correspondent with the six paramitas at all times and never apart from them?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "If the great bodhisattvas accurately contemplate matter, feeling, thinking, action, consciousness, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge as neither correspondent nor not correspondent, then they will be always correspondent with the six paramitas and never apart from them. Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas always think: 'I should not dwell in matter or in nonmatter; I should not dwell in feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness or in nonfeeling, nonthinking, nonaction, and nonconsciousness; and so forth, I should not dwell in the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge or in the nonperfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. Why? Matter cannot dwell, and no one can dwell in matter; feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness cannot dwell, and no one can dwell in feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness. And so on, the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge cannot dwell, and no one can dwell in

the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge.' Then, Well-Appearing One, these great bodhisattvas will be always correspondent with the six paramitas and never stay apart from them. Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas can adopt such nondwelling as skillful means to cultivate the six paramitas, they are able to realize and attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge before long.

(The Buddha taught how great bodhisattvas always stay with prajna paramita.)

"Well-Appearing One, someone wanted to eat amalaki fruit or jackfruit, so planted the seeds in fertilized soil, watered them properly, and took a good care of them; then the seeds grew into stems, branches, and leaves. When the right season came, flowers bloomed, and fruits became ripe, then they were picked and eaten. So, if the great bodhisattvas would like to attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, they need to learn the six paramitas first and absorb the sentient beings by means of practicing giving, speaking kind and good words, doing beneficial actions, and getting along with them in harmony and empathy. After successfully absorbing the sentient beings, the great bodhisattvas will further teach the sentient beings to dwell peacefully in giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna paramitas, so that they will be liberated from birth, old age, illness, and death and dwell permanently in ultimate peace and happiness. These great bodhisattvas thus will attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi and turn the wonderful dharma wheel to deliver innumerable sentient beings. Therefore, Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas would like to become awakened by themselves, assist the sentient beings to mature, and dignify and purify the Buddha lands; if they would like to sit firmly on the throne of wonderful bodhi, subjugate all demonic armies, realize and attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, turn the dharma wheel to liberate all sentient beings from birth, old age, illness, and death, and let them dwell permanently in ultimate peace and happiness, the great bodhisattvas should learn the six paramitas first, then absorb expediently the sentient beings by means of the four approaches. After that, they should further teach them to dwell peacefully in giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna paramitas. If the great bodhisattvas want to learn and cultivate something, they should learn and cultivate prajna paramita diligently and attentively all the time."

(The Buddha elaborated the steps that great bodhisattvas should adopt in learning prajna paramita to attain the unsurpassed bodhi.)