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# The Great Prajna Paramita Sutra

Volume 24

(Fascicles 461-480)

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

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Chapter 68

Skillful Means

Section 2

(In the Second Assembly)

At that time, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, "World-Honored One, does the Buddha say that great bodhisattvas should diligently and constantly cultivate and learn prajna paramita?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "Yes. I say that great bodhisattvas should diligently and constantly cultivate and learn prajna paramita. Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas would like to attain great freedom and stay at ease in all dharmas, they should learn prajna paramita. Why? The fathomless prajna paramita has great power to allow various great bodhisattvas to be free and at ease in all dharmas. You must know, Well-Appearing One, the fathomless prajna paramita is the gateway through which all virtuous dharmas are accessed. It is like the ocean into which all waters flow. Therefore, Well-Appearing One, all pursuers of voice-hearer vehicle, self-enlightened one vehicle, or bodhisattva vehicle should cultivate and learn this fathomless prajna paramita diligently and constantly.

(The Buddha taught that the pursuers of the three vehicles should all cultivate and learn the fathomless prajna paramita diligently and constantly.)

"Well-Appearing One, when cultivating and learning prajna paramita diligently, the great bodhisattvas should also consistently cultivate and learn giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and meditation paramita. They should dwell peacefully and consistently in internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature. They should dwell peacefully and consistently in realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable. They should dwell peacefully and consistently in the noble truths of suffering, the

cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering. They should consistently 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 stages of bodhisattva; 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 path, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena; all great bodhisattva actions; the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas; and the perfect of all perfect knowledge.

(The Buddha said that the great bodhisattvas should not only learn and cultivate prajna paramita consistently but also dwell in or consistently learn and cultivate other five paramitas and the rest of superior holy dharmas.)

"Well-Appearing One, a skilled, well armored archer master can always shoot perfectly and freely without fear of enemies. Similarly, the great bodhisattvas who develop expedient skillfulness of prajna paramita and possess various merits and virtues cannot be subjugated by demonic armies and incorrect arguments. Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas would like to realize and attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge quickly, they should cultivate and learn the fathomless prajna paramita. Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas consistently cultivate and learn prajna paramita, they will be kept in the minds of and protected by various Buddhas, the World-Honored Ones, in the innumerable, countless, and boundless worlds of the ten directions."

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "World-Honored One, why will the great bodhisattvas be kept in the minds of and protected by various Buddhas, the World-Honored Ones, in the innumerable, countless, and boundless worlds of the ten directions if they consistently cultivate and learn the fathomless prajna paramita?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “If the great bodhisattvas can consistently cultivate and learn prajna paramita, they will be able to cultivate giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, so they will be kept in the minds of and protected by various Buddhas, the World-Honored Ones, in the innumerable, countless, and boundless worlds of the ten directions.”

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, “Why will the great bodhisattvas be kept in the minds of and protected by various Buddhas, the World-Honored Ones, in the innumerable, countless, and boundless worlds of the ten directions if they cultivate giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “When cultivating giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, these great bodhisattvas will contemplate giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, as unattainable, so they will be kept in the minds of and protected by various Buddhas, the World-Honored Ones, in the innumerable, countless, and boundless worlds of the ten directions.

(The Buddha said that when the great bodhisattvas cultivate the six paramitas, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge as unattainable, they will be kept in the minds of various Thus-Comers and protected by them.)

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the various Buddhas, the World-Honored Ones, in the innumerable, countless, and boundless worlds are as unattainable as matter, feeling, thinking, action, consciousness, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, so they always protect and keep the great bodhisattvas in their minds.

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the Buddhas, the World-Honored Ones, in the innumerable, countless, and boundless worlds of the ten directions protect and keep the great bodhisattvas in their minds not because of matter, feeling, thinking, action, consciousness, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge.”

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One said to the Buddha, “The great bodhisattvas have learned in many places, but have learned nothing.”

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, “Yes. The great bodhisattvas have learned in many places, but they have learned nothing. Why? It is because there is no dharma that great bodhisattvas can learn.”

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One said to the Buddha again, “World-Honored One, when the great bodhisattvas are taught about the dharmas correspondent with the six paramitas, either in a brief and succinct way or in a more elaborated way, these great bodhisattvas should listen to, accept, embrace, read, recite, and study them thoroughly if they would like to realize and attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge quickly. After understanding them thoroughly, they should further reflect on them reasonably; after reflecting on them, they should correctly contemplate and investigate them, so that their minds and the associated images will not be affected by phenomena anymore.”

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, “Yes, it is as you say. Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, when the great bodhisattvas diligently cultivate and learn the six paramitas as they are taught by the Buddha in succinct or elaborated way, they should learn to know the forms of various dharmas as they really are in both brief and detailed ways.”

(The Buddha and Well-Appearing One discussed about the way of learning extensively or briefly the forms of various dharmas.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, “World-Honored One, how should great bodhisattvas get to know the simplified and the complicated forms of all dharmas as they really are?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “Knowing the simplified and complicated forms of all dharmas as they really are means that the great bodhisattvas accurately know the forms of the realness of matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness; the forms of the realness of the eye sphere, ear sphere, and so forth, and conscious sphere; the forms of the realness of the sight sphere, sound sphere, and so forth, and mental-image sphere; the forms of the realness of the eye realm, ear realm, and so forth, and conscious realm; the forms of the

realness of the sight realm, sound realm, and so forth, and mental-image realm; the forms of the realness of the eye consciousness realm, ear consciousness realm, and so forth, and conscious consciousness realm; the forms of the realness of the eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact; the forms of the realness of the feelings produced by eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact; the forms of the realness of the earth realm, water realm, and so forth, and consciousness realm; the forms of the realness of cause and condition, consecutive thoughts, the conditions that stimulate the mind, and the conditions that reinforce main causes; the forms of the realness of ignorance, action, consciousness, and so forth, and old age and death; the forms of the realness of giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita; the forms of the realness of internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature; the forms of the realness 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 realness of the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path; the forms of the realness of the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations; the forms of the realness of the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations; the forms of the realness of the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration; the forms of the realness of the stage of pure contemplation, stage of embryonic Buddha nature, and so forth, and stage of Thus-Comer; the forms of the realness of the stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilements, and so forth, and stage of dharma cloud; the forms of the realness of all dharani gates and samadhi gates; the forms of the realness of the five eyes and six supernatural powers; the forms of 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; the forms of the realness of the thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor futures; the forms of the realness of staying in correct mindfulness and always dwelling in equanimity; the forms of the realness of the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena; the forms of the realness of stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi; the forms of the realness of all great bodhisattva actions; the forms of the realness of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas; and the forms of the realness of the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge."

(The Buddha taught the way of getting to know the simplified and the complicated forms of all dharmas as they really are; namely, they should get to know the forms of the realness of various dharmas.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, “World-Honored One, what are the forms of the realness of matter, feeling, thinking, action, consciousness, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge that the great bodhisattvas should get to know and learn from, so as to accurately know the simplified and complicated forms of all dharmas as they really are?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “The realness of matter has no arising, extinction, duration, and decay that can be established; this is the form of the realness of matter. The realness of feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness has no arising, extinction, duration, and decay that can be established; this is the form of the realness of feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness. And so on, the realness of the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge has no arising, extinction, duration, and decay that can be established; this is the form of the realness of the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. The great bodhisattvas should accurately know them and learn from them, so that they can accurately know the simplified and complicated forms of all dharmas as they really are.

(The Buddha taught that the forms of the realness of various dharmas mean that the realness of these dharmas has no arising, extinction, duration, and decay that can be established. The great bodhisattvas should accurately know and learn from this reality of various dharmas.)

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas know the forms of the reality of matter, feeling, thinking, action, consciousness, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, they know the simplified and complicated forms of all dharmas as they really are.”

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, “World-Honored One, what are the forms of the reality of matter, feeling, thinking, action, consciousness, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge that the great bodhisattvas should get to know

and learn from, so as to accurately know the simplified and complicated forms of all dharmas as they really are?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "Boundlessness is the form of the reality of matter, feeling, thinking, action, consciousness, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. The great bodhisattvas should get to accurately know and learn from it, so that they can know the simplified and complicated forms of all dharmas as they really are.

(In addition to the forms of no arising, extinction, duration, and decay, great bodhisattvas can also look at them from different perspectives, such as the form is boundless.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas know the forms of the dharma realm of matter, feeling, thinking, action, consciousness, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge as they really are, then they can accurately know the simplified and complicated forms of all dharmas as they really are."

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, "World-Honored One, what are the forms of the dharma realm of matter, feeling, thinking, action, consciousness, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge that the great bodhisattvas should get to know and learn from, so as to accurately know the simplified and complicated forms of all dharmas as they really are?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One: "Matter is like empty space which has no obstruction, hindrance, arising, extinction, discontinuation, and continuation that can be established; these are the forms of the dharma realm of matter. Feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness are like empty space which has no obstruction, hindrance, arising, extinction, discontinuation, and continuation that can be established; these are the forms of the dharma realm of feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness. And so on, the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge is like empty space which has no obstruction, hindrance, arising, extinction, discontinuation, and continuation that can be established; these are the forms of the dharma realm of the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. The great bodhisattvas should accurately know these forms and learn from them, so that they can know the simplified and complicated forms of all dharmas as they really are."

(The forms of the reality, or the dharma realm, of various dharmas are boundless or like empty space, which has no obstruction, hindrance, arising, extinction, discontinuation, and continuation. We should not establish them as with obstruction, hindrance, and so forth.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, “World-Honored One, how can the great bodhisattvas further get to know the simplified and complicated forms of all dharmas as they really are?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “If the great bodhisattvas accurately know that all dharmas are without combination and separation, they can know the simplified and complicated forms of all dharmas as they really are.”

(All dharmas have no combination and separation.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, “World-Honored One, what dharmas are without combination and separation?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “Matter is without combination and separation, and feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness are without combination and separation too. The eye sphere, ear sphere, and so forth, and conscious sphere are without combination and separation. The sight sphere, sound sphere, and so forth, and mental-image sphere are without combination and separation. The eye realm, ear realm, and so forth, and conscious realm are without combination and separation. The sight realm, sound realm, and so forth, and mental-image realm are without combination and separation. The eye consciousness realm, ear consciousness realm, and so forth, and conscious consciousness realm are without combination and separation. The eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact are without combination and separation. The feelings produced by eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact are without combination and separation. The earth realm, water realm, and so forth, and consciousness realm are without combination and separation. Cause and condition, consecutive thoughts, the conditions that stimulate the mind, and the conditions that reinforce main causes are without combination and separation. Ignorance, action, consciousness, and so forth, and old age and death are without combination and separation. Greed, anger, and ignorance are without combination and separation. The realm of desire, the realm of form, and

the realm of formlessness are without combination and separation. Giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita are without combination and separation. Internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature are without combination and separation. Realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable are without combination and separation. The noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering are without combination and separation. The four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path are without combination and separation. The four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations are without combination and separation. The eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations are without combination and separation. The liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration are without combination and separation. The stage of pure contemplation, stage of embryonic Buddha nature, and so forth, and stage of Thus-Comer are without combination and separation. The stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilements, and so forth, and stage of dharma cloud are without combination and separation. All dharani gates and all samadhi gates are without combination and separation. The five eyes and six supernatural powers are without combination and separation. The Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power are without combination and separation. The thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features are without combination and separation. Staying in correct mindfulness and always dwelling in equanimity are without combination and separation. The perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena are without combination and separation. The stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi are without combination and separation. All great bodhisattva actions are without combination and separation. The unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas is without combination and separation. The perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge is without combination and separation. The conditioned realm is without combination and separation; the unconditioned realm is without combination and separation too. Why? All these dharmas are without self-nature. They thus are nonexistent. Because they are nonexistent, they cannot combine and separate. If the great

bodhisattvas realize all dharmas in this way, they know the simplified and complicated forms of all dharmas as they really are."

(The Buddha further elaborated what dharmas are without combination and separation. Because the dharmas have no self-nature and are nonexistent, they cannot combine and separate.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One said to the Buddha, "World-Honored One, this is a succinct way to absorb all paramitas. The great bodhisattvas can accomplish much through this approach. World-Honored One, all bodhisattvas, including novices, those at the first stage, and even at the tenth stage, should consistently cultivate and learn to absorb prajna paramita in this way to understand the simplified and complicated forms of all dharmas as they really are."

The Buddha said, "Yes, it is as you say. You must know, Well-Appearing One, this concise dharma gate for absorbing paramitas is suitable for intelligent, diligent practitioners with correct views and positive wisdom who rest on samahita; it is not suited for those lacking these qualities. Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas would like to enter this dharma gate, they should work diligently and expediently to achieve their objectives. All great bodhisattvas, who wish to stay in the state of nonregression, progress to reach the tenth stage, or attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, should diligently and expediently cultivate to enter this dharma gate.

(The Buddha taught about the succinct dharma gate which is suitable for the learners with the qualities of diligence, concentration, and wisdom.)

"Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas learn as taught by prajna paramita, they will be able to learn the following superior holy dharmas freely as they wish: 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 stages of bodhisattva; 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; the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas; and the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge.

"Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas learn by following the teachings of the fathomless prajna paramita, they will approach the attainment of the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. In addition, their karmic hindrances and demonic affairs will distinguish immediately whenever they appear. Therefore, Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas would like to eliminate all karmic hindrances and demonic affairs, and would like to absorb skillful and expedient powers, they should learn prajna paramita.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas who are practicing, cultivating, and learning prajna paramita will be kept in the minds of and protected by the Buddhas, the World-Honored Ones, who are teaching the dharma in innumerable, countless, and boundless worlds of the ten directions. Why? Well-Appearing One, all Buddhas in the past, future, and present appear in the worlds because of the fathomless prajna paramita. Therefore, Well-Appearing One, when practicing prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas should think, 'I will attain the dharma that the Buddhas in the past, future, and present realize and attain.' Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas should diligently cultivate and learn the fathomless prajna paramita, so that they can realize and attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge soon. Well-Appearing One, when cultivating prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas should not stay away from the intention correspondent with the fathomless prajna paramita.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas can cultivate prajna paramita as they should do, they will gain a great accumulation of blessings quickly as snapping fingers. On the other hand, someone has taught all sentient beings in the large threefold thousand-world and guided them to dwell peacefully in giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna; in the liberation and the knowledge and views of liberation;

and in stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, or self-enlightenment bodhi. This person thus has gained immeasurable blessings. But in comparison, the blessings gained by the fathomless prajna paramita practitioners for as brief as snapping fingers will be more than those gained by this person. Why? Prajna paramita can give birth to giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna; liberation and the knowledge and views of liberation; and the stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi. The Buddhas, the World-Honored Ones, in the present, past, and future, appear in the innumerable, countless, and boundless worlds of the ten directions because of the fathomless prajna paramita.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas do not stay far away from the intentions correspondent with the fathomless prajna paramita to cultivate prajna paramita for an instant, half a day, one day, half a month, one month, one hour, one year, one hundred years, or more, the blessings thus gained by these great bodhisattvas will be much more than the blessings gained by those who teach all sentient beings in as many worlds of the ten directions as the sands of the Ganges and guide them to dwell peacefully in giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna; in liberation and the knowledge and views of liberation; or in the stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi. Why? The Buddhas, the World-Honored Ones, in the past, future, and present appear in the worlds because of prajna paramita. It is for the sake of all sentient beings, they establish giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna paramitas; the liberation and the knowledge and views of liberation; the stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi; and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. Therefore, they will gain much more blessings.

(The Buddha explained why to cultivate the six paramitas, and so forth, and the unsurpassed bodhi will gain more blessings than cultivating giving, pure precept, and so forth, and prajna without paramita, and so forth, and the two vehicles.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas can dwell by following the teaching of the fathomless prajna paramita, you must know that these great bodhisattvas will not regress. They have always been kept in the minds of and protected by the Buddhas. They have attained the most superior expedient skillfulness. They have stayed close and made offerings

respectfully to numberless hundreds of thousands of koti nayuta Buddhas. They have planted immeasurable subtle and wonderful virtuous roots at various Buddhas' places. They have been absorbed by innumerable real and virtuous intellectuals and have cultivated and learned giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita for a long time. They have dwelled peacefully in internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature for a long time. They have dwelled peacefully in realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable for a long time. They have dwelled peacefully in the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering for a long time. They have cultivated 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 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; and the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena for a long time. They have cultivated all great bodhisattva actions and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas for a long time. They have also cultivated the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge for a long time. You must know, these great bodhisattvas have reached the stage of pure childhood. All their wishes can be realized. They can see the Buddhas very often. They never stay far away from all virtuous roots. They can assist the sentient beings they are guiding to mature and dignify and purify the Buddha lands in which they live. They always travel from one Buddha lands to the other to make offerings respectfully to esteem and acclaim various Buddhas, the World-Honored Ones, and hear, accept, and cultivate the unsurpassed dharma taught by these Buddhas. You must know that these great bodhisattvas have attained uninterrupted and endless talents of speech and debate. They have attained the subtlest and most wonderful dharani, and been conferred by various Buddhas the prophecy of achieving perfection in cultivation. They will be able to deliver the sentient beings freely as they wish and will show up in whatever physical bodies freely as they wish.

(The Buddha taught that the great bodhisattvas, who are currently able to cultivate prajna paramita expediently and skillfully, must have learned and cultivated prajna paramita and various holy dharmas for a long time in their previous lives. They must have made offerings respectfully to numberless Buddhas and heard their teachings, stayed close to many virtuous and intelligent friends, assisted many sentient beings to mature, and dignified and purified many Buddha lands. The path toward the unsurpassed bodhi is a long process involving numberless lifetimes, various areas of learning, and varied aspects of Buddhist services.)

"You must know, these great bodhisattvas can enter and understand insightfully the perceived dharmas; mental images; words and nonwords; verbal and nonverbal dharmas; one, two, and many designated names; the designated names of woman, man, and agender; designated names in the past, future, and present; meanings and writings; matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness; aggregates, spheres, and realms; dependent origination and the factors in dependent origination; the world; nirvana; dharma forms; the forms of the conditioned and the unconditioned dharmas; mental images and not mental images; the common characteristics of forms and nonforms; the forms of existence and the forms of nonexistence; self-nature and other-nature; combination, separation, and combination and separation; correspondence, noncorrespondence, correspondence and noncorrespondence; realness, the nature of nonillusion, nature of changelessness, dharma nature, dharma realm, dharma concentration, and dharma dwelling; the nature of conditions and nonnature of conditions; the noble truths; the meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations; the six paramitas; the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path; the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations; the dharani gates and the samadhi gates; the three liberation gates; all kinds of emptiness; the five eyes and the six supernatural powers; the Thuc-Comer'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; the conditioned and unconditioned realms; and the human realm and nonhuman realm.

(These great bodhisattvas can enter and understand everything.)

"These great bodhisattvas can enter and understand insightfully the intentions related to the following dharmas: matter, feeling, and so forth, and consciousness; the eye sphere, ear sphere, and so forth, and conscious realm; 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 realm, 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; cause and condition, consecutive thoughts, the conditions that stimulate the mind, and the conditions that reinforce main causes; 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 pure contemplation, stage of embryonic Buddha nature, and so forth, and stage of Thus-Comer; the stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilements, and so forth, 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; the thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features; 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; stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi; all great bodhisattva actions; the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas; and the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge.

(The great bodhisattvas can enter and get to understand various intentions related to various dharmas.)

"These great bodhisattvas can enter and understand insightfully the emptiness of matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness and their phenomena, and so forth, as well as the emptiness of the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge and its phenomena. They can enter and understand insightfully the path either with ease and peace or without ease and peace. They can enter and understand insightfully arising, extinction, duration, and decay; the correct and the incorrect views; views and nonviews; greed, anger, and ignorance and nongreed, nonanger, and nonignorance; all knots of incorrect views, hidden vexations, and bondages, as well as the termination of the incorrect views, hidden vexations, and bondages. They can enter and understand insightfully name, form, and name and form. They can enter and understand insightfully the conditions that stimulate the mind, the conditions that reinforce main causes, cause and condition, and the consecutive sequence of thoughts. They can enter and understand insightfully actions, phenomena, causes, and effects. They can enter and understand insightfully the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering. They can enter and understand insightfully hells and the path of hells, the realm of animals and the path of animals, the realm of ghosts and the path of ghosts, the human realm and the path of humans, and the heavenly realm and the path of heavenly beings. They can enter and understand insightfully the stream-enterers and the stream-entry effect, once-returners and once-return effect, nonreturners and nonreturn effect, arhats and arhat effect, and self-enlightened ones and self-enlightenment bodhi. They can enter and understand insightfully all great bodhisattvas and all great bodhisattva actions; all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas. They can enter and understand insightfully the perfect knowledge of everything and the path of the perfect knowledge of everything; the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths and the path of the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths; and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena and the path of the perfect knowledge of all phenomena. They can enter and understand insightfully the roots, the fulfillment of the roots, and the superior and inferior roots. They can enter and understand insightfully wisdom, witty wisdom, beneficial wisdom, quick wisdom, the wisdom of powers, the wisdom of understanding, broad wisdom, fathomless wisdom, great wisdom, unequaled wisdom, the wisdom of reality, and the wisdom of treasures. They can enter and understand insightfully the past, future, and present. They can enter and understand insightfully skillful means. They can enter and understand

insightfully aspirations and the reinforced aspirations for the sake of all sentient beings. They can enter and understand insightfully the forms of the words and meanings, various holy dharmas, and the peaceful dwelling in the skillful means of the three vehicles. Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas can practice, elicit, and cultivate the fathomless prajna paramita, they will gain such various superior benefits."

(The Buddha taught about the superior benefits gained by practicing, eliciting, and cultivating the fathomless prajna paramita.)

At that time, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "World-Honored One, how do great bodhisattvas practice the fathomless prajna paramita? How do they elicit and cultivate it?"

The Buddha responded to Well-Appearing One, "When practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas should contemplate matter, feeling, and so forth, and consciousness as deteriorating, destructing, separating, not at ease, not solid, and not real. Well-Appearing One, you asked me how the great bodhisattvas elicit fathomless prajna paramita? I will say that the great bodhisattvas should elicit the fathomless prajna paramita as if eliciting empty space. Well-Appearing One, you also asked how the great bodhisattvas cultivate fathomless prajna paramita. They should cultivate the fathomless prajna paramita by destroying all dharmas."

(The Buddha explained to Well-Appearing One how great bodhisattvas practice, elicit, and cultivate the fathomless prajna paramita.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, "World-Honored One, how long should great bodhisattvas practice, elicit, and cultivate the fathomless prajna paramita?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "The great bodhisattvas should practice, elicit, and cultivate the fathomless prajna paramita from their initial aspiration to great bodhi until finally sitting peacefully on the throne of the exquisite dharma."

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, “World-Honored One, with what mind should the great bodhisattvas uninterruptedly practice, elicit, and cultivate the fathomless prajna paramita?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “From the initial aspiration to the great bodhi until sitting peacefully on the throne of the exquisite dharma, the great bodhisattvas should wholeheartedly dwell in a mind correspondent with the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge when practicing, eliciting, and cultivating the fathomless prajna paramita. Well-Appearing One, these great bodhisattvas should dwell in a steady mind, unaffected by external circumstances, to practice, elicit, and cultivate the fathomless prajna paramita.”

“World-Honored One, will great bodhisattvas attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge if they practice, elicit, and cultivate the fathomless prajna paramita?”

“No, Well-Appearing One.”

“World-Honored One, will the great bodhisattvas attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge if they do not practice, elicit, and cultivate the fathomless prajna paramita?”

“No, Well-Appearing One.”

“World-Honored One, will the great bodhisattvas attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge if they practice and do not practice, elicit and do not elicit, and cultivate and do not cultivate the fathomless prajna paramita?”

“No, Well-Appearing One.”

“World-Honored One, will the great bodhisattvas attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge if they neither practice nor not practice, neither elicit nor not elicit, and neither cultivate nor not cultivate the fathomless prajna paramita?”

“No, Well-Appearing One.”

“World-Honored One, then how should great bodhisattvas attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge?”

"Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas should attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge as they would attain realness."

"World-Honored One, what is realness?"

"Well-Appearing One, it is like reality."

"World-Honored One, what is reality?"

"Well-Appearing One, it is like dharma realm."

"World-Honored One, what is dharma realm?"

"Well-Appearing One, it is like the realm of the 'I,' the realm of the sentient being, the realm of the living one, the realm of the one who gives birth, the realm of the one who raises others, the realm of the gentleperson, and the realm of the individual in reincarnation."

"World-Honored One, what are the realm of the 'I,' the realm of the sentient being, and so forth, and the realm of the individual in reincarnation?"

"Well-Appearing One, what do you think about this? Are the 'I,' the sentient being, the living one, the one who gives birth, the one who raises others, the gentleperson, and the individual in reincarnation attainable?"

"No, World-Honored One."

"Well-Appearing One, if the 'I,' the sentient being, and so forth, and the individual in reincarnation are unattainable, how can we establish the realm of the 'I,' the realm of the sentient being, and so forth, and the realm of the individual in reincarnation? Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas do not establish prajna paramita, the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, or all dharmas, they certainly will realize and attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge."

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, "Is prajna paramita the only dharma that cannot be established? Are meditation paramita, diligence paramita, and so forth, and giving paramita also the dharmas that cannot be established?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “Not only prajna paramita but also meditation paramita, diligence paramita, and so forth, and giving paramita cannot be established. The dharma of voice-hearer, the dharma of self-enlightened one, the dharma of bodhisattva, and the dharma of Thus-Comer cannot be established either. In summary, all dharmas, the conditioned and the unconditioned, cannot be established.”

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, “If all dharmas cannot be established, how can hells, animals, ghosts, human beings, heavenly beings, and the stream-enterers, once-returners, nonreturners, arhats, self-enlightened ones, bodhisattvas, and Thus-Comer be established?”

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, “What do you think about this? Are the established sentient beings and established dharmas attainable?”

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

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, “If the established sentient beings and established dharmas are unattainable, how can I establish hells, the realm of animals, and the realm of ghosts? How can I establish human beings, heavenly beings, stream-enterers, once-returners, nonreturners, arhats, self-enlightened ones, bodhisattvas, Thus-Comers, and all dharmas? Well-Appearing One, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas should learn that all dharmas cannot be established so they will be able to approach the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.

(The Buddha advised that the great bodhisattvas should not think that the realms and various effects of cultivation can be established to attain the unsurpassed bodhi.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One aske, “World-Honored One, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, should the great bodhisattvas also learn from matter, feeling, thinking, action, consciousness, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “When practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas should learn that matter, feeling, thinking, action, consciousness,

and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge are without addition and subtraction."

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "World-Honored One, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, how do the great bodhisattvas learn that matter, feeling, thinking, action, consciousness, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge are without addition and subtraction?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "When practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas should learn that matter, feeling, thinking, action, consciousness, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge are without arising and extinction."

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "World-Honored One, how do great bodhisattvas learn that matter, feeling, thinking, action, consciousness, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge are without arising and extinction?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "When practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas should learn that matter, feeling, thinking, action, consciousness, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge do not elicit and undertake the cultivation or the elimination of all actions."

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked, "World-Honored Ones, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, how do great bodhisattvas learn that matter, feeling, thinking, action, consciousness, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge do not elicit and undertake the cultivation or the elimination of all actions?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "When practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas should contemplate the particular characteristics of all dharmas as empty and realize that matter, feeling, thinking, action, consciousness, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge do not elicit and undertake the cultivation or the elimination of all actions."

(In these paragraphs the Buddha provided guidance for great bodhisattvas practicing the fathomless prajna paramita.)

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Chapter 68

Skillful Means

Section 3

(In the Second Assembly)

At that time, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, “World-Honored One, how do great bodhisattvas contemplate the particular characteristics of all dharmas as empty when they practice the fathomless prajna paramita?”

The Buddha replied, “Well-Appearing One, when great bodhisattvas practice the fathomless prajna paramita, they should contemplate matter as empty only because it is matter, and contemplate feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness as empty only because they are feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness. They should contemplate the eye sphere, ear sphere and so forth, and conscious sphere as empty only because they are the eye sphere, ear sphere, and so forth, and conscious sphere. They should contemplate the sight sphere, sound sphere, and so forth, and mental-image sphere as empty only because they are the sight sphere, sound sphere, and so forth, and mental-image sphere. They should contemplate the eye realm, ear realm, and so forth, and conscious realm as empty only because they are the eye realm, ear realm, and so forth, and conscious realm. They should contemplate the sight realm, sound realm, and so forth, and mental-image realm as empty only because they are the sight realm, sound realm, and so forth, and mental-image realm. They should contemplate the eye consciousness realm, ear consciousness realm, and so forth, and conscious consciousness realm as empty only because they are the eye consciousness realm, ear consciousness realm, and so forth, and conscious consciousness realm. They should contemplate the eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact as empty only because they are the eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact. They should contemplate the feelings produced by eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact as empty only because they are the feelings produced by eye

contact, and so forth, and conscious contact. They should contemplate the earth, water, fire, wind, space, and consciousness realms as empty only because they are the earth realm, water realm, and so forth, and consciousness realm. They should contemplate cause and condition, consecutive thoughts, conditions that stimulate the mind, and the conditions that reinforce main causes as empty only because they are cause and condition, consecutive thoughts, conditions that stimulate the mind, and the conditions that reinforce main causes. They should contemplate ignorance, action, consciousness, name and form, six sense spheres, contact, reception, craving, grasping, existence, birth, old age, and death as empty only because they are ignorance, action, consciousness, and so forth, and old age and death. They should contemplate giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna paramitas as empty only because they are giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita. They should contemplate 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 empty only because they are internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature. They should contemplate 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 empty only because they are realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable. 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 empty only because they are 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 four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, four bases of power, five roots, five powers, seven factors for enlightenment, and noble eightfold path as empty only because they are the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path. They should contemplate the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations as empty only because they are the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless

concentrations. They should contemplate the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations as empty only because they are the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations. They should contemplate the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration as empty only because they are the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration. They should contemplate the stages of pure contemplation, embryonic Buddha nature, eight-forbearance, insight, slight vexation, elimination of desires, arhat, self-enlightenment bodhi, bodhisattva, and Thus-Comer as empty only because they are the stage of pure contemplation, stage of embryonic Buddha nature, and so forth, and stage of Thus-Comer. They should contemplate 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 as empty only because they are the stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilements, and so forth, and stage of dharma cloud. They should contemplate all dharani gates and all samadhi gates as empty only because they are the dharani gates and samadhi gates. They should contemplate the five eyes and six supernatural powers as empty only because they are the five eyes and six supernatural powers. They should contemplate 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 empty only because they are 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 thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features as empty only because they are thirty-two perfect major marks and eight distinguishing minor features. They should contemplate staying in correct mindfulness and always dwelling in equanimity as empty only because they are staying in correct mindfulness and always dwelling in equanimity. They should contemplate the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena as empty only because they are the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena. They should contemplate stream-entry effect, once-return effect, nonreturn effect, arhat effect, and self-enlightenment bodhi as empty only because they are stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi. They should contemplate all great

bodhisattva actions as empty only because they are all great bodhisattva actions. They should contemplate the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas as empty only because it is the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas. They should contemplate the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge as empty only because it is the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. Thus, Well-Appearing One, when great bodhisattvas practice the fathomless prajna paramita, they should contemplate the particular characteristics of all dharmas as empty."

(The Buddha taught that when great bodhisattvas practice prajna paramita, they should consider various dharmas as empty; their particular characteristics of all dharmas are empty.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, "If matter, feeling, thinking, action, consciousness, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge are empty only because they are matter, feeling, thinking, action, consciousness, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, then how do the great bodhisattvas practice the fathomless prajna paramita?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "When the great bodhisattvas do not practice at all, they do practice the fathomless prajna paramita."

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, "World-Honored One, why do great bodhisattvas practice the fathomless prajna paramita when they do not practice at all?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "Because the fathomless prajna paramita is unattainable, the great bodhisattvas are unattainable. The practice itself, the one who practices, the cause of the practice, and the time and the place of the practice are all unattainable. Therefore, Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas do practice the fathomless prajna paramita when they do not practice. In the fathomless prajna paramita, all nonsensical arguments are unattainable."

(The Buddha taught Well-Appearing One that the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas, and various aspects of the practice are all unattainable. Therefore, if great bodhisattvas do not practice the fathomless prajna paramita, they do practice it.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, “World-Honored One, if the great bodhisattvas do practice the fathomless prajna paramita when they do not practice it, then how do novice great bodhisattvas practice the fathomless prajna paramita?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “From their initial aspiration to the great bodhi, the great bodhisattvas should learn all dharmas as unattainable, then further adopt nonattainment as skillful means 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 stages of great bodhisattva; 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 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; cultivate the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas; and cultivate the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge.”

(Since their initial aspiration to the great bodhi, the bodhisattvas, particularly the novices, should learn all dharmas as unattainable, and further cultivate and dwell in various superior holy dharmas by adopting nonattainment as skillful means.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, “World-Honored One, what is attainable? What is unattainable?”

The Buddha replied, “Well-Appearing One, all dualities are named attainable, while those without duality are named unattainable.”

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, “What attainable dharmas are dual? What unattainable dharmas are not dual?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “The eye sphere and the sight sphere are dual. The ear sphere and the sound sphere are dual. And so on, the conscious sphere and the mental-image sphere are also dual. The material and the immaterial are dual. The visible and the invisible are dual. The substantial and the insubstantial are dual. The flawed and the flawless are dual. The conditioned and the unconditioned are dual. Those in the world and those beyond the world are dual. Birth and death and nirvana are dual. The dharma of the ordinary sentient beings and the ordinary sentient beings are dual. The dharma of stream-entry and stream-enterers are dual. The dharma of once-return and once-returners are dual. And so forth, the self-enlightenment bodhi and self-enlightened ones are dual. Great bodhisattva actions and great bodhisattvas are dual. The unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas and the Buddhas are dual. All nonsensical arguments are dual, and all duals are named attainable. Well-Appearing One, on the other hand, the nonexistence of the eye sphere and the sight sphere, the nonexistence of the ear sphere and the sound sphere, and so forth, and the nonexistence of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi and the Buddha are not dual. All the dharmas apart from nonsensical arguments are not dual; they are unattainable.”

(The Buddha distinguished the dual from the not dual, namely, the attainable from the unattainable.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, “World-Honored One, is it because of attainment, or because of nonattainment, that there is no attainment?”

The Buddha replied, “Well-Appearing One, it is not because of attainment or because of nonattainment that there is no attainment. Nonattainment is so named because of the nature of equality of attainment and nonattainment. Therefore, Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas should diligently learn the nature of the equality of attainment and nonattainment. Well-Appearing One, when learning in this way, the great bodhisattvas are named the learners of prajna paramita without attainment.”

(The Buddha defined the great bodhisattvas as being free from attainment, realizing the equal nature of all dharmas.)

At that time, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "World-Honored One, if great bodhisattvas practice the fathomless prajna paramita without being attached to attainment or nonattainment, then how can they advance from one stage to the other step by step, and finally fulfill the cultivation of the fathomless prajna paramita? If there is no advancement from one stage to the other to fulfill the cultivation step by step, how can they attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge?"

The Buddha replied, "Well-Appearing One, when the great bodhisattvas practice the fathomless prajna paramita, they will not be able to advance from one stage to the other step by step and finally fulfill the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge whether they dwell in attainment or nonattainment. Why? Well-Appearing One, the fathomless prajna paramita is unattainable; the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge is unattainable; ones who practice the fathomless prajna paramita are unattainable; and nonattainment itself is also unattainable. Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas should practice the fathomless prajna paramita without dwelling in attainment or nonattainment."

(The Buddha advised great bodhisattvas to avoid dwelling in attainment or nonattainment if they want to move forward in practicing prajna paramita.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "If the fathomless prajna paramita, the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, and the ones who practice the fathomless prajna paramita are unattainable, how should great bodhisattvas distinguish and choose among all dharmas when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita? How should they distinguish and choose among 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 realm, 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; cause and condition, consecutive thoughts, conditioned that stimulate the mind, and the conditions that reinforce main causes; 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 pure contemplation, stage of embryonic Buddha nature, and so forth, and stage of Thus-Comer; the stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilements, and so forth, and 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; the thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features; staying in correct mindfulness and always 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; stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi; all great bodhisattva actions; the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas; and the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "When great bodhisattvas practice the fathomless prajna paramita and are well motivated to distinguish among matter, feeling, thinking, action, consciousness, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, they should not attain all these dharmas."

(The Buddha advised great bodhisattvas to distinguish among various dharmas without attaining them.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, "If the great bodhisattvas practice the fathomless prajna paramita and do not attain matter, feeling, thinking, action, consciousness, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, how can

they fulfill giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita and enter onto the bodhisattva path of nonarising? If they cannot do this, how can they assist the sentient beings to mature? If they cannot assist the sentient beings to mature, how can they dignify and purify the Buddha lands? If they cannot dignify and purify the Buddha lands, how can they attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge? If they cannot attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, how can they turn the correct dharma wheel and undertake all kinds of Buddhist services? If they cannot turn the correct dharma wheel and undertake all kinds of Buddhist services, how can they liberate immeasurable and countless hundreds of thousands of koti nayuta sentient beings from birth, old age, illness, and death and allow them to attain the ultimate peace and happiness of nirvana?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "When the great bodhisattvas practice the fathomless prajna paramita, they do not practice the fathomless prajna paramita for the sake of matter, feeling, thinking, action, consciousness, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge."

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, "But for what purposes do the great bodhisattvas practice the fathomless prajna paramita?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "The great bodhisattvas do not seek to accomplish any purpose when they practice the fathomless prajna paramita. Why? Well-Appearing One, all dharmas are without doing and making; the fathomless prajna paramita is without doing and making; the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge is without doing and making; and great bodhisattvas are also without doing and making. Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas thus adopt nondoing and nonmaking as skillful means to practice the fathomless prajna paramita."

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, "If all dharmas are without doing and making, then the three vehicles--the vehicle of voice-hearer, vehicle of self-enlightened one, and the unsurpassed vehicle--should not be established."

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "For the dharmas with doing and making, establishment is attainable, but for the dharmas without doing and making, establishment is

unattainable. Why? Well-Appearing One, the ignorant ordinary sentient beings without hearing the dharma are attached to matter, feeling, thinking, action, consciousness, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. They thus stay in the mindfulness of matter, feeling, thinking, action, consciousness, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, and think, 'I definitely will attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge to liberate all sentient beings from birth, old age, illness, and death, and let them attain ultimate peace and happiness of nirvana.' Well-Appearing One, as these ignorant sentient beings without hearing the dharma have upside-down thoughts, they do something equivalent to slandering the Buddha. Why? Well-Appearing One, the Buddha with his five eyes has sought but cannot attain matter, feeling, thinking, action, consciousness, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. It does not make sense to say that the ignorant sentient beings with their blind wisdom eye and attachment to the dharmas are able to attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, liberate the sentient beings from birth, old age, illness, and death, and let them dwell in ultimate peace and happiness of nirvana."

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, "As the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones cannot find matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness with five pure eyes, or cannot find the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge as well as the sentient beings with their five pure eyes, they must have not realized and attained the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, so cannot liberate the sentient beings from birth, old age, illness, and death and let them dwell in the ultimate peace and happiness of nirvana, then how could the World-Honored One realize and attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, and establish three different groups of sentient beings: those definitely on correct path, those definitely on incorrect path, and those uncertain about their path?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "Upon realizing and attaining unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, I contemplated and investigated with my five pure eyes. I was quite sure that no one could truly realize and attain the unsurpassed bodhi or establish the three groups of sentient beings. However, sentient beings are ignorant and have inverted thought, leading them to perceive unreal dharmas and sentient beings as real. To address these misunderstandings and attachments, I presented teachings using conventional language rather than ultimate

meanings."

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, "Has Thus-Comer realized and attained the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge because of dwelling in ultimate meanings?"

The Buddha replied, "No."

Well-Appearing One asked again, "Has Thus-Comer realized and attained the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge because of dwelling in the upside-down delusions?"

The Buddha replied, "No."

Well-Appearing One asked again, "If the Thus-Comer has not realized and attained the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge by dwelling either in the ultimate meanings or in the upside-down delusions, then has the Thus-Comer attained the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge at all?"

The Buddha replied, "Yes, he has. Well-Appearing One, you must know that although I have realized and attained the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, I dwell nowhere. I do not dwell in the conditioned realm or in the unconditioned realm. Well-Appearing One, the transformed ones made by the Thus-Comer neither dwell in the conditioned realm nor in the unconditioned realm, but they indeed go, come, walk, stay, sit, and lie. Well-Appearing One, as the transformed ones practice 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 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; 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; cultivate the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas; realize and attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge; turn the dharma wheel and undertake various Buddhist services; and further make transformed sentient beings and establish them in the three different placements, do these transformed ones really go, come, walk, stay, sit, and lie? Do they really establish sentient beings in the three different groups?"

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

The Buddha said, "Well-Appearing One, so do the Thus-Comers. They understand and teach that all dharmas are like transformed ones. They have offered many services, but none is real; they have delivered sentient beings, but no one is really delivered. It is like the transformed ones, who have delivered the transformed sentient beings, but no one is really delivered. Therefore, Well-Appearing One, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas should perform as the transformed ones do; although they have performed many things, they are not attached to what they do."

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, "If all dharmas are like the transformed things, and so are the Thus-Comers, do Thus-Comers differ from the transformed ones?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "The Thus-Comers, the transformed ones made by the Thus-Comers, and all dharmas are not different. Why? Well-Appearing One, all the things done by the Thus-Comers can also be done by the transformed ones. The things done by the transformed ones can also be done by the Thus-Comers. Therefore, the Thus-Comers, the transformed ones, and all dharmas are not different."

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "Can Thus-Comer do things alone without transformed ones? Can transformed ones do things alone without Thus-Comers?"

The Buddha replied, "Yes, they can."

Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, “What are the things that they can do?”

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, “A Thus-Comer, One Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened One, named Virtuous Tranquil Wise One, had delivered all sentient beings that should be delivered. In the meantime, no bodhisattva in his land was entitled to be conferred by the Buddha the prophecy of becoming a Buddha in the future. He decided to make a transformed Buddha and let this transformed Buddha stay in the world, while he himself entered the nirvana without remainder. At that time, various heavenly beings, human beings, asuras, and so forth said that that the Buddha now had entered nirvana. This transformed Buddha did not have arising and extinction. Therefore, Well-Appearing One, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas should know and believe that all dharmas are like the transformed things.”

(The Buddha taught that the Thus-Comers, the transformed ones, and all dharmas are not different. The great bodhisattvas should know and believe that all dharmas are like the transformed things.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One said, “Thus-Comer and transformed Buddha are equal and without difference. How do Thus-Comers serve as the givers of the world and the pure field of bliss? Some sentient beings have for the sake of nirvana made offerings respectfully to the Thus-Comers incessantly until finally entering the realm of nirvana without remainder; they thus have gained endless blessings. If the sentient beings have for the sake of nirvana made offerings respectfully to the transformed Buddhas incessantly until finally entering the realm of nirvana without remainder, then they will also gain endless blessings.”

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, “It is like the Thus-Comer who can serve as the pure field of bliss for the heavenly beings, human beings, asuras, and so forth because of the dharma nature, so the transformed one made by the Buddha can do the same thing. If the Thus-Comer can receive the offerings made respectfully by various almsgivers and thus grant blessings to these givers until the end of life, then the transformed one should be able to do the same thing. Well-Appearing One, let us put these two things aside at this moment. If the good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth stay in the mindfulness of the Thus-Comer with respect and kindness, they will gain unexhausted virtuous roots until the end of life. Let us put this aside

now, Well-Appearing One. Suppose that the good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth have spread even a single flower in the air as the offering to the Buddha, then these good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth will gain unexhausted virtuous roots until the end of suffering. Well-Appearing One, let us now put this aside. If the good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth recite 'Namo Buddha, the Great Taming and Guiding One' just once, these good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth will gain unexhausted virtuous roots until the end of suffering. Well-Appearing One, if one makes offerings respectfully at the great field of bliss of various Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones, this person will gain immeasurable benefits, merits, and virtues. Well-Appearing One, you must know that both Thus-Comers and the transformed Buddhas are almsgivers; they can equally purify the fields of bliss without difference by virtue of the dharma nature.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas should practice the fathomless prajna paramita by virtue of dharma nature. The great bodhisattvas should expediently and skillfully enter various dharma natures without destroying dharma nature; namely, they should not differentiate between prajna paramita, meditation paramita, and so forth, and giving paramita and their dharma nature; internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature and their dharma nature; realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable and their dharma nature; the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering and their dharma nature; the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path and their dharma nature; the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations and their dharma nature; the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations and their dharma nature; the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration and their dharma nature; the stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilements, and so forth, and stage of dharma cloud and their dharma nature; all dharani gates and samadhi gates and their dharma nature; the five eyes and six supernatural powers and their dharma nature; the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power and their dharma nature; the thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features and their dharma nature; staying in correct mindfulness, dwelling in equanimity at

all times and their dharma nature; the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena and their dharma nature; stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi and their dharma nature; all great bodhisattva actions and their dharma nature; the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas and its dharma nature; and the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge and its dharma nature. Well-Appearing One, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas should not differentiate between these s dharmas and the nature of all dharmas and thus destroy the dharma nature."

(The great bodhisattvas should not differentiate between various dharmas and their nature when they practice the fathomless prajna paramita.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One said to the Buddha, "World-Honored One, if the great bodhisattvas should not differentiate between various dharmas and their nature to destroy the dharma nature, then why do the World-Honored One teach about the differences of the dharma nature of various dharmas and the destruction of the dharma nature? Why do the World-Honored One distinguish among 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 realm, 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; cause and condition, consecutive thoughts, conditions that stimulate the mind, and the conditions that reinforce main causes; ignorance, action, consciousness, and so forth, and old age and death; internal and external dharmas; the virtuous and not virtuous dharmas; the morally related and the morally unrelated dharmas; the flawed and flawless dharmas; the dharmas of and the beyond the world; the dharmas shared and not shared by other sentient beings; the dharmas that will invite arguments and the dharmas that will not invite arguments; and the conditioned dharmas and unconditioned dharmas? World-Honored One, when speaking of the differences of various dharmas, won't you destroy the dharma nature?"

The Buddha replied, “Well-Appearing One, I have not destroyed the dharma nature of various dharmas. I just give teachings expediently in terms of the provisional names and forms, so that the sentient beings can insightfully understand the equality of the dharma nature of all dharmas, so that they will be able to get rid of birth and death and realize nirvana. Well-Appearing One, all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones have taught the names and forms of all dharmas, but they do not destroy the real nature of all dharmas.”

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, “The Buddha has taught the dharma nature of all dharmas in terms of the provisional names and forms, so that various sentient beings can expediently and insightfully understand the equality of dharma nature to get rid of birth and death and realize nirvana. But how does the Buddha teach the dharmas without names and forms by means of names and forms without destroying the dharma nature?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “I have set up names and forms of all dharmas in compliance with the worldly perspective and teach sentient beings expediently without attachment, so I will not destroy the dharma nature. Well-Appearing One, as the ignorant sentient beings heard about suffering, the cause of suffering, and so forth, they were attached to their names and forms but did not understand that these were merely provisional dharmas. On the other hand, as the Thus-Comers and their disciples heard the names and forms of suffering, the cause of suffering, and so forth, they knew what they really were and taught in compliance with the worldly perspective, while they were not attached to them. They knew that the names and forms of all dharmas were not real. Well-Appearing One, if the holy ones are attached to the names and forms, they are also attached to emptiness, formlessness, nonaspiration, realness, dharma realm, reality, and nondoing. Well-Appearing One, the names of all dharmas are provisional and unreal; so are the forms of all dharmas. The holy ones should not be attached to the provisional, unreal names and forms. Therefore, Well-Appearing One, when the great bodhisattvas dwell in all dharmas, they expediently use the unreal, provisionally established names and forms to practice the fathomless prajna paramita, but they are not attached to them.”

(The Buddha explained how Thus-Comers and great bodhisattvas taught sentient beings provisionally established names and forms in terms of worldly perspective without destroying dharma nature.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, “If all dharmas have nothing other than names and forms, why do great bodhisattvas initiate aspiration to the bodhi and practice the bodhisattva actions? Why do they cultivate giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita assiduously? Why do 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; the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering? Why do they 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 stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilements, and so forth, and 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 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 perfectly?”

(Well-Appearing One asked why great bodhisattvas, who understand that all dharmas have nothing other than names and forms, still aspire to the unsurpassed bodhi and cultivate and fulfill various holy practices.)

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “All dharmas have only names and forms, and these names and forms are provisionally established, so the natures of the names and forms are empty. But the sentient beings have upside-down attachments, which lead them to live in the cycle of birth and death instead of advancing toward nirvana. The great bodhisattvas, driven by

compassion for all sentient beings, initiate an aspiration to the great bodhi, diligently practice bodhisattva actions, realize and attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, and turn the correct dharma wheel through the three vehicles to expediently liberate all sentient beings from birth and death, and guide them to the nirvana without remainder. But names and forms do not arise, extinguish, persist, or diminish; therefore, they should not be established as such."

At that time, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "World-Honored One, does the Buddha say that the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge is the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge?"

The Buddha replied, "Well-Appearing One, I do say that the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge is the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge."

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, "The Thus-Comer mentioned three types of the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge: knowing everything, knowing the forms of the paths, and knowing all phenomena. What are the characteristics of these kinds of perfect knowledge? Are they different?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "The perfect knowledge of everything is the perfect knowledge shared by the voice-hearers and the self-enlightened ones. The perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths is the perfect knowledge shared by the bodhisattvas. The perfect knowledge of all phenomena is the exquisite perfect knowledge owned by the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones; it is not shared by others."

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, "Why is the perfect knowledge of everything shared by the voice-hearers and the self-enlightened ones?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "The perfect knowledge of everything contains varied dharma gates, such as the five aggregates, twelve spheres, and the eighteen realms. The voice-hearers and the self-enlightened ones also know the differences of these dharma gates, but they do not know the paths and the phenomena of all dharmas."

(The Buddha described the perfect knowledge of everything.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, “Why is the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths shared by the great bodhisattvas?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “The great bodhisattvas are supposed to know all paths universally, namely, the forms of the path of the voice-hearer, the forms of the path of the self-enlightened one, the forms of the path of the bodhisattva, and the forms of the Thus-Comer path. The great bodhisattvas should consistently cultivate and learn these paths to fulfill them. Although they should accomplish all what should be done, they will not realize and attain reality until they are ready. The perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths is thus shared by great bodhisattvas.”

(The Buddha explained what the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths is.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, “As the great bodhisattvas cultivate and fulfill the path of the Thus-Comer, won’t they realize and attain reality?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “The great bodhisattvas will assist the sentient beings to mature, dignify and purify the Buddha lands, and cultivate what they have aspired to. If they have not yet fulfilled the aspiration, they will not realize and dwell in the reality. They will realize and reside in the reality when they achieve their aspiration.”

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the World-Honored One again, “Will great bodhisattvas achieve and reside in the reality by dwelling in the path?”

The Buddha replied, “No.”

Well-Appearing One asked again, “Will great bodhisattvas achieve and reside in the reality by dwelling in the nonpath?”

The Buddha replied, “No.”

Well-Appearing One asked again, “Will great bodhisattvas achieve and reside in the reality by dwelling in the path and nonpath?”

The Buddha replied, “No.”

Well-Appearing One asked, “Will great bodhisattvas achieve and reside in the reality by dwelling in the nonpath and not nonpath?”

The Buddha replied, “No.”

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, “World-Honored One, then where will the great bodhisattvas dwell in order to realize and reside in the reality?”

The Buddha replied by asking, “Well-Appearing One, what do you think about this? Have your mind been liberated from all kinds of flaws because of dwelling in the path?”

“No, World-Honored One.”

“Well-Appearing One, have your mind been liberated from all kinds of flaws because of dwelling in the nonpath?”

“No, World-Honored One.”

“Well-Appearing One, have your mind been liberated from all kinds of flaws because of dwelling in the path and nonpath?”

“No, World-Honored One.”

“Well-Appearing One, have your mind been liberated from all kinds of flaws because of dwelling in the nonpath and not nonpath?”

“No, World-Honored One.”

The Buddha said, “Well-Appearing One, it is similar to the great bodhisattvas, who will realize and reside in the reality by dwelling nowhere when they practice the fathomless prajna paramita.”

(The Buddha taught that great bodhisattvas should reside in the reality by dwelling nowhere.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, “Why is the perfect knowledge of all phenomena named the perfect knowledge of all phenomena?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “Knowing that all dharmas have only one form, namely, the form of tranquility, is named the perfect knowledge of all phenomena. Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, all actions, shapes, and forms are the manifestations of the dharmas. The Thus-Comers universally know them all, so they possess the perfect knowledge of all phenomena.”

(The Buddha explained the meaning of the perfect knowledge of all phenomena.)

The long-lived sage asked the Buddha again, “Do the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena differ in the termination of vexations? Do they have vexations completely terminated or not?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “They do not differ in the termination of vexations. The Thus-Comers have completely and permanently terminated the enduring disposition of vexations, while the voice-hearers and the self-enlightened ones have not yet completely terminated the enduring disposition of vexations.”

Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, “Will one attain the unconditioned reality when all vexations are terminated?”

The Buddha replied, “Yes.”

Well-Appearing One asked again, “Have the voice-hearers and self-enlightened ones eliminated vexations and attained the unconditioned reality?”

The Buddha replied, “They do.”

Well-Appearing One asked again, “Are there differences among the unconditioned dharmas?”

The Buddha replied, “No.”

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, “If there are no differences among the unconditioned dharmas, why do the Buddha say that all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones have terminated

permanently the enduring disposition while the voice-hearers and the self-enlightened ones have not?"

The Buddha replied, "Well-Appearing One, the enduring disposition is not the vexations. The voice-hearers and the self-enlightened ones have terminated their vexations, but certain factors resembling greed, anger, and ignorance persist and influence their body, speech, and mind; this persistence is known as the enduring disposition. These factors can elicit inappropriate actions in unenlightened sentient beings, but not in voice-hearers or self-enlightened ones. The Buddhas, the World-Honored Ones, no longer have such a disposition."

(The Buddha differentiated Thus-Comers from voice-hearers and self-enlightened ones by their enduring disposition of vexations.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, "World-Honored One, as the paths and nirvana do not have self-nature, why does the Buddha distinguish among stream-enterer, once-returner, nonreturner, arhat, self-enlightened one, bodhisattva, and the Thus-Comer?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "The stream-enterer, once-returner, nonreturner, arhat, self-enlightened one, bodhisattva, and the Thus-Comer are all the manifestations of the unconditioned reality."

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, "Do the meanings of the stream-enterer, once-returner, and so forth, and the Thus-Comer differ in the unconditioned dharmas?"

The Buddha replied, "No."

Well-Appearing One asked again, "But why does the Buddha say that the stream-enterer, once-returner, and so forth, and the Thus-Comer are the manifestations of the unconditioned reality?"

The Buddha replied, "Well-Appearing One, the terms like stream-enterer, once-returner, and so forth reflect a worldly perspective, not ultimate meaning. Why? In the unconditioned realm there is no language or wisdom of differentiation. These differences arise in worldly

speech to imply that as certain dharmas end, the concept of ‘future’ is established to ensure their continuity.”

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, “If the particular characteristics of all dharmas are empty, there is no past or future, then why is the establishment made for the future?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “The characteristics of all dharmas are empty; there is no past, let alone the future. It does not make sense to say that the future really exists. But the sentient beings cannot understand the truth that the characteristics of all dharmas are empty. To benefit them, it is expediently expressed: ‘This is the past, and this is the future.’ But in the emptiness of the particular characteristics of all dharmas, both the past and the future are unattainable. Therefore, Well-Appearing One, after fully understanding the emptiness of the particular characteristics of all dharmas, the great bodhisattvas should continue to practice prajna paramita. You must know, Well-Appearing One, as the great bodhisattvas do in this way, they are not attached to the dharmas; namely, they are not attached to the differences between the internal and the external dharmas, the virtuous and the not virtuous dharmas, the morally related dharmas and the morally unrelated dharmas, the dharmas of the world and the dharmas beyond the world, the flawed dharmas and the flawless dharmas, and the conditioned dharmas and the unconditioned dharmas. Nor will they be attached to the dharma gate of voice-hearer, the dharma gate of self-enlightened one, the dharma gate of bodhisattva, or the dharma gate of Thus-Comer. These are established provisionally in compliance with the worldly way instead of the ultimate meaning.”

(The Buddha advised that after fully understanding the emptiness of the characteristics of all dharmas, the great bodhisattvas continue to practice prajna paramita but should avoid to be attached to all dharmas.)

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Chapter 68

Skillful Means

Section 4

(In the Second Assembly)

At that time, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, “World-Honored One, the Thus-Comer often talks about the fathomless prajna paramita. Why is the fathomless prajna paramita named prajna paramita?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “The fathomless prajna paramita can reach the ultimate other shore of all dharmas, so it is named prajna paramita. Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, owing to the fathomless prajna paramita, the voice-hearers, self-enlightened ones, bodhisattvas, and the Thus-Comers can reach the other shore, so it is named prajna paramita. Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, when the fathomless prajna paramita examines various dharmas and analyzes them into fundamental particles, it will recognize that nothing is attainable, so it is named prajna paramita.

(The Buddha explained why the fathomless prajna paramita is named prajna paramita in this and the following paragraphs.)

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the fathomless prajna paramita consists of realness, dharma realm, dharma nature, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable, so it is named prajna paramita. Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, in the fathomless prajna paramita, no dharma can combine or separate, nor is it material or immaterial, visible or invisible, substantial or unsubstantial, so it is named prajna paramita. Why? The fathomless prajna paramita does not combine or separate, nor is it material, visible, and substantial. It is characterized by one form, which is formlessness.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the fathomless prajna paramita can give birth to all subtle and wonderful virtuous dharmas, inspire all kinds of intelligent and wise talent of debate, elicit all pleasures of and beyond the world, and fully understand the extremely profound meanings of all dharmas, so it is named prajna paramita. Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the fathomless prajna paramita has solid and real essential meanings; it is unmovable. If the great bodhisattvas practice the fathomless prajna paramita, no evil demons and their associates, voice-hearers, self-enlightened ones, other-path believers, celibacy practitioners, evil friends, and enemies can destroy them. Why? The fathomless prajna paramita teaches that the particular characteristics of all dharmas are empty; the evil demons and their associates, and so forth are also unattainable, so it is named prajna paramita. Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas should practice the fathomless essential meanings of prajna paramita as they should do; that is, they should realize that the particular characteristics of all dharmas are empty. If they can do this, they will not be moved or damaged by negative conditions.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas would like to practice the very profound essential meanings of prajna paramita, they should focus on the meanings of impermanence, painfulness, emptiness, selflessness, tranquility, and getting far away. They should study and practice the meanings of the wisdom of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering. They should study and practice the meanings of the knowledge of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering. They should study and practice the meanings of dharmas, classes, and knowing others' minds. They should study and practice the meanings of the knowledge of the world and the ultimate knowledge. They should study and practice the meanings of the knowledge of extinguishing all flaws and the knowledge of nonarising. They should study and practice the meanings of all kinds of knowledge, and the knowledge of all dharmas as they really are. Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas should practice prajna paramita so that they can grasp the very profound essential meanings of prajna paramita."

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "World-Honored One, as in the subtle and wonderful meanings of prajna paramita, both meaning and nonmeaning are unattainable, how should the great bodhisattvas practice prajna paramita to grasp the very profound essential meanings of prajna paramita?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "When practicing the very profound essential meanings of prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas should think, 'Do not practice the meaning or nonmeaning of greed, anger, ignorance, incorrect views, incorrect concentrations, and so forth, and various kinds of views.' Why? The realness and the reality of greed, anger, ignorance, incorrect views, incorrect concentrations, and so forth, and various kinds of views are unrelated to the meaning or nonmeaning of all dharmas.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, when practicing the very profound essential meanings of prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas should think, 'Do not practice the meaning or nonmeaning of 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 realm, 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; cause and condition, consecutive thoughts, conditions that stimulate the mind, and the conditions that reinforce main causes; 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 pure contemplation, stage of embryonic Buddha nature, and so forth, and stage of Thus-Comer; the stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilements, and so forth, and 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; the thirty-two perfect major marks and the eighty 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; the stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi; all great bodhisattva actions; the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas; and the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge.' Why?

(The Buddha implied that great bodhisattvas should not be attached to these various dharmas when studying and practicing them.)

"Well-Appearing One, when attaining the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, the Thus-Comers sought the meaning and nonmeaning of all dharmas, but they could not find them. You must know, Well-Appearing One, whether the Thus-Comers appear or do not appear in the worlds, the dharma nature, dharma dwelling, and dharma concentration of all dharmas always exist. Prajna paramita does not signify the meaning or nonmeaning of all dharmas. Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas should not be attached to meaning or nonmeaning; rather, they should consistently reflect on and practice the very profound essential meanings of prajna paramita."

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, "Why does prajna paramita not signify the meaning or nonmeaning of all dharmas?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "The fathomless prajna paramita only realizes and attains the unconditioned dharma; it does not signify the meaning or nonmeaning of various dharmas."

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, "Do all sages and holy ones regard the unconditioned dharma as ultimate meaning?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "Yes, they do. All sages and holy ones regard the unconditioned dharma as ultimate meaning, while it does not make all dharmas increase or decrease. Well-Appearing One, like empty space, the realness and the dharma realm do not add something to or take something from all dharmas, so the fathomless prajna paramita of the great bodhisattvas do not add something to or take something from all dharmas. Therefore, prajna paramita does not signify the meaning or nonmeaning of all dharmas."

(The Buddha explained why prajna paramita does not signify meaning or nonmeaning of various dharmas.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, “Shouldn’t the great bodhisattvas learn the unconditioned prajna paramita in order to realize and attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “The great bodhisattvas should learn the fathomless unconditioned prajna paramita to realize and attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. They should adopt nonduality as skillful means.”

Well-Appearing One asked again, “Do great bodhisattvas attain nonduality by means of nonduality?”

The Buddha replied, “No.”

Well-Appearing One asked again, “Do they attain the nonduality by means of duality?”

The Buddha replied, “No.”

Well-Appearing One asked again, “If nonduality cannot be attained by means of duality or nonduality, then how can great bodhisattvas attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “Both duality and nonduality are unattainable; therefore, the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge cannot be attained by means of duality or nonduality, but nonattainment can be attained by means of nonattainment. Why? The fathomless prajna paramita and the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge are unattainable.”

(The Buddha concluded that the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge cannot be attained by means of duality or nonduality, but nonattainment can be attained by means of nonattainment because both prajna paramita and perfect knowledge are unattainable.)

# Chapter 69

## The Similes of the Trees

## (In the Second Assembly)

At that time, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One said to the Buddha, “World-Honored One, prajna paramita is the most profound of all. The great bodhisattvas can do very difficult things; they aspire to attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge without attaining or establishing sentient beings. World-Honored One, someone is going to plant trees in the air. The air is immaterial, invisible, and unsubstantial, in which there is nothing that you can rely on; therefore, planting a tree in the air will be a very difficult task. The same are the great bodhisattvas, who cannot attain sentient beings, nor can establish sentient beings, but they aspire to attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge for the sake of the sentient beings. That is a very difficult task.”

The Buddha said, “It is as you say, Well-Appearing One. Prajna paramita is the most profound of all. The great bodhisattvas can do very difficult things. They aspire to attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge while they cannot attain or establish the sentient beings. You must know, Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas do not see the real sentient beings or their establishment, while the ignorant sentient beings mistake the unreal ones for real because of their upside-down thinking. They thus are sunk and drowned in the ocean of birth and death and suffer severely and endlessly. To expediently and skillfully assist the sentient beings, the bodhisattvas strive to achieve perfect knowledge as quickly as possible. A person plants a tree in rich soil, unaware of who will benefit from its roots, trunks, branches, leaves, flowers, or fruits in the future, yet continues to water and care for it. Then the tree grows, blossoms, and bears many fruits, and people will enjoy them and have their illness healed and minds purified. So do the great bodhisattvas, who have aspired to pursue the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge for the sake of the sentient beings although they do not know who will benefit owing to their efforts. The great bodhisattvas have cultivated giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna paramita, as well as the rest of the factors for enlightenment,

step by step. After the cultivation, they will attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, allowing various sentient beings to benefit from the fruitful rewards resembling enjoying the branches, leaves, flowers, or fruits of a tree.

(The Buddha said that great bodhisattvas undertake challenging deeds without identifying sentient beings or knowing who will benefit, yet they persist in helping them.)

"You must know, Well-Appearing One, the benefits of the branches and leaves are the merits that allow sentient beings to get rid of the inferior destinies because of the bodhisattvas. The benefits of the flowers let the sentient beings be reborn in the noble family of Ksatriya, Brahman, elders, or lay believers; or reborn in Heaven of Four Great Kings, Heaven of Thirty-Three Smaller Heavens, and so forth, and Heaven of Nonthinking and Not Nonthinking. The benefits of the fruits enable these bodhisattvas to realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi themselves, and assist sentient beings to dwell in stream-entry effect, once-return effect, nonreturn effect, arhat effect, self-enlightenment bodhi, or the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. These sentient beings will cultivate virtuous dharmas diligently and realize and attain the nirvana in the three vehicles step by step. These are the benefits of the fruits thus caused by the bodhisattvas. The great bodhisattvas perform beneficial acts, knowing they may not see sentient beings attain nirvana, but they understand that suffering and delusion are ultimately replaced by tranquility. Thus, Well-Appearing One, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas do not attain the sentient beings and their establishment. These sentient beings seek to attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge quickly to help sentient beings remove their upside-down attachment. Because of this cause and condition, what they perform is a very difficult task."

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One said to the Buddha, "World-Honored One, these great bodhisattvas are like the Buddhas. Why? Because of the great bodhisattvas, the realms of hell, animals, and ghosts will be eliminated forever; all poverty, suffering, and obstacles to learning Buddhist teachings in the three realms will also be removed permanently."

(Well-Appearing One explained why the great bodhisattvas are like the Buddhas.)

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “Yes, it is as you say. The great bodhisattvas are like the Buddhas. Without great bodhisattvas, Thus-Comers would not appear in the three phases of time, nor would self-enlightened ones and voice-hearers. Without great bodhisattvas, the realms of hell, animals, and ghosts or the suffering from poverty and inferior three realms would not be terminated permanently. Therefore, Well-Appearing One, it is true that great bodhisattvas are like Buddhas. Furthermore, you must know, Well-Appearing One, these great bodhisattvas are Thus-Comers. Why? Well-Appearing One, if realness can establish Thus-Comers, then realness can also establish self-enlightened ones, voice-hearers, and all sages and holy ones. Realness can also establish 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 realm, 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; cause and condition, consecutive thoughts, conditions that stimulate the mind, and the conditions that reinforce main causes; 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 pure contemplation, stage of embryonic Buddha nature, and so forth, and stage of Thus-Comer; the stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilements, and so forth, and 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; the thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features; 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; the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge; the conditioned realm; the unconditioned realm; all dharmas; all sentient beings; and all great bodhisattvas.

(The Buddha confirmed Well-Appearing One's statement and provided more reasons to explain why great bodhisattvas are named Thus-Comer.)

"Therefore, Well-Appearing One, the realness of the Thus-Comers, the realness of the self-enlightened ones, the realness of the voice-hearers, the realness of the sages and the holy ones, the realness of all dharmas such as matter, feeling, and so forth, and all sentient beings, and the realness of all great bodhisattvas are the same. Because they are the same, they are called realness. After fulfilling realness, the great bodhisattvas can realize and attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. After attaining the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, they are named Thus-Comer. It is because of this cause and condition to say that the great bodhisattvas are Thus-Comer. It is because all dharmas and sentient beings share realness as their foundation. Therefore, Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas should learn the fathomless prajna paramita. Through learning the fathomless prajna paramita, they can learn the realness of all dharmas. If they learn the realness of all dharmas, they can achieve ease and freedom in the realness of all dharmas. If they achieve ease and freedom in the realness of all dharmas, they can attain the knowledge of the superior and inferior roots of all sentient beings. If they attain the knowledge of the superior and inferior roots of all sentient beings, they can fully know how all sentient beings differ in their abilities of understanding and making choices. Upon such thorough knowledge, they can understand how sentient beings receive effects caused by their karmas. Based on this understanding, they can fulfill their aspirations and knowledge. By fulfilling their aspirations and knowledge, they can undertake pure cultivation to attain the exquisite knowledge of past, present, and future. This exquisite knowledge leads to the fulfillment of the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. If they can fulfill the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, they are able to practice the great bodhisattva actions correctly. By practicing correctly the great bodhisattva actions, they are able to benefit all sentient beings through property giving and dharma giving. By consistently practicing property giving and dharma giving to benefit all sentient beings, they will assist them to mature and

dignify and purify the Buddha lands. Then they will realize and attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. If they realize and attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, they will be able to turn the wonderful dharma wheel and establish all sentient beings peacefully on the path of the three vehicles. If they establish peacefully all sentient beings on the path of the three vehicles, they are able to guide the sentient beings into the realm of nirvana without remainder. Thus, Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas see such immeasurable merits and virtues caused by benefitting themselves and others, and would like to solidify their aspiration to the great bodhi, they should diligently and attentively cultivate expedient skillfulness of prajna paramita."

(The Buddha further elaborated the significant benefits that great bodhisattvas will attain if they assiduously cultivate the expedient skillfulness of prajna paramita.)

In the meantime, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One said to the Buddha, "World-Honored One, if the great bodhisattvas can initiate the aspiration to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal enlightenment and cultivate the fathomless prajna paramita as they are taught by the Buddha, all heavenly beings, human beings, asuras, and so forth should pay homage to them."

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "Yes, it is as you say. If the great bodhisattvas can initiate the aspiration to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal enlightenment and cultivate the fathomless prajna paramita as they are taught by the Buddha, all heavenly beings, human beings, asuras, and so forth should pay homage to them."

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, "If the great bodhisattvas initiate the aspiration to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal enlightenment in order to benefit all sentient beings, what blessings do they receive?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "What do you think about this? If the small thousand-world is filled with sentient beings who have aspired to the stage of voice-hearer or self-enlightened one, will they be much blessed?"

Well-Appearing One replied, "Very much, World-Honored One. They will be blessed countlessly and boundlessly."

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, “But the blessings gained by the great bodhisattvas who initiate the aspiration to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal enlightenment will be much more than those gained by aspiring to voice-hearer or self-enlightened one by one hundred, one thousand, and so forth, and one hundreds of thousands of koti-nayuta times. Why? The voice-hearers and the self-enlightened ones exist because of the great bodhisattvas, not the other way around. Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, now let us put the small thousand-world or the medium thousand-world aside. What do you think about this? If the large threefold thousand-world is filled with sentient beings who have aspired to voice-hearer or self-enlightened one, will they be much blessed?”

Well-Appearing One replied, “Yes, World-Honored One. Their blessings will be countless and boundless.”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “But the merits and virtues accumulated by one great bodhisattva who has initiated aspiration to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi in order to universally benefit all sentient beings will be much more than those gained by the sentient beings who aspire to voice-hearer or self-enlightened one by one hundred, one thousand, and so forth, and one hundreds of thousands of koti nayuta times. Why? The voice-hearers and the self-enlightened ones exist because of the great bodhisattvas, but not the other way around. Well-Appearing One, now let us put all sentient beings within the large threefold thousand-world who have aspired to the stage of voice-hearer or self-enlightened one aside. What do you think about this? If the large threefold thousand-world is filled with sentient beings who have dwelled in the stage of pure contemplation, will they be much blessed?”

Well-Appearing One replied, “Yes, World-Honored One. The merits and virtues gained by them will be countless and boundless.”

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, “The blessings gained by these sentient beings will be much less than those gained by one great bodhisattva who has just initiated to aspire to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi by one hundredth, one thousandth, and so forth, and one hundreds of thousands of koti nayuta-th. Why? All voice-hearers and self-enlightened ones exist because of the great bodhisattvas, but not the other way around. Now let us put the sentient beings in the large threefold thousand-world who have dwelled in the stage of pure

contemplation aside. If the sentient beings large threefold thousand-world is filled with sentient beings, who have dwelled in the stage of embryonic Buddha nature, eight-forbearance, insight, slight vexation, nonarising, or arhat, what do you think about this? Will they be much blessed?"

Well-Appearing One replied, "Yes, World-Honored One. The merits and virtues thus gained will be countless and boundless."

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, "In comparison to the one great bodhisattva who has just initiated to aspire to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, the blessings gained by these sentient beings will be much less by one hundredth, one thousandth, and so forth, and one hundreds of thousands of koti nayuta-th. Why? All voice-hearers and self-enlightened ones exist because of the great bodhisattvas, but not the other way around.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, if the entire large threefold thousand-world is filled with sentient beings who have initiated to aspire to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi in order to benefit all sentient beings, then the blessings thus gained will be much less than the blessings gained by one great bodhisattva who has entered onto the bodhisattva path of nonarising by one hundredth, one thousandth, and so forth, and one hundreds of thousands of koti nayuta-th. Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, if the entire large threefold thousand-world is filled with sentient beings who have entered onto the bodhisattva path of nonarising, then the blessings thus gained will be much less than those gained by one great bodhisattva who has practiced toward the bodhi by one hundredth, thousandth, and so forth, and one hundreds of thousands of koti nayuta-th. If the entire large threefold thousand-world is filled with sentient beings who have practiced toward the bodhi, then the blessings thus gained will be much less than those gained by the Thus-Comer, One Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened One by one hundredth, thousandth, and so forth, and one hundreds of thousands of koti nayuta-th."

(The Buddha compared the blessings associated with different cultivation levels achieved by great bodhisattvas.)

Meanwhile, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, “World-Honored One, what do the great bodhisattvas think when they begin to aspire to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi?”

The Buddha replied, “Well-Appearing One, these great bodhisattvas always reflect on the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge.”

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, “What is adopted by the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge as its nature? What is its condition? How is it fostered? What is its mental image? What is its form?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “The perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge has adopted nonnature as its nature because it does not have forms, causes, alert and awakening, and arising and presence. You also asked, ‘What are the conditions of the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge? How is it fostered? What are its mental images? And what is its form?’ Well-Appearing One, I will say that the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge has nonnature as its condition, correct mindfulness as its fosterage, tranquility as its mental image, and dharma realm as its form.”

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, “Is only the nature of the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge without nature? Are the nature of matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness; the nature of the eye sphere, ear sphere, and so forth, and conscious sphere; the nature of the sight sphere, sound sphere, and so forth, and mental-image sphere; the nature of the eye realm, ear realm, and so forth, and conscious realm; the nature of the sight realm, sound realm, and so forth, and mental-image realm; the nature of the eye consciousness realm, ear consciousness realm, and so forth, and conscious consciousness realm; the nature of the eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact; the nature of the feelings produced by eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact; the nature of the earth realm, water realm, and so forth, and consciousness realm; the nature of cause and condition, consecutive thoughts, conditions that stimulate the mind, and the conditions that reinforce main causes; the nature of ignorance, action, consciousness, and so forth, and old age and death; the nature of giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita; the nature of internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of

selfless self-nature; the nature of realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable; the nature of the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering; the nature of the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path; the nature of the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations; the nature of the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations; the nature of the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration; the nature of the stage of pure contemplation, stage of embryonic Buddha nature, and so forth, and stage of the Thus-Comer; the nature of the stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilements, and so forth, and stage of dharma cloud; the nature of all dharani gates and all samadhi gates; the nature of the five eyes and six supernatural powers; the nature of the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power; the nature of the thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features; the nature of staying in correct mindfulness and always dwelling in equanimity at all times; the nature of the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena; the nature of stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi; the nature of all great bodhisattva actions; the nature of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas; the nature of the conditioned realm; and the nature of the unconditioned realm also without nature?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "Not only the nature of the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge is without nature, but also the nature of matter, feeling, thinking, action, consciousness, and so forth, and the nature of the conditioned realm and the unconditioned realm are without nature."

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, "Why is the nature of the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge without nature? Why are the nature of matter, feeling, thinking, action, consciousness, and so forth, and the nature of the conditioned realm and the unconditioned realm also without nature?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “It is because the self-nature of the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge is nonexistent. If the self-nature of the dharma is nonexistent, the nature of this dharma is without nature. The self-nature of matter, feeling, thinking, action, consciousness, and so forth, and the self-nature of the conditioned realm and the unconditioned realm are nonexistent. If the self-nature of the dharmas is nonexistent, the nature of these dharmas is without nature.”

(The Buddha explained that the nature of all dharmas is without nature because their self-nature is nonexistent.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, “Why is the self-nature of the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge nonexistent? Why is the self-nature of mater, feeling, thinking, action, consciousness, and so forth, and the self-nature of the conditioned realm and the unconditioned realm also nonexistent?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “The perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge does not have the self-nature of combination. If the dharma does not have the self-nature of combination, the nature of this dharma is without nature. Matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness do not have the self-nature of combination. If the dharmas do not have the self-nature of combination, the natures of these dharmas are without nature. The conditioned realm and the unconditioned realm do not have the self-nature of combination. If the dharmas do not have the self-nature of combination, the natures of these dharmas are without nature. Well-Appearing One, because of this cause and condition, the great bodhisattvas must know that all dharmas have adopted nonnature as their nature. Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, all dharmas have adopted emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration as their self-nature. Well-Appearing One, because of this cause and condition, the great bodhisattvas must know that the nature of all dharmas is nonnature. Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, all dharmas have adopted realness, reality, or dharma realm as their self-nature. Well-Appearing One, because of this cause and condition, the great bodhisattvas must know that the nature of all dharmas is nonnature.”

(The Buddha discussed why the nature of all dharmas is without nature or nonnature: all dharmas do not have the self-nature of combination; all dharmas adopt emptiness, formlessness, and

nonaspiration as their self-nature; and all dharmas adopt realness, reality, or dharma realm as their self-nature.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, "If all dharmas are without nature, then what expedient skillfulness should the great bodhisattvas who just initiate aspiration to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi achieve so that they are able to practice giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita; assist the sentient beings to mature; and dignify and purify the Buddha lands? What expedient skillfulness should they achieve so that they are able to dwell in internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature; assist the sentient beings to mature; and dignify and purify the Buddha lands? What expedient skillfulness should they achieve so that they are able to dwell in realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable; assist the sentient beings to mature; and dignify and purify the Buddha lands? What expedient skillfulness should they achieve so that they are able to dwell in the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering; assist the sentient beings to mature; and dignify and purify the Buddha lands? What expedient skillfulness should they achieve so that they are able to practice the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path; assist the sentient beings to mature; and dignify and purify the Buddha lands? What expedient skillfulness should they achieve so that they are able to practice the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations; assist the sentient beings to mature; and dignify and purify the Buddha lands? What expedient skillfulness should they achieve so that they are able to practice the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations; assist the sentient beings to mature; and dignify and purify the Buddha lands? What expedient skillfulness should they achieve so that they are able to practice the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration; assist the sentient beings to mature; and dignify and purify the Buddha lands? What expedient skillfulness should they achieve so that they able to practice the stages of the bodhisattva, assist the sentient beings to mature, and dignify and purify the Buddha lands? What expedient skillfulness should they achieve so that they are able to practice all dharani gates and all samadhi gates, assist the sentient beings to mature, and dignify and purify the Buddha lands? What expedient skillfulness should

they achieve so that they are able to practice the five eyes and six supernatural powers, assist the sentient beings to mature, and dignify and purify the Buddha lands? What expedient skillfulness should they achieve so that they are able to practice the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features; assist the sentient beings to mature; and dignify and purify the Buddha lands? What expedient skillfulness should they achieve so that they are able to stay in correct mindfulness and always dwell in equanimity, assist the sentient beings to mature, and dignify and purify the Buddha lands? What expedient skillfulness should they achieve so that they are able to practice the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena; assist the sentient beings to mature; and dignify and purify the Buddha lands? What expedient skillfulness should they achieve so that they are able to practice all great bodhisattva actions, assist the sentient beings to mature, and dignify and purify the Buddha lands? What expedient skillfulness should they achieve so that they are able to practice the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas, assist the sentient beings to mature, and dignify and purify the Buddha lands? What expedient skillfulness should they achieve so that they are able to practice the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, assist the sentient beings to mature, and dignify and purify the Buddha lands?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "As great bodhisattvas achieve superior expedient skillfulness and know that the nature of all dharmas is without nature, they still should work diligently and attentively to assist the sentient beings to mature and dignify and purify the Buddha lands. Although working diligently and attentively to assist the sentient beings to mature and dignify and purify the Buddha lands, they should always realize that all sentient beings and various Buddha lands have adopted nonnature as their nature. Well-Appearing One, although learning the path of the bodhi by practicing giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita, they should realize that giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita and the path of the bodhi have adopted nonnature as their nature. Although learning the path of the bodhi by practicing the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, they should realize that the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge and the path of the bodhi have adopted nonnature as their nature. Well-Appearing One, great bodhisattvas should learn the path of the bodhi by cultivating giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so

forth, and prajna paramita and the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge in this way. They cannot fulfill the path of bodhi unless they achieve 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, staying in correct mindfulness, dwelling in equanimity at all times, the perfect knowledge of everything, the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, the perfect knowledge of all phenomena, and the rest of numberless and boundless Buddha dharma. They will fulfill the path of bodhi by realizing and attaining the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge through an instantaneous correspondence with prajna. At that time, all subtle and minute vexations caused by enduring disposition cease to arise, the permanent termination of vexations without remainder is accomplished, and the great bodhisattvas now are named the Buddha. At that time, as universally looking at all dharmas in the three phases of time and in the worlds of the ten directions, they will see that not a dharma is existent!

(The Buddha taught how the great bodhisattvas adopt superior expedient skillfulness to diligently and attentively cultivate various holy dharmas step by step to achieve the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, terminate enduring disposition of vexations permanently, and attain Buddhahood. These great bodhisattvas understand that the nature of all dharmas is nonnature.)

"Therefore, Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas should practice prajna paramita and believe and understand that the nature of all dharmas is nonnature. Well-Appearing One, the superior expedient skillfulness achieved by these great bodhisattvas is, when practicing prajna paramita, they contemplate all dharmas and realize that all dharmas are nonexistent. Well-Appearing One, when cultivating giving paramita, the great bodhisattvas do not see the givers, receivers, the things given, the effect of giving, and the bodhi because all are nonexistent. They do not see the one who realizes and attains the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, what the one has realized and attained, the cause of the realization and attainment, and the place and time of the realization and attainment because all are nonexistent. Why? Well-Appearing One, these great bodhisattvas always think, 'All dharmas have adopted nonnature as their nature. This nonnature is not made by the Buddhas, bodhisattvas, self-enlightened ones, voice-hearers, or others. All dharmas are apart from makers.'"

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, “Are the dharmas and their dharma nature separate?”

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, “Yes. All dharmas and their dharma nature are separate.”

Well-Appearing One asked again, “If all dharmas are apart from dharma nature, how can a separate dharma know another separate dharma as existent or nonexistent? World-Honored One, the existent dharma cannot know the nonexistent dharma; the nonexistent dharma cannot know the existent dharma; the existent dharma cannot know the existent dharma; and the nonexistent dharma cannot know the nonexistent dharma. World-Honored One, all dharmas adopt non-knowing as their nature. If this is the case, how can great bodhisattvas manifest all dharmas when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita? How can they manifest matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness as existent or nonexistent? How can they manifest 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 realm, and so forth, and conscious consciousness realm; the eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact; and the feeling produced by eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact as existent or nonexistent? How can they manifest the earth realm, water realm, and so forth, and consciousness realm as existent or nonexistent? How can they manifest the cause and condition, consecutive thoughts, the conditions that stimulate the mind, and the conditions that reinforce main causes as existent or nonexistent? How can they manifest ignorance, action, consciousness, and so forth, and old age and death as existent or nonexistent? How can they manifest giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita as existent or nonexistent? How can they manifest internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless elf-nature as existent or nonexistent? How can they manifest realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable as existent or nonexistent? How can they manifest the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for cessation of suffering as existent or nonexistent? How can they manifest the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path as existent or nonexistent? How can they manifest the four

meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations as existent or nonexistent? How can they manifest the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations as existent or nonexistent? How can they manifest the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration as existent or nonexistent? How can they manifest the stage of pure contemplation, stage of embryonic Buddha nature, and so forth, and stage of Thus-Comer as existent or nonexistent? How can they manifest the stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilements, and so forth, and stage of dharma cloud as existent or nonexistent? How can they manifest all dharani gates and all samadhi gates as existent or nonexistent? How can they manifest the five eyes and six supernatural powers as existent or nonexistent? How can they manifest the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinguishing features of Buddha's wisdom and powers as existent or nonexistent? How can they manifest the thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features as existent or nonexistent? How can they manifest staying in correct mindfulness and always dwelling in equanimity as existent or nonexistent? How can they manifest the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena as existent or nonexistent? How can they manifest stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi as existent or nonexistent? How can they manifest all great bodhisattva actions; the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas; and the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge as existent or nonexistent? How can they manifest the conditioned realm and the unconditioned realm as existent or nonexistent?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "When practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas manifest various dharmas as existent or nonexistent based on the worldly way of thinking and speaking instead of the superior ultimate meaning."

Well-Appearing One asked again, "Are the worldly meaning and ultimate meaning different?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "The ultimate meaning is not different or separate from the worldly meaning. Why? The realness of the worldly meaning is the ultimate meaning. But the sentient beings do not see and know realness because of delusive and upside-

down attachment. The great bodhisattvas thus manifest various dharmas as existent or nonexistent according to worldly phenomena instead of the ultimate meaning to teach and benefit sentient beings. Well-Appearing One, immeasurable sentient beings have regarded various dharmas, such as the aggregates, spheres, and so forth, as existent or nonexistent; they cannot understand that all dharmas are neither existent nor nonexistent. The great bodhisattvas thus manifest the aggregates, spheres, and so forth as existent or nonexistent to help these sentient beings understand that the dharmas, such as the aggregates, spheres, and so forth, are neither existent nor nonexistent, liberating them from attachment to the phenomena of existence or nonexistence. Therefore, Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas should work diligently to stay away from the attachment to existence or nonexistence when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita."

(The Buddha taught that the great bodhisattvas should learn diligently to avoid attachment to existence and nonexistence of all dharmas so that they can help sentient beings understand reality and become free from attachment.)

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Chapter 70

Bodhisattva Actions

(In the Second Assembly)

At that time, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, “World-Honored One, you have taught about bodhisattva actions. What dharmas are named bodhisattva actions?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “The bodhisattva actions are the actions that bodhisattvas practice in birth and death to pursue the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.”

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, “World-Honored One, where should great bodhisattvas practice the bodhisattva actions?”

The Buddha replied, “Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas should practice the bodhisattva actions in the emptiness of matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness; in the emptiness of the eye sphere, ear sphere, and so forth, and conscious sphere; in the emptiness of the sight sphere, sound sphere, and so forth, and mental-image sphere; in the emptiness of the eye realm, ear realm, and so forth, and conscious realm; in the emptiness of the sight realm, sound realm, and so forth, and mental-image realm; in the emptiness of the eye consciousness realm, ear consciousness realm, and so forth, and conscious consciousness realm; in the emptiness of the eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact; in the emptiness of the feelings produced by eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact; in the emptiness of the earth realm, water realm, and so forth, and consciousness realm; in the emptiness of cause and condition, consecutive thoughts, conditions that stimulate the mind, and the conditions that reinforce main causes; and in the emptiness of ignorance, action, consciousness, and so forth, and old age and death. The great bodhisattvas should practice bodhisattva actions based on giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita; based on internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless

self-nature; based on realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable; based on the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering; based on the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path; based on the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations; based on the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations; based on the three liberation gates; based on the ten stages of the bodhisattva; based on all dharani gates and all samadhi gates; based on the five eyes and six supernatural powers; based on 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; based on staying in correct mindfulness and always dwelling in equanimity; based on the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena; based on dignifying and purifying the Buddha lands and assisting the sentient beings to mature; based on the elicitation and in-depth understanding of the language dharani; based on the in-depth understanding of nonlanguage dharani; based on the elicitation of the unhindered talents of debate; and based on the conditioned realm and unconditioned realm.

"Well-Appearing One, when cultivating bodhisattva actions in this way, the great bodhisattvas will not practice the dualistic forms of all dharmas just like the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas does. Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas practice prajna paramita in this way, they do practice bodhisattva actions for the sake of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas cultivate bodhisattva actions in this way, they can realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly."

(The Buddha explained to Well-Appearing One what bodhisattva actions are and how bodhisattvas practice them.)

At that time, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, "The World-Honored One have taught about Buddha. Based on what meaning is the Buddha named Buddha?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “The Buddha means enlightenment, reality, and Bhagavat.

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, to fulfill the perfect and universal enlightenment of all real dharmas is named Buddha.

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, to thoroughly understand the real dharmas is named Buddha.

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, to be awakened correctly to inherent nature of all dharmas and to their full development is named Buddha.

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, turning conscious perception into perfect knowledge without hindrance regarding the three phases of time and the unconditioned dharmas is named Buddha.

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, to enlighten all sentient beings to help them get rid of upside-down thinking and actions is named Buddha.”

(The Buddha clearly and thoroughly defined the concept of Buddha.)

At that time, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, “The World-Honored One has also taught about the bodhi. Based on what meanings is the bodhi named bodhi?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “Bodhi means emptiness, realness, reality, dharma nature, and dharma realm.

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, to provisionally establish names, forms, and language and be really enlightened to the highest, superior, and most exquisite truth is bodhi.

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the bodhi signifies no destruction and no differentiation.

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, being true, real, and without illusions and changes is bodhi.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the bodhi means all existents are provisionally established, unreal, and unattainable.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the bodhi means the real, pure, and universal enlightenment of various Buddhas.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, various Buddhas have attained the perfect and universal enlightenment of all dharmas and all phenomena through the bodhi."

(The Buddha precisely and thoroughly explained the meaning of bodhi.)

At that time, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "World-Honored One, when various great bodhisattvas cultivate the six paramitas, various kinds of emptiness, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge for the sake of the bodhi, what dharmas will be benefited or damaged? What dharmas will increase or decrease? What dharmas will arise or disappear? And what dharmas will be contaminated or purified?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "When great bodhisattvas cultivate the six paramitas, various kinds of emptiness, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge for the sake of the bodhi, no dharma is benefited or damaged, no dharma increases or decreases, no dharma arises or disappear, and no dharma is contaminated or purified. Why? When the great bodhisattvas practice the fathomless prajna paramita for the sake of the bodhi, they do not rely on any dharma as condition. They do not benefit or damage, increase or decrease all dharmas; they do not give birth to or extinguish, and contaminate or purify them."

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "World-Honored One, when cultivating the six paramitas, various kinds of emptiness, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge for the sake of the bodhi, the great bodhisattvas do not rely on all dharmas as condition and thus they do not benefit or damage, increase or decrease, give birth to or extinguish, and contaminate or purify them. Given this truth, how can great bodhisattvas absorb giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita? How do they absorb internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature? How do they absorb realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable? How do they absorb the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of

suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering? How do they absorb the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path? How do they absorb the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations? How do they absorb the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations? How do they absorb the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration? How do they absorb the stages of the bodhisattva? How do they absorb the dharani gates and samadhi gates? How do they absorb the five eyes and six supernatural powers? How do they absorb 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 absorb staying in correct mindfulness and dwelling in equanimity? How do they absorb the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena? How do they surpass the stages of voice-hearer and self-enlightened one, enter onto the bodhisattva path of nonarising, and realize and attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge step by step?"

The Buddha replied, "Well-Appearing One, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas do not adopt duality to absorb and cultivate the six paramitas, various kinds of emptiness, and so forth, and realize and attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge."

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, "If the great bodhisattvas do not adopt duality to absorb and cultivate the six paramitas, various kinds of emptiness, and so on, and realize and attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, then how can the great bodhisattvas have all virtuous dharmas continue to grow and increase since the time of beginning to aspire to the bodhi?"

(Well-Appearing One asked which dharmas are affected when bodhisattvas cultivate the six paramitas, emptiness, and perfect knowledge. The Buddha replied that great bodhisattvas do not rely on conditions or duality, so they neither affect nor are affected by these dharmas. Given this understanding, he further asked how great bodhisattvas develop virtuous dharmas.)

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "If the great bodhisattvas engage in dualistic actions, their virtuous dharmas will not grow and increase. Why? The ignorant ordinary sentient

beings always do dualistic actions, so their virtuous dharmas stop growing and increasing even if they are initiated. As the great bodhisattvas adopt nonduality in their actions, all their virtuous dharmas will continue to grow and increase incessantly since the time of beginning to aspire to the bodhi. Therefore, Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas can do in this way to solidify their virtuous roots, then all heavenly beings, human beings, asuras, and so forth cannot do harm to or destroy them, they will not fall into the stage of voice-hearer or self-enlightened one. Various evil dharmas of the world will be subjugated so that all virtuous dharmas are able to grow and increase when the great bodhisattvas diligently practice the six paramitas, emptiness, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. Therefore, Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas should practice the nondualistic, fathomless prajna paramita."

(The Buddha suggested that great bodhisattvas should adopt nonduality in their cultivation of various superior holy dharmas to ensure their continuous growth.)

The long-lived sage asked again, "World-Honored One, should great bodhisattvas practice the fathomless prajna paramita for the sake of virtuous roots?"

The Buddha replied, "No, the great bodhisattvas practice the fathomless prajna paramita not for the sake of the virtuous roots or the not virtuous roots. Why? The correct dharma for great bodhisattvas is, if they do not stay close to various Buddhas, do not fully develop virtuous roots, and do not absorbed many real virtuous friends, they will not be able to attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge."

(The Buddha explained why great bodhisattvas cannot attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, "How should great bodhisattvas stay close to various Buddhas, fully develop virtuous roots, and absorb many real virtuous friends to quickly realize and attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge?"

The Buddha replied, "Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas should stay close to the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones to listen to their correct dharma teachings since the time of beginning to aspire to the bodhi. They should listen to the Thus-Comers' teachings of the sutras, verses, and so forth, and the treatises.

After accepting and embracing the teachings, they will repeatedly review and thoroughly understand them. After that, they will continue to reflect on and investigate them, and thoroughly and deeply understand the essential meanings. Then they will attain dharani, activate unhindered talent of debate, and so forth. They will then attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. Wherever they are reborn, they should stay in correct mindfulness of the correct dharma that they hear. They should plant virtuous roots in various Buddhas' places. Being absorbed by the powers of the virtuous roots, they will not fall into inferior destinies in which there is no access to Buddhist teachings. They should always have pure intentions, with which, they are able to correctly assist the sentient beings to mature and dignify and purify the Buddha lands. Because of being absorbed by virtuous roots, they will not stay far away from the real, pure, and virtuous friends: the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones, great bodhisattvas, self-enlightened ones, voice-hearers, and the rest of the sentient beings who admire the Buddha, the dharma, and the sangha.

"Well-Appearing One, this is how great bodhisattvas stay close to various Buddhas, fulfill virtuous roots, and absorb the real virtuous friends. Therefore, Well-Appearing One, great bodhisattvas should work diligently to stay with various Buddhas, absorb and fulfill the virtuous roots that they have planted, and offer services to virtuous friends tirelessly to realize and attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge quickly."

(The Buddha concluded how great bodhisattvas should perform and fulfill all bodhisattva actions.)

## Chapter 71

## Staying Close to the Buddhas

## (In the Second Assembly)

At that time, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, “World-Honored One, if the great bodhisattvas do not stay close to various Buddhas, fulfill virtuous roots, and offer services to virtuous friends, are they able to attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “If they do not stay close to various Buddhas, fulfill virtuous roots, and offer services to virtuous friends, they cannot called great bodhisattva, let alone attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. Why? Some great bodhisattvas have stayed close to various Buddhas, fulfilled virtuous roots, and served virtuous friends, but still cannot attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, let alone those who do not stay close to various Buddhas, fulfill virtuous roots, and offer services to virtuous friends. It is unreasonable to say that they will attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. Therefore, Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas would like to be named great bodhisattva and attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge quickly, they should stay close to various Buddhas, the World-Honored Ones; they should also fulfill virtuous roots and offer services to virtuous friends tirelessly.”

(The Buddha advised that if the great bodhisattvas would like to be called great bodhisattva and attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge quickly, they should stay close to various Buddhas, fulfill virtuous roots, and offer services to virtuous friends tirelessly.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, “Why are some great bodhisattvas unable to attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge although they have stayed close to various Buddhas, planted virtuous roots, and offered services to virtuous friends?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “It is because these great bodhisattvas have stayed far away from the powers of expedient skillfulness. They have stayed close to various Buddhas, planted various virtuous roots, and offered services to virtuous friends, but they have not heard the superior expedient skillfulness from the Buddhas and the virtuous friends, so they cannot attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge.”

(The Buddha further said that the great bodhisattva staying away from expedient skillfulness would not attain the unsurpassed bodhi even if they could stay close to Buddhas, plant virtuous roots, and offer services to virtuous friends.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, “What is the expedient skillfulness that the great bodhisattvas should achieve in order to attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “Since the moment aspiring to the cultivation of giving paramita, the great bodhisattvas have stayed in an intention correspondent with the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge to practice giving to various Buddhas, bodhisattvas, self-enlightened ones, voice-hearers, sramanas, other-path celibacy practitioners, ascetics, beggars, or humans and nonhumans. Because these great bodhisattvas have stayed in a mind correspondent with the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, they practice giving without thinking of giving, the receivers, themselves, and those belonging to them. Why? These great bodhisattvas have contemplated all dharmas and realized that the particular characteristics of all dharmas are empty, unreal, and without formation, turning, and extinction, thus enter and understand insightfully the forms of all dharmas. They have realized that all dharmas are without actions and capabilities and thus enter and understand insightfully the forms of all actions. Because these great bodhisattvas have achieved such expedient skillfulness, their virtuous roots will continue grow and increase. Because of the growth and increase of the virtuous roots, they are able to practice giving paramita, assist the sentient beings to mature, and dignify and purify the Buddha lands. They practice giving without seeking the benefits that arise from such actions, such as, transferring the merits thus derived toward the desirable states or rebirth in superior destinies for themselves. Instead, their diligent practice of giving paramita is motivated by the intention to rescue and protect individuals in need and liberate those who are longing for liberation.

(The Buddha explained practicing giving paramita with expedient skillfulness.)

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, since the moment aspiring to the cultivation of pure-precept paramita, the great bodhisattvas have stayed in a mind correspondent with the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. They do not let greed, anger, ignorance, and other hidden

vexations and bondages arise. They do not allow other not virtuous dharmas to arise, such as stinginess, invalid precepts, hatred, tiredness and laziness, inferior minds, restless minds, wisdom abuse, self-conceit, arrogance of overstating one's strength, arrogance of highly exaggerating one's strength, arrogance caused by an attachment to selfness, arrogance of overstating one's achievement in cultivation, being not humble, claiming oneself morally good although is not, and the intentions correspondent with voice-hearer and self-enlightened one. Why? These great bodhisattvas have contemplated the particular characteristics of all dharmas as empty, unreal, without formation, no turning, and no extinction, thus enter and understand insightfully the forms of all dharmas. They have realized that all dharmas are without making and capabilities and thus enter and understand insightfully the forms of all actions. Because these great bodhisattvas have achieved such expedient skillfulness, their virtuous roots for enlightenment increase and grow incessantly. Because their virtuous roots continue to increase and grow, they can practice pure-precept paramita, assist the sentient beings to mature, and dignify and purify the Buddha lands. Although they practice pure precept, they do not seek the effects of observing precept, do not transfer the merits and virtues thus derived toward desirable spiritual level or superior rebirth for themselves. Instead, they cultivate pure-precept paramita with an attempt to rescue and protect the sentient beings in need and help those who look for liberation.

(The Buddha taught about the expedient skillfulness in practicing pure-precept paramita.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, since the moment aspiring to the cultivation of forbearance paramita, the great bodhisattvas have stayed in a mind correspondent with the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. These great bodhisattvas avoid hatred, anger, abusive words. They do not take revenge on others even to protect their own lives. If someone tries to kill them, rob their properties, and harass their wives; slander, scold, and insult them; hinder and disparage them; beat, stab, mow, and cut them; or do other harmful things to them, these great bodhisattvas will not hate this person; rather, they will bring benefits, peace, and happiness to him or her. Why? These great bodhisattvas have contemplated the characteristics of all dharmas as empty, unreal, and without formation, turning, and extinction. They thus enter and understand insightfully the forms of all dharmas. They have also realized that all dharmas are without making and capabilities. They thus enter and understand insightfully the forms of all actions. Because these great bodhisattvas have achieved such expedient skillfulness, their

virtuous roots for enlightenment grow and increase steadily and incessantly. Because of the growth and increase of virtuous roots, they can practice forbearance paramita, assist the sentient beings to mature, and dignify and purify the Buddha lands. Although they practice forbearance, they do not pursue the effects caused by practicing forbearance; they do not try to transfer the merits and virtues thus derived toward the desirable spiritual level or superior rebirth for themselves. Instead, they cultivate forbearance paramita with an attempt to rescue and protect the sentient beings in need and liberate those who are seeking liberation.

(The Buddha advised how great bodhisattvas should practice the expedient skillfulness of forbearance paramita.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, since the moment aspiring to the cultivation of diligence paramita, the great bodhisattvas have stayed in a mind correspondent with the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge to initiate correct, brave, and fearless diligence and stay far away from the inferior minds of laziness and tiredness. They are not afraid of all kinds of challenging tasks, rather tirelessly cultivating various virtuous dharmas to attain the bodhi. Why? These great bodhisattvas have contemplated the characteristics of all dharmas as empty, unreal, and without formation, turning, and extinction. They thus enter and understand insightfully the forms of all dharmas. They have also realized that all dharmas are without making and capabilities. They thus enter and understand insightfully the forms of all actions. Because these great bodhisattvas have achieved such expedient skillfulness, their virtuous roots for enlightenment grow and increase steadily and incessantly. Because of the growth and increase of virtuous roots, they can practice diligence paramita, assist the sentient beings to mature, and dignify and purify the Buddha lands. When they practice diligence, they do not pursue the effects caused by practicing diligence; they do not transfer the merits and virtues thus derived toward the desirable spiritual level or superior rebirth for themselves. Instead, they cultivate diligence paramita with an attempt to rescue and protect the sentient beings in need and help those who are seeking liberation.

(The Buddha taught about the way of practicing diligence paramita with expedient skillfulness.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, since the moment aspiring to the cultivation of meditation paramita, the great bodhisattvas have stayed in a mind correspondent with the perfect

knowledge of all perfect knowledge to cultivate and learn various concentrations. These great bodhisattvas see the sights with their eyes, hear the sounds with their ears, smell the fragrances with their noses, taste flavors with their tongues, feel the contacts with their bodies, and perceive the mental images with their minds, but they do not grasp the forms of various dharmas that attract them. They carefully watch their sense roots to avoid dwelling in unrestrained situations and prevent the arising of all greedy desires of the world, evil dharmas, and flawed vexations. They are devoted to the cultivation of mindful concentrations to protect sense roots, and stay with superior samatha when they walk, stay, sit, lie, speak, or keep in silence, but stay far away from various filthy dharmas. Their bodies and minds are tranquil, and their demeanors are not in conflict with rules. Whatever they do, all are in harmony and well adjusted. Their minds always rest in peace without differentiation. Why? These great bodhisattvas have contemplated the characteristics of all dharmas as empty, unreal, and without formation, turning, and extinction. They thus enter and understand insightfully the forms of all dharmas. They have also realized that all dharmas are without making and capabilities. They thus enter and understand insightfully the forms of all actions. Because these great bodhisattvas have achieved such expedient skillfulness, their virtuous roots for enlightenment grow and increase steadily and incessantly. Because of the growth and increase of the virtuous roots, they can practice meditation paramita, assist the sentient beings to mature, and dignify and purify the Buddha lands. When they practice meditation, they do not pursue the effects of their cultivation, transferring the merits and virtues thus derived toward the desirable spiritual level or superior rebirth for themselves. Instead, they cultivate meditation paramita with an attempt to rescue and protect the sentient beings in need and help those who are looking for liberation.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, since the moment aspiring to the cultivation of prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas have stayed in a mind correspondent with the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge to cultivate and learn the exquisite wisdom. These great bodhisattvas have stayed away from various kinds of wisdom abuse, so they will not elicit or initiate attachment to the 'I' and the associated images. They have also stayed far away from the incorrect views of the 'I,' the sentient being, and so forth, and the knower and the viewer; the incorrect views of existence and nonexistence, arrogance, and differentiations. Therefore, they can initiate various superior virtuous roots. Why? The great bodhisattvas have contemplated the

characteristics of all dharmas as empty, unreal, and without formation, turning, and extinction. They thus enter and understand insightfully the forms of all dharmas. They have also realized that all dharmas are without making and capabilities. They thus enter and understand insightfully the forms of all actions. Because they have achieved such expedient skillfulness, their virtuous roots for enlightenment grow and increase steadily and incessantly. Because of the growth and increase of the virtuous roots, they can practice prajna paramita, assist the sentient beings to mature, and dignify and purify the Buddha lands. When they practice prajna, they do not transfer the merits and virtues thus derived toward the desirable spiritual level or superior rebirth for themselves. Instead, they cultivate prajna paramita with an attempt to rescue and protect the sentient beings in need and help those who are seeking liberation.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, since the moment aspiring to the cultivation of prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas have stayed in a mind correspondent with the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge to enter the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations. They enter and get out of the meditations, immeasurable minds, and formless concentrations freely and easily, but they do not absorb the effects that mature in different ways and at different times. Why? These great bodhisattvas have contemplated the characteristics of all dharmas as empty, unreal, and without formation, turning, and extinction. They thus enter and understand insightfully the forms of all dharmas. They have also realized that all dharmas are without making and capabilities. They thus enter and understand insightfully the forms of all actions. Because these great bodhisattvas have achieved such expedient skillfulness, their virtuous roots for enlightenment grow and increase steadily and incessantly. Because of the growth and increase of the virtuous roots, they can practice the meditations, the immeasurable minds, and the formless concentrations; assist the sentient beings to mature; and dignify and purify the Buddha lands freely and at ease.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, since the moment aspiring to the cultivation of prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas have stayed in a mind correspondent with the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge to cultivate and learn all factors for enlightenment and achieve expedient skillfulness. Although they practice the path leading to the stage of seeing the truth [in the first stage of voice-hearer] and the stage of cultivation [the second and third stage of voice-hearer], they do not stop at stream-entry effect, once-return effect, nonreturn effect, arhat

effect, or self-enlightenment bodhi. Why? These great bodhisattvas have contemplated the characteristics of all dharmas as empty, unreal, and without formation, turning, and extinction. They thus enter and understand insightfully the forms of all dharmas. They have also realized that all dharmas are without making and capabilities. They thus enter and understand insightfully the forms of all actions. These great bodhisattvas have achieved the superior expedient skillfulness, so their virtuous roots continue to grow and increase incessantly. Because of the growth and increase of their virtuous roots, they can practice all factors for enlightenment, surpass the stages of voice-hearer and self-enlightened one, and enter onto the bodhisattva path of nonarising. This is named the dharma forbearance of nonarising for the bodhisattvas. Because of this forbearance, they can assist the sentient beings to mature and dignify and purify the Buddha lands freely and at ease.

(The great bodhisattvas enter onto the bodhisattva path of forbearance because they have achieved expedient skillfulness.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, when cultivating prajna paramita, some great bodhisattvas have stayed in a mind correspondent with the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. They can enter and get out of the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations in two opposite directions, from the first to the ninth concentration and backward, freely and at ease. They have achieved the expedient skillfulness, so they do not stop at stream-entry effect, once-return effect, nonreturn effect, arhat effect, or self-enlightenment bodhi. Why? These great bodhisattvas have contemplated the characteristics of all dharmas as empty, unreal, and without formation, turning, and extinction. They thus enter and understand insightfully the forms of all dharmas. They have also realized that all dharmas are without making and capabilities. They thus enter and understand insightfully the forms of all actions. These great bodhisattvas have achieved the superior expedient skillfulness, so their virtuous roots continue to grow and increase incessantly. Because of the growth and increase of their virtuous roots, they can assist the sentient beings to mature, dignify and purify the Buddha lands, and realize and attain the bodhisattva stage of nonregression and are conferred by the Buddha the prophecy of attaining forbearance.

(The great bodhisattvas achieve nonregression because of the expedient skillfulness.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, when cultivating prajna paramita, some great bodhisattvas have stayed in a mind correspondent with the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge to diligently cultivate 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 immeasurable and boundless merits and virtues of the Buddha. But by this time, they still cannot realize and attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge because they have not assisted the sentient beings to mature and dignified and purified the Buddha lands. However, these great bodhisattvas have contemplated the characteristics of all dharmas as empty, unreal, and without formation, turning, and extinction and thus enter and understand insightfully the forms of all dharmas. They have also realized that all dharmas are without making and capabilities and thus enter and understand insightfully the forms of all actions. Because they have achieved the superior expedient skillfulness, their virtuous roots for enlightenment continue to grow and increase incessantly. Because of the growth and increase of the virtuous roots, they can assist the sentient beings to mature, dignify and purify the Buddha lands, and realize and attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge step by step.

(These great bodhisattvas have achieved expedient skillfulness; they need to assist sentient beings to mature and dignify and purify the Buddha lands to attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge.)

(The Buddha taught about several right ways of cultivating prajna paramita based on different holy dharmas, all with the expedient skillfulness.)

"Well-Appearing One, this is named the expedient skillfulness. If the great bodhisattvas can achieve such expedient skillfulness, they will be able to realize and attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge based on what they have accomplished in cultivation. Such superior expedient skillfulness can be achieved through prajna paramita. Therefore, Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas should diligently cultivate the fathomless prajna paramita without seeking any rewards in return. If they can diligently cultivate the fathomless prajna paramita in this way, they will realize and attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge quickly."

(The Buddha concluded that expedient skillfulness, an important characteristic of fathomless prajna paramita, is vital for great bodhisattvas aiming to quickly attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge.)

## Chapter 72

## Learning All Paths

### Section 1

### (In the Second Assembly)

At that time, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One said to the Buddha, “World-Honored One, as the great bodhisattvas have achieved such superior wisdom of enlightenment, they are able to receive and practice the pure and profound dharma, but they do not absorb the superior effects.”

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, “Yes, it is as you say. As the great bodhisattvas have achieved such superior wisdom of enlightenment, they are able to receive and practice the pure and profound dharma, but they do not absorb the superior effects. Why? It is because these great bodhisattvas stay unaffected by the self-nature of the dharmas.”

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, “World-Honored One, by what self-nature are the great bodhisattvas unaffected?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “The great bodhisattvas are unaffected by selfless self-nature.”

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, “By what selfless self-nature are the great bodhisattvas unaffected?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “The great bodhisattvas are unaffected by the self-nature of matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness. They are not unaffected by the self-nature of the eye sphere, ear sphere, and so forth, and conscious sphere; the self-nature of the sight sphere, sound sphere, and so forth, and mental-image sphere; the self-nature of the eye realm, ear realm, and so forth, and conscious realm; the self-nature of the sight realm, sound realm, and so forth, and mental-image realm; the self-nature of the eye consciousness realm, ear consciousness realm, and so forth, and conscious consciousness realm; the self-nature of the eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact; the self-nature of the feelings produced by eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact; the self-nature of giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita; the self-nature of the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations; the self-nature of the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path; the self-nature of the three liberation gates; the self-nature of the eight liberations and the nine concentrations in sequence; self-nature of the Buddha’s ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha’s wisdom and power; the self-nature of the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge; and the self-nature of the conditioned realm and the unconditioned realm. Why? It is because these various dharmas have no nature. The great bodhisattvas are not moved by the self-nature of the dharmas that are without nature. Nonnature cannot realize and attain nonnature.”

(The Buddha said that the great bodhisattvas are not moved by the self-nature of various dharmas, which have no nature.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked, “World-Honored One, can the dharmas with nature realize and attain nature?”

The Buddha replied, “No.”

“World-Honored One, can the dharmas of without nature realize and attain nature?”

The Buddha replied, “No.”

"World-Honored One, can the dharmas with nature realize and attain nonnature?"

The Buddha replied, "No."

"World-Honored One, can the dharmas with nonnature realize and attain nonnature?"

The Buddha replied, "No."

"World-Honored One, if this is the case, then the dharmas with nature should not be able to contemplate nature; the dharmas without nature should not be able to contemplate nature; the dharmas with nature should not be able to contemplate nonnature; and the dharmas without nature should not be able to contemplate nonnature. Then, will the World-Honored One have attainment and intuitive contemplation?"

The Buddha replied, "Well-Appearing One, although the World-Honored One has attainment and contemplation, he does not adhere to the four dialectical phrases."

(The Buddha said that the Thus-Comer has attainment and contemplation, but he is free from the nonsensical arguments of the four dialectical contradictions: the dharmas with nature cannot contemplate nature; the dharmas without nature cannot contemplate nature; the dharmas with nature cannot contemplate nonnature; the dharmas without nature cannot contemplate nonnature. Or A is not B, non-A is not B, A is not non-B, and non-A is not non-B.)

"World-Honored One, how can one attain insightful contemplation apart from the four dialectical phrases?"

"Well-Appearing One, as attainment and insightful contemplation are neither existent nor nonexistent and apart from various nonsensical arguments, it is appropriate to say that one attains attainment and insightful contemplation apart from the four dialectical phrases."

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, "What are the nonsensical arguments of great bodhisattvas?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "As great bodhisattvas contemplate matter, feeling, and so forth, and consciousness as permanent or impermanent, pleasant or painful, with

selfness or without selfness, pure or impure, tranquil or not tranquil, and far away or not far away, they engage in nonsensical arguments.

(The Buddha explained how great bodhisattvas engage in nonsensical arguments.)

"As great bodhisattvas contemplate the eye sphere, ear sphere, and so forth, and conscious sphere as permanent or impermanent, pleasant or painful, with selfness or without selfness, pure or impure, tranquil or not tranquil, and far away or not far away, they engage in nonsensical arguments.

"As great bodhisattvas contemplate the sight sphere, sound sphere, and so forth, and mental image sphere as permanent or impermanent, pleasant or painful, with selfness or without selfness, pure or impure, tranquil or not tranquil, and far away or not far away, they engage in nonsensical arguments.

"As great bodhisattvas contemplate the eye realm, ear realm, and so forth, and conscious realm as permanent or impermanent, pleasant or painful, with selfness or without selfness, pure or impure, tranquil or not tranquil, and far away or not far away, they engage in nonsensical arguments.

"As great bodhisattvas contemplate the sight realm, sound realm, and so forth, and mental image realm as permanent or impermanent, pleasant or painful, with selfness or without selfness, pure or impure, tranquil or not tranquil, and far away or not far away, they engage in nonsensical arguments.

"As great bodhisattvas contemplate the eye consciousness realm, ear consciousness realm, and so forth, and conscious consciousness realm as permanent or impermanent, pleasant or painful, with selfness or without selfness, pure or impure, tranquil or not tranquil, and far away or not far away, they engage in nonsensical arguments.

"As great bodhisattvas contemplate the eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact as permanent or impermanent, pleasant or painful, with selfness or without selfness, pure or impure, tranquil or not tranquil, and far away or not far away, they engage in nonsensical arguments.

“As great bodhisattvas contemplate the feelings produced by eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact as permanent or impermanent, pleasant or painful, with selfness or without selfness, pure or impure, tranquil or not tranquil, and far away or not far away, they engage in nonsensical arguments.

“As great bodhisattvas contemplate the earth realm, water realm, and so forth, and consciousness realm as permanent or impermanent, pleasant or painful, with selfness or without selfness, pure or impure, tranquil or not tranquil, and far away or not far away, they engage in nonsensical arguments.

“As great bodhisattvas contemplate cause and condition, consecutive thoughts, conditions that stimulate the mind, and the conditions that reinforce main causes as permanent or impermanent, pleasant or painful, with selfness or without selfness, pure or impure, tranquil or not tranquil, and far away or not far away, they engage in nonsensical arguments.

“As great bodhisattvas contemplate ignorance, action, consciousness, and so forth, and old age and death as permanent or impermanent, pleasant or painful, with selfness or without selfness, pure or impure, tranquil or not tranquil, and far away or not far away, they engage in nonsensical arguments.

“As great bodhisattvas contemplate giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita as permanent or impermanent, pleasant or painful, with selfness or without selfness, pure or impure, tranquil or not tranquil, and far away or not far away, they engage in nonsensical arguments.

“As great bodhisattvas contemplate internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature as permanent or impermanent, pleasant or painful, with selfness or without selfness, pure or impure, tranquil or not tranquil, and far away or not far away, they engage in nonsensical arguments.

“As great bodhisattvas contemplate realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable as permanent or impermanent, pleasant or painful, with selfness or without selfness, pure or impure, tranquil or not tranquil, and far away or not far away, they engage in nonsensical arguments.

“As great bodhisattvas contemplate the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering as permanent or impermanent, pleasant or painful, with selfness or without selfness, pure or impure, tranquil or not tranquil, and far away or not far away, they engage in nonsensical arguments.

“As great bodhisattvas contemplate the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path as permanent or impermanent, pleasant or painful, with selfness or without selfness, pure or impure, tranquil or not tranquil, and far away or not far away, they engage in nonsensical arguments.

“As great bodhisattvas contemplate the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations as permanent or impermanent, pleasant or painful, with selfness or without selfness, pure or impure, tranquil or not tranquil, and far away or not far away, they engage in nonsensical arguments.

“As great bodhisattvas contemplate the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations as permanent or impermanent, pleasant or painful, with selfness or without selfness, pure or impure, tranquil or not tranquil, and far away or not far away, they engage in nonsensical arguments.

“As great bodhisattvas contemplate the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration as permanent or impermanent, pleasant or painful, with selfness or without selfness, pure or impure, tranquil or not tranquil, and far away or not far away, they engage in nonsensical arguments.

“As great bodhisattvas contemplate the stage of pure contemplation, stage of embryonic Buddha nature, and so forth, and stage of Thus-Comer as permanent or impermanent, pleasant or painful, with selfness or without selfness, pure or impure, tranquil or not tranquil, and far away or not far away, they engage in nonsensical arguments.

“As great bodhisattvas contemplate the stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilements, and so forth, and stage of dharma cloud as permanent or impermanent, pleasant or painful, with selfness or without selfness, pure or impure, tranquil or not tranquil, and far away or not far away, they engage in nonsensical arguments.

"As great bodhisattvas contemplate the dharani gates and samadhi gates as permanent or impermanent, pleasant or painful, with selfness or without selfness, pure or impure, tranquil or not tranquil, and far away or not far away, they engage in nonsensical arguments.

"As great bodhisattvas contemplate the five eyes and six supernatural powers as permanent or impermanent, pleasant or painful, with selfness or without selfness, pure or impure, tranquil or not tranquil, and far away or not far away, they engage in nonsensical arguments.

"As great bodhisattvas contemplate the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power as permanent or impermanent, pleasant or painful, with selfness or without selfness, pure or impure, tranquil or not tranquil, and far away or not far away, they engage in nonsensical arguments.

"As great bodhisattvas contemplate the thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features as permanent or impermanent, pleasant or painful, with selfness or without selfness, pure or impure, tranquil or not tranquil, and far away or not far away, they engage in nonsensical arguments.

"As great bodhisattvas contemplate staying in correct mindfulness and always dwelling in equanimity as permanent or impermanent, pleasant or painful, with selfness or without selfness, pure or impure, tranquil or not tranquil, and far away or not far away, they engage in nonsensical arguments.

"As great bodhisattvas contemplate the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena as permanent or impermanent, pleasant or painful, with selfness or without selfness, pure or impure, tranquil or not tranquil, and far away or not far away, they engage in nonsensical arguments.

"As great bodhisattvas contemplate stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi as permanent or impermanent, pleasant or painful, with selfness or without selfness, pure or impure, tranquil or not tranquil, and far away or not far away, they engage in nonsensical arguments.

"As great bodhisattvas contemplate all great bodhisattva actions as permanent or impermanent, pleasant or painful, with selfness or without selfness, pure or impure, tranquil or not tranquil, and far away or not far away, they engage in nonsensical arguments.

"As great bodhisattvas contemplate the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas as permanent or impermanent, pleasant or painful, with selfness or without selfness, pure or impure, tranquil or not tranquil, and far away or not far away, they engage in nonsensical arguments.

"As great bodhisattvas contemplate the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge as permanent or impermanent, pleasant or painful, with selfness or without selfness, pure or impure, tranquil or not tranquil, and far away or not far away, they engage in nonsensical arguments.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas think, 'The noble truth of suffering must be known thoroughly; the cause of suffering must be terminated permanently; the noble truth of the cessation of suffering must be realized; and the noble truth of the path for the cessation of suffering must be cultivated and learned,' they engage in a nonsensical argument. If they think, 'I should cultivate the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations,' they engage in a nonsensical argument. If they think, 'I should cultivate the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path,' they engage in a nonsensical argument. If they think, 'I should cultivate the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration,' they engage in a nonsensical argument. If they think, 'I should cultivate the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations,' they engage in a nonsensical argument. If they think, 'I should cultivate stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi,' they engage in a nonsensical argument. If they think, 'I should cultivate giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita,' they engage in a nonsensical argument. If they think, 'I should dwell in internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature,' they engage in a nonsensical argument. If they think, 'I should dwell in realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable,' they engage in a nonsensical argument. If they think, 'I should enter onto the bodhisattva nature of nonarising,' they engage in a nonsensical argument. If they think, 'I should

fulfill the ten stages of bodhisattva,' they engage in a nonsensical argument. If they think, 'I should initiate all dharani gates and all samadhi gates,' they engage in a nonsensical argument. If they think, 'I should elicit the five eyes and six supernatural powers,' they engage in a nonsensical argument. If they think, 'I should elicit the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power,' they engage in a nonsensical argument. If they think, 'I should fulfill the thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features,' they engage in a nonsensical argument. If they think, 'I should elicit staying in correct mindfulness and always dwelling in equanimity,' they engage in a nonsensical argument. If they think, 'I should elicit the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena,' they engage in a nonsensical argument. If they think, 'I should practice all great bodhisattva actions,' they engage in a nonsensical argument. If they think, 'I should realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas,' they engage in a nonsensical argument. If they think, 'I should dignify and purify the Buddha lands and assist the sentient beings to mature,' they engage in a nonsensical argument. If they think, 'I should realize and attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge,' they engage in a nonsensical argument. If they think, 'I should permanently terminate the enduring disposition of all vexations,' they engage in a nonsensical argument. Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas have such differentiations, they possess nonsensical arguments.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas should not nonsensically argue that matter, feeling, action, thinking, and consciousness are 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 nonsensically argue that the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge must be or must not be realized and attained. They should not nonsensically argue that the enduring disposition of vexations must be or must not be terminated permanently.

"Well-Appearing One, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas should not nonsensically argue about all dharmas and sentient beings. Why? In all dharmas and sentient beings, nature cannot nonsensically argue about nature; nature cannot nonsensically argue about nonnature; nonnature cannot nonsensically argue about nonnature; and

nonnature cannot nonsensically argue about nature. All these dharmas are nonexistent and without nature. The one who engages in discussion, the subjects of debate, the location and timing of the argument are all unattainable. Therefore, Well-Appearing One, there is no nonsensical argument about matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness; there is no nonsensical argument about the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge; and there is no nonsensical argument about the termination of the enduring disposition of vexations. Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas should practice the fathomless prajna paramita without nonsensical arguments."

(The Buddha explained how great bodhisattvas should practice prajna paramita apart from nonsensical arguments.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "World-Honored One, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, how do the great bodhisattvas contemplate matter, feeling, thinking, action, consciousness, and so forth; the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge; and the permanent termination of the enduring disposition of all vexations apart from nonsensical arguments?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "When practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas should contemplate matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness as without self-nature. They should also contemplate the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge and the permanent termination of the enduring disposition of all vexations as without self-nature. We cannot nonsensically argue about the dharmas without self-nature. Therefore, Well-Appearing One, as the great bodhisattvas cannot nonsensically argue about matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness, they should not nonsensically argue about them. As the great bodhisattvas cannot nonsensically argue about the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge and the permanent termination of the enduring disposition of all vexations, they should not nonsensically argue about them. If the great bodhisattvas can practice the expedient skillfulness of fathomless prajna paramita apart from all nonsensical arguments, they will be able to enter onto the bodhisattva nature of nonarising and realize and attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge quickly."

(The Buddha concluded how great bodhisattvas should practice prajna paramita apart from nonsensical arguments to enter the nature of nonarising and attain the perfect knowledge.)

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Chapter 72

Learning All Paths

Section 2

(In the Second Assembly)

At that time, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, “World-Honored One, if all dharmas are without self-nature, apart from nonsensical arguments, and unattainable, then how can great bodhisattvas find the path to enter the correct bodhisattva nature of nonarising of? Is it the path of voice-hearer, path of self-enlightened one, or the path of Thus-Comer?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “The great bodhisattvas do not enter the correct bodhisattva nature of nonarising through the path of voice-hearer, the path of self-enlightened one, or the path of Thus-Comer alone. They should learn all paths and then enter the correct bodhisattva nature of nonarising through the path of bodhisattva. For example, the eight-forbearance practitioners should learn various paths before entering the correct nature of nonarising of their chosen vehicles. They cannot realize and attain the full effect associated with their own vehicles until they complete the cultivation relevant to the vehicle they follow. So do the great bodhisattvas, they should learn and fulfill all paths before entering the correct bodhisattva nature of nonarising. They cannot attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge until eliciting the diamond-like concentration. Upon achieving this concentration, they are able to realize and attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge through an instantaneous correspondence with prajna.”

(The Buddha taught that individual learners of all vehicles should fulfill all paths before they can achieve their own vehicles, including the bodhisattva-path pursuers.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, “If great bodhisattvas should learn and fulfill all paths before entering the correct bodhisattva nature of nonarising through bodhisattva path, do practitioners of eight-forbearance, stream-entry, once-return, nonreturn, arhat, self-enlightenment bodhi, and Thus-Comer each follow distinct paths? World-Honored One, if these paths indeed differ, how should great bodhisattvas proceed along their respective path to enter the correct bodhisattva nature of nonarising through after mastering all other paths? Isn’t it the case that the great bodhisattvas who initiate the stage of eight-forbearance should become a pre-stream-enter, initiate the stage of insight should become a stream-enter, initiate the advanced stage of cultivation should become a once-returner or nonreturner, initiate the stage needing no more learning should become an arhat, and initiate self-enlightenment bodhi should become a self-enlightened one?

“World-Honored One, if the great bodhisattvas should become a pre-stream-enters after achieving eight-forbearance, there will be no way for them to enter the correct bodhisattva nature of nonarising. If they cannot enter the correct bodhisattva nature of nonarising, they will not able to realize and attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. World-Honored One, if the great bodhisattvas become a stream-enter, once-returner, nonreturner, arhat, or self-enlightened ones, they will not be able to enter the correct bodhisattva nature of nonarising. If they do not enter the correct bodhisattva nature of nonarising, they cannot realize and attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. World-Honored One, it is not reasonable to say that great bodhisattvas should learn and fulfill all paths before entering the correct bodhisattva nature of nonarising.”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “It is as you say. If great bodhisattvas should become a pre-stream-enterer when fulfilling the eight-forbearance, become a stream-enterer when fulfilling the stage of insight, and so forth, and become a self-enlightened one when fulfilling the self-enlightenment bodhi, it is impossible for them to enter the correct bodhisattva nature of nonarising. If the great bodhisattvas do not enter the correct bodhisattva nature of nonarising, they cannot realize and attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge.”

The long-lived sage Well Appearing asked the Buddha again, “World-Honored One, how do great bodhisattvas learn various paths perfectly and then enter the correct bodhisattva nature

of nonarising through their own path? Do they step by step realize and attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge and permanently terminate the enduring disposition of all vexations after entering the correct bodhisattva nature of nonarising?"

(Well-Appearing One asked how bodhisattvas enter the bodhisattva nature of nonarising after learning all paths without becoming voice-hearers and self-enlightened ones.)

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "Since the time aspiring to the bodhi, the great bodhisattvas should diligently and bravely cultivate the six paramitas. With the superior knowledge and views that they have achieved, they surpass the eight stages, namely, the stage of pure contemplation, stage of embryonic Buddha nature, and so forth, and the stage of self-enlightenment bodhi. Although they learn all stages of all paths, they must surpass all these stages with their superior knowledge and views and enter the correct bodhisattva nature of nonarising through the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths. After entering the correct bodhisattva nature of nonarising, they will realize and fulfill the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge and permanently terminate the enduring disposition of all vexations through the perfect knowledge of all phenomena. Well-Appearing One, you must know that the eight-forbearance is the forbearance of bodhisattva. The knowledge and the termination occurring in the process of stream-entry, once-return, nonreturn, arhat, and self-enlightenment bodhi are also the forbearance of bodhisattva. Therefore, Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas should learn various paths perfectly and then enter the correct bodhisattva nature of nonarising through their own path. After entering the correct bodhisattva nature of nonarising, they will realize and attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge step by step. After attaining the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, they will use the effects they have achieved to benefit all sentient beings."

(The Buddha taught how great bodhisattvas learn all paths, refrain from attaining these paths, and further surpass them to achieve the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge.)

At that time, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "World-Honored One, you have said that great bodhisattvas should learn all paths and their phenomena, including the path of voice-hearer, the path of self-enlightened one, the path of bodhisattva, and the path of Thus-Comer. To understand the phenomena of all these paths is named the perfect

knowledge of the forms of the paths. How do the great bodhisattvas elicit this perfect knowledge?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "The phenomena of all paths contain various actions, shapes, and forms that manifest and make the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths significant. Great bodhisattvas should learn these actions, shapes, and forms universally to become awakened to them. After being awakened to them, they should teach, lecture on, explain, demonstrate, organize, and establish them as they really are for others, so sentient beings can correctly understand and take advantage to approach the benefits and happiness that they are pursuing. These great bodhisattvas should learn to master skillful dharani gates in various languages and voices, enabling them to universally teach the correct dharma to different groups of sentient beings in the large threefold thousand-world. Listeners will understand these teachings clearly without attachment, like hearing echoes in a valley.

(The Buddha taught how great bodhisattvas fulfill the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths to benefit sentient beings.)

"Well-Appearing One, because of this cause and condition, the great bodhisattvas should fulfill the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, knowing the different intentions, preferences, and the hidden roots of vexations of all sentient beings as they really are to bring correspondent benefits and happiness to them. For instance, the great bodhisattvas should accurately know the different intentions, preferences, and the hidden roots of vexations and their causes and effects of the sentient beings in the hells so that they can expediently help them. They should accurately know the different intentions, preferences, and the hidden roots of vexations and their causes and effects of the sentient beings in the realm of animals so that they can expediently help them. They should accurately know the different intentions, preferences, and the hidden roots of vexations and their causes and effects of the sentient beings in the realm of ghosts so that they can expediently help them. They should accurately know the different intentions, preferences, and the hidden roots of vexations and their causes and effects of dragons, yaksas, and asuras so that they can expediently help them. They should accurately know the different intentions, preferences, and the hidden roots of vexations and their causes and effects of human beings and heavenly beings in the realm of desire so that they can expediently help them.

They should accurately know the different intentions, preferences, and the hidden roots of vexations and their causes and effects of heavenly beings in the Heaven of Brahma Followers, Heaven of Brahma Associates, and so forth, and Heaven of Ultimate Form so that they can expediently help them. They should accurately know the different intentions, preferences, and the hidden roots of vexations and their causes and effects of heavenly beings in the Heaven of Boundless Emptiness, Heaven of Boundless Consciousness, Heaven of Nothingness, and Heaven of Nonthinking and Not Nonthinking so that they can expediently help them. They should also accurately know the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path and their causes and effects; the three liberation gates and their causes and effects; the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations and their causes and effects; the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations and their causes and effects; the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering and their causes and conditions; giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita and their causes and effects; internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature and their causes and effects; realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable and their causes and effects; the stage of pure contemplation, stage of embryonic Buddha nature, and so forth, and the stage of Thus-Comer and their causes and effects; the stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilements, and so forth, and the stage of dharma cloud and their causes and effects; all dharani gates and all samadhi gates and their causes and effects; the five eyes and the six supernatural powers and their causes and effects; the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and the eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power and their causes and effects; staying in correct mindfulness and always dwelling in equanimity and their causes and effects; and the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena and their causes and effects. Well-Appearing One, when accurately knowing the path of voice-hearer, the path of self-enlightened one, and so forth, and their causes and effects, the great bodhisattvas will establish all sentient beings peacefully in the path of the three vehicles suitable for each of them and encourage them to diligently cultivate and learn what they are doing until fulfilling their ultimate goals.

(The Buddha elaborated in detail the way for great bodhisattvas to learn various paths and surpass them to help various sentient beings.)

"Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas should initiate the learning of the perfect knowledge of the forms of various paths. If they can learn this perfect knowledge, they will be able to insightfully know the realm nature, the intentions and preferences, and the hidden roots of vexations of various sentient beings and further teach them correct dharma based on individual differences to let enjoy the superior effects thus derived with no exception. Why? These great bodhisattvas have known the strengths and weaknesses of the sentient beings very well. They know accurately where all sentient beings come from, where they will go, and their births, deaths, and minds, so the dharma they teach will not turn out in vain. Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas should practice such various paths of prajna paramita. Why? All the factors for enlightenment that voice-hearers, self-enlightened ones, and bodhisattvas should learn are absorbed in the fathomless prajna paramita. All voice-hearers, self-enlightened ones, and bodhisattvas can attain individual ultimate objectives through the fathomless prajna paramita."

At that time, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "World-Honored One, if all factors for the bodhi and bodhi itself are incombinable, inseparable, immaterial, invisible, or unsubstantial, and have only one form, namely, formlessness, how do these factors grasp bodhi? World-Honored One, all dharmas are incombinable, inseparable, immaterial, invisible, and unsubstantial, and have only one form, formlessness, so no dharma can grasp or discard another dharma. Like empty space that does not grasp or discard any dharma only because its self-nature is empty, so all dharmas, with empty self-nature, do not grasp or discard other dharmas. How do the factors, such as the four bases of mindfulness and four correct endeavors, grasp the bodhi?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "It is as you say. The self-nature of all dharmas is empty and without grasping and renunciation. But the sentient beings cannot understand the emptiness of the self-nature of all dharmas. The Thus-Comers expediently teach that the factors for enlightenment can grasp the bodhi with an attempt to help and benefit sentient beings.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, all dharmas, such as 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 realm, 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; cause and condition, consecutive thoughts, conditions that stimulate the mind, and the conditions that reinforce main causes; 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 three liberation gates; the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and so forth, and ten universal contemplations; the stage of pure contemplation, stage of embryonic Buddha nature, and so forth, and stage of Thus-Comer; the stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilements, and so forth, and 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; the thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features; 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; stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi; all great bodhisattva actions; the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas; permanent termination of enduring disposition of vexations; and the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, are incombinable, inseparable, immaterial, invisible, and unsubstantial. They are the sacred laws for the monastics, the vinaya, established by the Buddha. They are all with one form, namely, formlessness. The Thus-Comers teach sentient beings and guide them to correctly understand the real forms of the dharmas in terms of

the worldly language instead of the ultimate meaning. Well-Appearing One, you must know that great bodhisattvas should learn the perfect knowledge and the correct views of all dharmas. After learning them, they will fully know what dharmas are applicable and what are not."

(The Thus-Comer established the five aggregates, inner perceptive senses, outer correspondent perceived objects, six fundamental elements of the world, as well as various superior holy dharmas in terms of the worldly perspective instead of the ultimate meaning with an attempt to guide sentient beings to correctly understand the reality of dharmas. The Buddha advised that great bodhisattvas should comprehensively learn all these dharmas to tell the applicable from the unapplicable ones.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "What dharmas are applicable and what are not?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "After learning the knowledge and the views of the dharmas of voice-hearer and self-enlightened one, great bodhisattvas realize that these dharmas are not applicable. On the other hand, after learning the knowledge and the views of the forms of the dharmas correspondent with the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, they realize that these forms are applicable. Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas should learn the fathomless prajna paramita in this way through the holy dharma of vinaya."

(The Buddha taught that the knowledge and views correspondent with the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge are applicable; those correspondent with voice-hearer and self-enlightened one are unapplicable.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, "World-Honored One, what is the holy dharma of vinaya?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "If voice-hearers, self-enlightened ones, great bodhisattvas, and Thus-comers are neither combined with nor separate from greed, anger, and ignorance; the five lower bonds; the five upper bonds; the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations; the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and the noble eightfold path; the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering; the three

liberation gates; the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations; the stage of pure contemplation, stage of embryonic Buddha nature, and so forth, and stage of Thus-Comer; the five eyes and six supernatural powers; 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 stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilements, and so forth, and stage of dharma cloud; all dharani gates and all samadhi gates; 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 eight distinguishing minor features; 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; stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi; all great bodhisattva actions; the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas; permanent termination of the enduring disposition of vexations; the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge; and the conditioned and unconditioned realm, then, Well-Appearing One, these voice-hearers, self-enlightened ones, great bodhisattvas, and the Thus-Comer are named the holy ones, the dharmas of the vinaya for these holy ones are named the holy dharmas of vinaya. Why? It is because all these dharmas are immaterial, invisible, and unsubstantial, and have only one form, that is formlessness. The holy ones see their reality as it really is. You must know, Well-Appearing One, the immaterial dharmas do not combine with or separate from other immaterial dharmas; the invisible dharmas do not combine with or separate from other invisible dharmas; the unsubstantial dharmas do not combine with or separate from other unsubstantial dharmas; the one-form dharmas do not combine with or separate from other one-form dharmas; and the formless dharmas do not combine with or separate from other formless dharmas. Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas should consistently cultivate and learn the fathomless prajna paramita in such immaterial, invisible, unsubstantial, one-form, and formless dharmas, but should not grasp their forms."

(The Buddha explained the meaning of the holy dharma of vinaya.)

At that time, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "World-Honored One, should the great bodhisattvas learn the forms of matter, feeling, and so forth, and

consciousness? Should they learn the forms of the eye sphere, ear sphere, and so forth, and conscious sphere; the forms of the sight sphere, sound sphere, and so forth, and mental-image sphere; the forms of the eye realm, ear realm, and so forth, and conscious realm; the forms of the sight realm, sound realm, and so forth, and mental-image realm; the forms of the eye consciousness realm, ear consciousness realm, and so forth, and conscious consciousness realm; the forms of the eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact; and the forms of the feelings produced by eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact? Should they learn the forms of the earth realm, water realm, and so forth, and conscious realm; the forms of cause and condition, consecutive thoughts, conditions that stimulate the mind, and the conditions that reinforce main causes; and the forms of ignorance, action, consciousness, and so forth, and old age and death? Should they learn the forms of giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita; the forms of internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature; the forms of realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable; the forms of the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of the 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 four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path; the forms of the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations; the forms of the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration; the forms of the stage of pure contemplation, stage of embryonic Buddha nature, and so forth, and stage of Thus-Comer; the forms of the stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilements, and so forth, and stage of dharma cloud; the forms of all dharani gates and all samadhi gates; the forms of the five eyes and six supernatural powers; 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; the forms of the thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features; the forms of staying in correct mindfulness and always dwelling in equanimity; the forms of the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena; the forms of stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi; the forms of all great bodhisattva actions and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas; the forms of permanent termination of enduring disposition of all vexations; the forms of the

perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge; the forms of realizing suffering, finding out the causes of suffering, deciding to cease suffering, and practicing the path for ceasing suffering; the forms of contemplating dependent origination from causes to effects and vice versa; the forms of the holy ones and holy paths; and the forms of the conditioned and unconditioned realms?

"World-Honored One, if the great bodhisattvas should not learn the forms of these dharmas, they should not learn the forms of actions either. World-Honored One, if this is the case, how can great bodhisattvas surpass the stage of voice-hearer and the stage of self-enlightened one? If they do not surpass the stage of voice-hearer and the stage of self-enlightened one, how can they enter the correct bodhisattva nature of nonarising? If they do not enter the correct bodhisattva nature of nonarising, how can they attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge? If they do not attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, how can they turn the wonderful dharma wheel? If they do not turn the wonderful dharma wheel, how can they establish sentient beings in the three vehicles and help them get rid of the painful ocean of birth and death?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "If all dharmas have real forms, great bodhisattvas should learn the forms. Because all dharmas have no real forms, the great bodhisattvas should not learn forms. Why? Whether the Buddha appears in the world or not, the dharma realm is always there, and all dharmas always have one form, that is, formlessness. This formlessness means that there is neither form nor non-form, so it cannot be learned."

At that time, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One said to the Buddha, "World-Honored One, if all dharmas have neither forms nor non-forms, how can great bodhisattvas cultivate prajna paramita? World-Honored One, if the great bodhisattvas do not cultivate prajna paramita, they will not be able to surpass the stage of voice-hearer and the stage of self-enlightened one. If they do not surpass the stage of voice-hearer and the stage of self-enlightened one, they will not be able to enter the correct bodhisattva nature of nonarising. If they do not enter the correct bodhisattva nature of nonarising, they will not be able to activate the bodhisattva dharma forbearance of nonarising. If they do not activate the bodhisattva dharma forbearance of nonarising, they will not be able to elicit the superior and wonderful supernatural powers of bodhisattva. If they do not elicit the superior and wonderful supernatural powers of

bodhisattva, they will not be able to dignify the Buddha lands and assist the sentient beings to mature. If they do not dignify and purify the Buddha lands and assist the sentient beings to mature, they will not be able to realize and attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. If they do not realize and attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, they will not be able to turn the superior wonderful dharma wheel. If they do not turn the superior wonderful dharma wheel, they will not be able to establish all sentient beings and let dwell in stream-entry effect, once-return effect, nonreturn effect, arhat effect, self-enlightenment bodhi, or the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi; nor will they be able to establish sentient beings to dwell in bliss-inviting giving, observing precept, and cultivation to attain the heavenly or human peace, freedom, and wealth."

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "Yes, it is as you say. All dharmas possess neither forms nor non-forms. If great bodhisattvas understand that all dharmas, whether with or without forms, have only one form, which is formlessness, then they do cultivate formlessness. Cultivating formlessness is regarded as cultivating prajna paramita."

(The Buddha encouraged great bodhisattvas to cultivate formlessness, stating that cultivating formlessness is equivalent to cultivating prajna paramita.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "How do great bodhisattvas cultivate formlessness to be named cultivating prajna paramita?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "If the great bodhisattvas cultivate to relinquish all dharmas, they do cultivate prajna paramita."

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, "How do the great bodhisattvas relinquish all dharmas to cultivate prajna paramita?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "If the great bodhisattvas cultivate to relinquish matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness, they do cultivate prajna paramita. If they cultivate to relinquish 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 sphere, and so forth, and conscious realm; the sight realm, sound realm, and so forth, and mental-image realm; the eye consciousness realm, ear consciousness realm, 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, they do cultivate prajna paramita. If the great bodhisattvas cultivate to relinquish the earth realm, water, realm, and so forth, and consciousness realm, they do cultivate prajna paramita. If they cultivate to relinquish cause and condition, consecutive thoughts, conditions that stimulate the mind, and the conditions that reinforce main causes, they do cultivate prajna paramita. If they cultivate to relinquish ignorance, action, consciousness, and so forth, and old age and death, they do cultivate prajna paramita. If they cultivate to relinquish the contemplation of impurity, they do cultivate prajna paramita. If they cultivate to relinquish the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations, they do cultivate prajna paramita. If they cultivate to relinquish the mindfulness in compliance with the Buddha, dharma, sangha, precept, equanimity, heaven, tranquility, and inhalation and exhalation, they do cultivate prajna paramita. If the great bodhisattvas cultivate to relinquish the thoughts of impermanence, painfulness, selflessness, emptiness, the cause of suffering, causes, arising, conditions, extinction, tranquility, exquisiteness, getting far away, paths, thusness, actions, and transcendence, they do cultivate prajna paramita. If they cultivate to relinquish the thoughts of the 'I,' sentient being, and so forth, and the knower and the viewer, they do cultivate prajna paramita. If they cultivate to relinquish the thoughts of permanence, pleasure, self, and purity, they do cultivate prajna paramita. If they cultivate to relinquish the thought of dependent origination, they do cultivate prajna paramita. If they cultivate to relinquish the noble truths, they do cultivate prajna paramita. If they cultivate to relinquish the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path, they do cultivate prajna paramita. If they cultivate to relinquish the three liberation gates, they do cultivate prajna paramita. If they cultivate to relinquish the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations, they do cultivate prajna paramita. If they cultivate to relinquish the samadhi with both general contemplation and specific investigation, the samadhi with specific investigation only, and the samadhi without general contemplation and specific investigation, they do cultivate prajna paramita. If they cultivate to relinquish the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering, they do cultivate prajna paramita. If they cultivate to relinquish the knowledge of suffering, the knowledge of the cause of suffering, the knowledge of the cessation of suffering, the knowledge

of the path for the cessation of suffering, the knowledge of the dharmas, the knowledge of the classes, the knowledge of the world, the knowledge of reading others' minds, the knowledge of extinction, the knowledge of nonarising, and the knowledge as taught by the Buddha, they do cultivate prajna paramita. If they cultivate to relinquish giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita, they do cultivate prajna paramita. If they cultivate to relinquish internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature, they do cultivate prajna paramita. If they cultivate to relinquish realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable, they do cultivate prajna paramita. If they cultivate to relinquish the stage of pure contemplation, stage of embryonic Buddha nature, and so forth, and stage of Thus-Comer, they do cultivate prajna paramita. If they cultivate to relinquish the stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilements, and so forth, and stage of dharma cloud, they do cultivate prajna paramita. If they cultivate to relinquish all dharani gates and all samadhi gates, they do cultivate prajna paramita. If they cultivate to relinquish the five eyes and six supernatural powers, they do cultivate prajna paramita. If they cultivate to relinquish the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power, they do cultivate prajna paramita. If they cultivate to relinquish the thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features, they do cultivate prajna paramita. If they cultivate to relinquish staying in correct mindfulness and always dwelling in equanimity, they do cultivate prajna paramita. If they cultivate to relinquish the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena, they do cultivate prajna paramita. If they cultivate to relinquish stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi, they do cultivate prajna paramita. If they cultivate to relinquish all great bodhisattva actions, they do cultivate prajna paramita. If they cultivate to relinquish the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas, they do cultivate prajna paramita. If they cultivate to relinquish the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, they do cultivate prajna paramita. If they cultivate to relinquish the permanent termination of enduring disposition of vexations, they do cultivate prajna paramita."

(The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One's question, saying that great bodhisattvas should cultivate formlessness by relinquishing all dharmas, which is equivalent to cultivating prajna paramita.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, “How do great bodhisattvas cultivate to relinquish matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness to cultivate prajna paramita? And so on, how do great bodhisattvas cultivate to relinquish the permanent termination of enduring disposition of all vexations to cultivate prajna paramita?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “If the great bodhisattvas practice the fathomless prajna paramita with a mindfulness of matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness, they do not relinquish matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness. And so on, if they stay mindful of the permanent termination of enduring disposition of all vexations, they do not relinquish the termination of enduring disposition of all vexations. If the great bodhisattvas, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, do not stay mindful of matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness, or stay mindful of the permanent termination of enduring disposition of all vexations, they do cultivate prajna paramita. Why? Staying in mindfulness of something cannot really cultivate prajna paramita. Therefore, Well-Appearing One, as great bodhisattvas cultivate to relinquish matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness, or relinquish the permanent termination of enduring disposition of all vexations, they do cultivate prajna paramita.

(The Buddha taught that if great bodhisattvas do not stay mindful of various dharmas when practicing prajna paramita, they do practice prajna paramita.)

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, staying in mindfulness of existent beings, one cannot cultivate giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita; the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path. Staying in mindfulness of existent beings, one cannot dwell 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. Staying in mindfulness of existent beings, one cannot cultivate the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration; the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and the formless concentrations; the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations; the stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilements, and so forth,

and 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; correct thoughts and equanimity; the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena; all great bodhisattva actions; the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas; the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge; and the permanent termination of enduring disposition of vexations. Why? Those staying in mindfulness of something existent will be attached to the 'I' and the associated images, falling into the two extremities. They are unable to get rid of birth and death, non-path, and non-nirvana. So, they cannot cultivate the six paramitas as they should do or permanently terminate the enduring disposition of vexations."

(The Buddha cautioned that those staying mindful of something would be attached to their own selfness and could not cultivate the six paramitas and other holy dharmas; they would fall into the two vehicles.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, "What is existent being? What is nonexistent being?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "Duality is existent being, while nonduality is nonexistent being."

(The Buddha distinguished existent beings as dual and nonexistent beings as nondual.)

Well-Appearing One asked again, "What is duality? What is nonduality?"

The Buddha replied, "The thoughts of matter, feeling, and so forth, and consciousness are dual, while the emptiness of these thoughts is nondual. The thoughts of the eye sphere, ear sphere, and so forth, and the conscious sphere are dual, while the emptiness of these thoughts is nondual. The thoughts of the sight sphere, sound sphere, and so forth, and mental-image sphere are dual, while the emptiness of these thoughts is nondual. The thoughts of the eye realm, ear realm, and so forth, and conscious realm are dual, while the emptiness of these thoughts is nondual. The thoughts of the sight realm, sound realm, and so forth, and mental-image realm are dual, while the emptiness of these thoughts is nondual. The thoughts of the eye consciousness

realm, ear consciousness realm, and so forth, and conscious consciousness realm are dual, while the emptiness of these thoughts is nondual. The thoughts of the eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact are dual, while the emptiness of these thoughts is nondual. The thoughts of the feelings produced by eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact are dual, while the emptiness of these thoughts is nondual. The thoughts of the earth realm, water realm, and so forth, and consciousness realm are dual, while the emptiness of these thoughts is nondual. The thoughts of cause and condition, consecutive thoughts, conditions that stimulate the mind, and the conditions that reinforce main causes are dual, while the emptiness of these thoughts is nondual. The thoughts of ignorance, action, consciousness, and so forth, and old age and death are dual, while the emptiness of these thoughts is nondual. The thoughts of giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita are dual, while the emptiness of these thoughts is nondual. The thoughts of internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature are dual, while the emptiness of these thoughts is nondual. The thoughts of realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable are dual, while the emptiness of these thoughts is nondual. The thoughts of the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering are dual, while the emptiness of these thoughts is nondual. The thoughts of the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path are dual, while the emptiness of these thoughts is nondual. The thoughts of the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations are dual, while the emptiness of these thoughts is nondual. The thoughts of the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, and so forth, and ten universal contemplations are dual, while the emptiness of these thoughts is nondual. The thoughts of the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration are dual, while the emptiness of these thoughts is nondual. The thoughts of the stage of pure contemplation, stage of embryonic Buddha nature, and so forth, and stage of Thus-Comer are dual, while the emptiness of these thoughts is nondual. The thoughts of the stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilements, and so forth, and stage of dharma cloud are dual, while the emptiness of these thoughts is nondual. The thoughts of the dharani gates and samadhi gates are dual, while the emptiness of these thoughts is nondual. The thoughts of the five eyes and six supernatural powers are dual, while the emptiness of these thoughts is nondual. The thoughts of the Buddha’s ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen

distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power are dual, while the emptiness of these thoughts is nondual. The thoughts of the thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features of Buddha's wisdom and power are dual, while the emptiness of these thoughts is nondual. The thoughts of staying in correct mindfulness and always dwelling in equanimity are dual, while the emptiness of these thoughts is nondual. The thoughts of the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena are dual, while the emptiness of these thoughts is nondual. The thoughts of stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi are dual, while the emptiness of these thoughts is nondual. The thoughts of all great bodhisattva actions are dual, while the emptiness of these thoughts is nondual. The thoughts of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas are dual, while the emptiness of these thoughts is nondual. The thoughts of the conditioned and unconditioned realm are dual, while the emptiness of these thoughts is nondual.

(The Buddha said that the thoughts of various existent beings are dual, while the emptiness of thoughts is nondual. The former indicates existent beings, while the latter nonexistent beings.)

"Well-Appearing One, all thoughts are dual. All dualities are existent beings, and all existent beings have birth and death. Those with birth and death are not liberated from birth, old age, illness, death, worry, sorrow, misery, anxiety, and upset. Well-Appearing One, the emptiness of all thoughts is nondual. All nondualities are nonexistent beings, and the nonexistent beings do not have birth and death. Those without birth and death are liberated from birth, old age, illness, death, worry, sorrow, misery, anxiety, and upset. Well-Appearing One, because of this cause and condition, you must know that all dualistic thoughts do not have giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna paramitas. They cannot attain intuitive contemplation, or attain compliant forbearance, not to mention they can universally know matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. They cannot cultivate the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path. They cannot attain stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi either, not to mention they can attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge and permanently terminate the enduring disposition of vexations."

(The Buddha noted that all thoughts are dual, and all dualities are existent beings, which are subject to birth, aging, illness, and death. However, the emptiness of thoughts is nondual, and all nondualities are nonexistent, which is free from birth and death, and the suffering ensues.)

## Chapter 73

## Progressing Step by Step

### Section 1

### (In the Second Assembly)

At that time, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One said to the Buddha, "World-Honored One, those dwelling in the thoughts of existent beings possess neither compliant forbearance nor intuitive contemplation resulting from cultivation. How about those dwelling in the thoughts of nonexistent beings? Do they have compliant forbearance? Will they terminate vexations as the holy path practitioners do since the stage of pure contemplation through the stage of Thus-Comer? If they still have vexations, they will not realize and attain the stage correspondent with voice-hearer and the stage of self-enlightened one, let alone enter the correct bodhisattva nature of nonarising. If they do not enter the correct bodhisattva nature of nonarising, how can they realize and attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge? If they do not realize and attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, how can they permanently terminate the enduring disposition of vexations? World-Honored One, if all dharmas do not exist, do not arise or extinguish, and are neither contaminated nor purified; and if the dharmas do not give birth to other dharmas, how can great bodhisattvas realize and attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "It is as you say. Those dwelling in nonthinking do not have compliant forbearance and cannot permanently terminate the enduring

disposition of vexations. If dharmas are nonexistent, without arising or extinction, and without contamination or purification; and if dharmas do not give birth to other dharmas, how can one realize and attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge?"

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, "When practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, do great bodhisattvas have thoughts? Do they have the thought of matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness? Do they have the thought of the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge? Do they have the thought of permanent termination of enduring disposition of vexations? Do they have the thought of matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness and the termination of matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness? Do they have the thought of the eye sphere, ear sphere, and so forth, and conscious sphere? Do they have the thought of the termination of the eye sphere, ear sphere, and so forth, and conscious sphere? Do they have the thought of the sight sphere, sound sphere, and so forth, and mental-image sphere? Do they have the thought of the termination of the sight sphere, sound sphere, and so forth, and mental-image sphere? Do they have the thought of the eye realm, ear realm, and so forth, and conscious realm? Do they have the thought of the termination of the eye realm, ear realm, and so forth, and conscious realm? Do they have the thought of the sight realm, sound realm, and so forth, and mental-image realm? Do they have the thought of the termination of the sight realm, sound realm, and so forth, and the mental-image realm? Do they have the thought of the eye consciousness realm, ear consciousness realm, and so forth, and conscious consciousness realm? Do they have the thought of the termination of the eye consciousness realm, ear consciousness realm, and so forth, and conscious consciousness realm? Do they have the thought of the eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact? Do they have the thought of the termination of the eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact? Do they have the thought of the feelings produced by eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact? Do they have the thought of the termination of the feelings produced by eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact? Do they have the thought of the earth realm, water realm, and so forth, and consciousness realm? Do they have the thought of the termination of the earth realm, water realm, and so forth, and consciousness realm? Do they have the thought of cause and condition, consecutive thoughts, conditions that stimulate the mind, and the conditions that reinforce main causes? Do they have the thought of the termination of cause

and condition, consecutive thoughts, conditions that stimulate the mind, and the conditions that reinforce main causes? Do they have the thought of greed, anger, and ignorance? Do they have the thought of the termination of greed, anger, and ignorance? Do they have the thought of ignorance, action, consciousness, and so forth, and old age, death, worry, sorrow, misery, anxiety, and upset? Do they have the thought of the termination of ignorance, action, consciousness, and so forth, and old age, death, worry, sorrow, misery, anxiety, and upset? Do they have the thought of the four noble truths and the termination of the thought of the noble truths? Do they have the thought of realizing the four noble truths and the permanent termination of the thought of realizing the four noble truths? And so on, do they have the thought of the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge? Do they have the thought of realizing the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge? Do they have the thought of the enduring disposition of vexations and the permanent termination of the enduring disposition of vexations?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "When practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas neither think nor do not think. This is compliant forbearance of bodhisattva, cultivation of the path, attainment of effects, and intuitive contemplation of the truth.

(The Buddha taught that practicing prajna paramita without thinking or without nonthinking is compliant forbearance and so forth.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas adopt nonnature as holy path and intuitive contemplation, they will become fully aware that the self-nature of all dharmas is nonnature. Because of this cause and condition, you must know that all dharmas have adopted nonnature as self-nature."

(The Buddha said that the self-nature of all dharmas is nonnature.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "If the nature of all dharmas is nonnature, how can Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones turn all dharmas and all spiritual levels freely and easily after they are fully awakened to the nonnature of all dharmas and thus named Buddha?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “All dharmas have adopted nonnature as self-nature. As I still was a bodhisattva and cultivated the bodhisattva path previously, I had correctly cultivated giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna paramitas. Because of this cultivation, I got away from greedy evils and other not virtuous dharmas, and, with general contemplation and specific investigation, I entered the first meditation, fully dwelled in it, and enjoyed the joy and pleasure caused by getting away. I then was apart from pleasure and pain when the previously existing joy and worries disappeared. Without pain and pleasure, but with a pure mind in equanimity, I entered the fourth meditation and fully dwelled in it. At that time, I was able to grasp the phenomena and the factors of various meditations well, but I was not attached to them at all. I was not addicted to the tastes of various meditations and their factors; I did not attain them either. At that time, I did differentiate between the pure actions and the forms of the four meditations. Although I could master various kinds of meditation and their factors well and fluently, I did not receive the rewards caused by the practice. I just let the meditations elicit the supernatural powers of transformation, heavenly ear, reading others’ minds, knowing previous lives, and heavenly eye. I was able to grasp the phenomena of these five supernatural powers very well, but I was not attached to them or addicted to their tastes. I did not attain any states of the supernatural powers, nor did I differentiate among them. I just dwelled in emptiness. At that time, I contemplated all dharmas as equal and without nature. Being correspondent with prajna instantaneously, I realized and attained the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. I thus realized that this is the noble truth of suffering; this is the noble truth of the cause of suffering; this is the noble truth of the cessation of suffering; and this is the noble truth of the path for the cessation of suffering. They are all with one form, that is, formlessness; and this formlessness is nonexistent. I thus achieved 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 immeasurable, countless, and boundless unimaginable, subtle, and wonderful merits and virtues. I further used my wonderful knowledge of the Buddha to establish sentient beings into three groups: those certainly will move on correct path, those certainly will move on incorrect path, and those who are uncertain in their orientations. I continued to guide and teach them expediently according to their individual differences, so that they could all benefit in obtaining superior peace and happiness.”

(The Buddha described in detail his own experience of becoming a Buddha.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, “How do Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones in the nonnature of all dharmas elicit the four meditations and five supernatural powers, realize the great bodhi, and with their various merits and virtues establish the three different groups of sentient beings in peace and happiness?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “If various greedy, evil, and not virtuous dharmas had even a little bit of self-nature, then when I cultivated the bodhisattva path before, I would not be able to fully understand that all greedy evils and not virtuous dharmas are without self-nature, nor could I stay away from evils and enter the first, second, third, and fourth meditations and fully dwell in them. Because various greedy, evils, and not virtuous dharmas do not have neither self-nature nor other nature, but nonnature, I can stay away from the evils and enter the first, second, third, and fourth meditations when cultivating the bodhisattva path.

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, if the five supernatural powers had a little bit of self-nature or adopted other nature as their self-nature, then when I cultivated the bodhisattva path, I would not be able to fully realize that all supernatural powers have adopted nonnature as self-nature; I would not further elicit various supernatural powers freely and at ease, and apply them well in all situations without hindrance. Because the supernatural powers do not have self-nature or other nature, but nonnature, I can fully understand the inherent nature of supernatural powers to elicit various supernatural powers freely and at ease and apply them well in various situations without hindrance.

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, if the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas had a little bit of self-nature or had adopted other nature as its self-nature, then I would not be able to fully understand that the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas had adopted nonnature as its self-nature when I cultivated the bodhisattva path, nor could I realize various merits and virtues contained in the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas. Because the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas and its merits and virtues have neither self-nature nor other-nature, but nonnature, I can fully

understand the truth when I cultivate the bodhisattva path and realize that the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi possesses various merits and virtues.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, if the sentient beings had a little bit of self-nature or other-nature, I would not be able to fully understand that all sentient beings had adopted nonnature as their self-nature when I became a Buddha. Knowing that the self-nature of all sentient beings is nonnature, I can establish them in three different groups, teaching them expediently according to individual needs, and let them attain superior benefits, peace, and happiness."

(The Buddha stated that because of nonnature, he could stay away from the not virtuous dharmas and enter the four meditations. Because of understanding the nonnature of the supernatural powers, he could elicit these powers freely and without hindrance to benefit sentient being. Because of fully understanding the nonnature of the unsurpassed bodhi, he realized that the unsurpassed bodhi contained various merits and virtues. Because of understanding the nonnature of all sentient beings, he could establish them in three different groups and expediently teach and guide them to dwell in superior benefits, peace, and happiness.)

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Chapter 73

Progressing Step by Step

Section 2

(In the Second Assembly)

At that time, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, “World-Honored One, if the great bodhisattvas in the nonnature of all dharmas initiate the four meditations and elicit the five supernatural powers, realize and attain the merits and virtues of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, and establish sentient beings in three orientations to bring benefits and happiness to them, how do novice great bodhisattvas in the nonnature of all dharmas make virtuous karmas, cultivate and practice bodhisattva actions step by step, and finally realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi to bring superior benefits and happiness to all sentient beings?”

(Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha how novice bodhisattvas, understanding the nonnature of all dharmas, should cultivate virtuous actions step by step and ultimately attain the unsurpassed bodhi to benefit sentient being.)

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “If novice great bodhisattvas have heard holy dharma from Buddha, or from the holy ones, such as bodhisattvas, self-enlightened ones, arhats, nonreturners, once-returners, and stream-enterers who have often made offerings to Buddhas, that the nature of all dharmas is nonnature. They have also heard that those who have perfectly realized this truth are named Buddha; those who are in the process of realizing this truth are named bodhisattva; and those who deeply believe in this truth are named the virtuous ones. All these holy ones have confirmed that the self-nature of all dharmas and sentient beings is nonnature; all dharmas and sentient beings do not have self-nature even as tiny as the tip of a hair.

"When hearing this truth, the novice bodhisattvas thought: 'If the nature of all dharmas and sentient beings is nonnature; those who have perfectly realized this truth are named Buddha; those who are in the process of realizing this truth are named bodhisattva; and those who deeply believe in this truth are named virtuous ones, then I should aspire to realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, expediently assist the sentient beings to dwell in non-thinking.' After having this thought, these novice bodhisattvas are determined to aspire to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. With an attempt to guide sentient beings to universally attain nirvana, the novices will make virtuous karmas, cultivate and practice virtuous actions step by step as many great bodhisattvas did previously, and finally realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. These novice great bodhisattvas thus should first cultivate and learn giving paramita, then pure-precept paramita, forbearance paramita, diligence paramita, meditation paramita, and finally prajna paramita.

"Well-Appearing One, since the initial aspiration to giving paramita, the great bodhisattvas have not only practiced giving themselves but also encouraged others to do so. They have correctly and publicly praised the merits and virtues of giving and joyfully admired and acclaimed those who have practiced giving. Because of this cause and condition, they will gain great fortunes and always stay away from the mind of stinginess. They give food, drinks, clothing, beds, bedding, necklaces, fragrant flowers, properties, treasures, lamps, vehicles, houses, and other living supplies to those in need. Because of practicing giving, these great bodhisattvas also observe precept, they are reborn in heaven or as dignified and noble human beings. Because of practicing giving and observing precept, they also practice meditation and then attain wisdom. Because of cultivating giving, precept, meditation, and wisdom, they attain liberation. Because of cultivating giving, precept, meditation, wisdom, and liberation, they get to know liberation and the views of liberation. After fulfilling all these practices, they surpass the stage of voice-hearer or self-enlightened one and enter the correct bodhisattva nature of nonarising. They further assist sentient beings to mature and dignify and purify the Buddha lands. After fulfilling these services, they will realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, turn the wonderful dharma wheel, and establish sentient beings in peace and liberation through three vehicles. Well-Appearing One, these great bodhisattvas have started with practicing giving, and then move on, step by step, to make virtuous karmas, cultivate all

kinds of learning, and practice all virtuous actions. But they have attained nothing at all. Why? It is because all dharmas are without self-nature.

(The Buddha outlined a sequential process through which novice bodhisattvas learned the holy dharmas step by step, beginning with giving paramita and extending to other five paramitas. This ultimately leads to the attainment of the unsurpassed bodhi, which enables bodhisattvas to help sentient beings.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, since the time aspiring to the cultivation and learning of pure-precept paramita, the great bodhisattvas have not only observed pure precept themselves but also encouraged others to do so. They have correctly and publicly praised the merits and virtues of pure precept and joyfully admired and acclaimed those who have practiced pure precept. Because of this cause and condition, their pure precept becomes pure, and they will be reborn in great noble families of humans or heavenly beings to practice giving for the poor. After practicing giving, they dwell peacefully in precept, concentration, wisdom, liberation, and the knowledge and views of liberation. Because of the purity of precept, concentration, wisdom, liberation, and the knowledge and views of liberation, they surpass the stage of voice-hearer or self-enlightened one and enter the correct bodhisattva nature of nonarising. They further assist sentient beings to mature and dignify and purify the Buddha lands. Upon accomplishing all these tasks, they will realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, turn the wonderful dharma wheel, and establish sentient beings in the three vehicles, allowing them to get rid of birth and death and attain nirvana. Well-Appearing One, because of pure precept, these great bodhisattvas can make virtuous karmas, cultivate all kinds of learning, and practice all virtuous actions step by step, but they will attain nothing. Why? It is because all dharmas are without self-nature.

(The Buddha elaborated how novice bodhisattvas aspired and progressed toward the unsurpassed bodhi through a step-by-step sequential learning process, starting with pure-precept paramita and extending to other five paramitas, and ultimately attaining the unsurpassed bodhi to assist sentient beings.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, since initiating aspiration to the cultivation and learning of forbearance paramita, the great bodhisattvas have not only practiced forbearance

themselves but also encouraged others to do so. They have correctly and publicly praised the merits and virtues of forbearance and joyfully admired and acclaimed those who have practiced forbearance. When practicing forbearance, these great bodhisattvas give properties and living supplies to various sentient beings to satisfy their needs. After practicing giving, they dwell peacefully in pure precept, concentration, wisdom, liberation, and the knowledge and views of liberation. Because of the purity of precept, concentration, wisdom, liberation, and the knowledge and views of liberation, they surpass the stage of voice-hearer or self-enlightened one and enter the correct bodhisattva nature of nonarising. They further assist sentient beings to mature and dignify and purify the Buddha lands. Upon accomplishing these services, they will realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, turn the wonderful dharma wheel, and establish sentient beings in the three vehicles, so that they can get rid of birth and death and attain nirvana. Well-Appearing One, because of forbearance, these great bodhisattvas can make virtuous karmas, cultivate all kinds of learning, and practice all virtuous actions step by step, but they will attain nothing. Why? It is because all dharmas are without self-nature.

(The Buddha elaborated how novice bodhisattvas aspired and advanced toward the unsurpassed bodhi through a step-by-step sequential learning process, commencing with forbearance paramita and extending to other five paramitas, ultimately attaining the unsurpassed bodhi to assist sentient beings.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, since the great bodhisattvas aspired to the cultivation and learning of diligence paramita, they have not only diligently worked on various virtuous dharmas themselves but also encouraged others to do so. They have correctly and publicly praised the merits and virtues of diligence and joyfully admired and acclaimed those who could work diligently and correctly. When practicing diligence, the great bodhisattvas give properties and living supplies to the sentient beings in need. After doing this, they dwell peacefully in precept, concentration, wisdom, liberation, and the knowledge and views of liberation. Because of the purity of precept, concentration, wisdom, liberation, and the knowledge and views of liberation, they surpass the stage of voice-hearer or self-enlightened one and enter the correct bodhisattva nature of nonarising. They further assist the sentient beings to mature and dignify and purify the Buddha lands. After accomplishing the services, they will realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, turn the wonderful dharma

wheel, and establish sentient beings in the three vehicles, so that they can get rid of birth and death and attain nirvana. Well-Appearing One, these great bodhisattvas have worked diligently and been able to make virtuous karmas, cultivate all learning, and practice all virtuous actions step by step, but they will attain nothing. Why? It is because all dharmas are without self-nature.

(The Buddha elaborated how novice bodhisattvas aspired and progressed toward the unsurpassed bodhi through a step-by-step sequential learning process, beginning with diligence paramita and extending to other five paramitas, ultimately leading the attainment of unsurpassed bodhi to assist sentient beings.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, since the great bodhisattvas aspired to the cultivation and learning of meditation paramita, the great bodhisattvas have not only entered and understood the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations themselves but also encouraged others to do so. They have publicly and correctly praised the merits and virtues of the four meditations, the four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations and joyfully admired and acclaimed those who have entered the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations. When practicing meditation, these great bodhisattvas give properties and living supplies to the sentient beings in need. After practicing giving, they further dwell peacefully in precept, concentration, wisdom, liberation, and the knowledge and views of liberation. Because of the purity of precept, concentration, wisdom, liberation, and the knowledge and views of liberation, they surpass the stage of voice-hearer or self-enlightened one and enter the correct bodhisattva nature of nonarising. They further assist sentient beings to mature and dignify and purify the Buddha lands. After accomplishing these services, they will realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, turn the wonderful dharma wheel, and establish the sentient beings in the three vehicles to let them get rid of birth and death and attain nirvana. Well-Appearing One, these great bodhisattvas have practiced meditation and been able to make virtuous karmas, cultivate all learning, and practice all virtuous actions step by step, but they will attain nothing. Why? It is because all dharmas are without self-nature.

(The Buddha elaborated how novice bodhisattvas aspired and worked toward the unsurpassed bodhi through a step-by-step sequential learning process, starting with meditation paramita and

extending to other five paramitas, ultimately attaining the unsurpassed bodhi to assist sentient beings.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, since aspiring to the cultivation and learning of prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas have not only adopted nonattainment as skillful means to practice the six paramitas themselves but also encouraged others to do so. They have correctly and publicly praised the merits and virtues of the six paramitas and joyfully admired and acclaimed those who have practiced the six paramitas. Because of the expedient skillfulness of the six paramitas, they surpass the stage of voice-hearer or self-enlightened one and enter the correct bodhisattva nature of nonarising. After entering the correct bodhisattva nature of nonarising, they assist sentient beings to mature and dignify and purify the Buddha lands. Upon accomplishing these services, they will realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, turn the wonderful dharma wheel, and establish the sentient beings in the three vehicles, to allow them to get rid of birth and death and attain nirvana. Well-Appearing One, because of prajna, these great bodhisattvas can make virtuous karmas, cultivate all kinds of learning, and practice all virtuous actions step by step, but they will attain nothing. Why? It is because all dharmas are without self-nature.

(The Buddha elaborated how novice bodhisattvas should work toward the unsurpassed bodhi through a step-by-step sequential learning process, starting with prajna paramita and extending to other five paramitas, ultimately attaining the unsurpassed bodhi to assist sentient beings.)

"Well-Appearing One, this is how the novice great bodhisattvas, based on the learning of the six paramitas, make virtuous karmas, cultivate all learning, and practice all virtuous actions step by step to bring benefits and happiness to all sentient beings.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, since the time aspiring to the bodhi, the great bodhisattvas have stayed in a mind correspondent with the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge to make virtuous karmas, cultivate all learning, and practice all virtuous actions step by step, then they develop a belief and understanding that the nature of all dharmas is nonnature. To achieve this, they should first learn the mindfulness in compliance with the Buddha, then the mindfulness in compliance with the dharma, sangha, precept, equanimity, and heaven in sequence.

"Well-Appearing One, how should great bodhisattvas cultivate and learn the mindfulness compliant with the Buddha? When cultivating and learning the mindfulness compliant with the Buddha, the great bodhisattvas should not think of the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones by virtue of matter, or by virtue of feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness. Why? Matter, feeling, and so forth, and consciousness do not have self-nature, and no one should be able to stay in mindfulness of or reflect on the dharmas without self-nature. Why? Being detached from mindfulness and reflection is regarded compliant with the Buddha.

(The Buddha taught how great bodhisattvas should cultivate to stay in mindfulness compliant with the Buddha.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, when cultivating and learning the mindfulness compliant with the Buddha, the great bodhisattvas should not reflect on the thirty-two perfect major marks of the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones; the Buddha's body surrounded by a circle of radiant lights in authentic golden color as wide as one joyana; or the eighty distinguishing minor features of the Thus-Comer. Why? The perfect features and golden-colored body are without self-nature. One cannot stay mindful of or reflect on the dharmas without self-nature. Why? Being detached from mindfulness and reflection is regarded compliant with the Buddha.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, when cultivating and learning the mindfulness compliant with the Buddha, the great bodhisattvas should not reflect on the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones through precept, concentration, wisdom, liberation, or the knowledge and views of liberation. Why? It is because these dharmas are without self-nature. One cannot stay mindful of or reflect on the dharmas without self-nature. Why? Being detached from mindfulness and reflection is regarded compliant with the Buddha.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, when cultivating and learning the mindfulness in compliance with the Buddha, the great bodhisattvas should not reflect on the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones through the five eyes and the six supernatural powers, or through the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so

forth, and the eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power. Why? It is because all dharmas are without self-nature. One cannot stay mindful of or reflect on the dharmas without self-nature. Why? Being detached from mindfulness and reflection is regarded compliant with the Buddha.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, when cultivating and learning the mindfulness in compliance with the Buddha, the great bodhisattvas should not reflect on the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones through staying in correct mindfulness and always dwelling in equanimity, or through the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, the perfect knowledge of all phenomena, and the rest of immeasurable and boundless Buddha dharma. Why? All these dharmas are without self-nature. One cannot stay mindful of or reflect on the dharmas without self-nature. Why? Being detached from mindfulness or reflection is regarded compliant with the Buddha.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, when cultivating the mindfulness in compliance with the Buddha, the great bodhisattvas should not reflect on the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones through dependent nature or dependent origination. Why? Both dependent nature and dependent origination are without self-nature. One cannot stay mindful of or reflect on the dharmas without self-nature. Why? Being detached from mindfulness and reflection is regarded compliant with the Buddha.

"Well-Appearing One, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas should cultivate and learn the mindfulness in compliance with the Buddha in this way. If they cultivate and learn the mindfulness in compliance with the Buddha in this way, they will be able to make virtuous karmas, cultivate perfect learning, and practice virtuous actions step by step, and fulfill the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path perfectly. They also will be able to fulfill 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; 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 liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration; various stages of bodhisattva; 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 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 perfectly. Because of the fulfillment of these virtuous dharmas, the great bodhisattvas will be able to realize and attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. Well-Appearing One, because these great bodhisattvas have adopted nonnature of all dharmas as skillful means, they are able to be awakened to the truth that all dharmas are without self-nature, and in the dharmas, there is neither thinking nor nonthinking. Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas should cultivate and learn the mindfulness in compliance with the Buddha in this way. In the nonnature of all dharmas, the Buddha is unattainable, not to mention the mindfulness in compliance with the Buddha.

(The Buddha elaborated to explain what the mindfulness in compliance with the Buddha is, and how great bodhisattvas should cultivate this mindfulness. He emphasized that the nature of all dharmas is nonnature; one cannot stay mindful of or reflect on the dharmas without nature. Therefore, to stay away from mindfulness and reflection is to be mindful in compliance with the Buddha.)

"Well-Appearing One, how should great bodhisattvas cultivate and learn the mindfulness in compliance with the dharma? When cultivating and learning the mindfulness in compliance with the dharma, the great bodhisattvas should not reflect on the virtuous and not virtuous dharmas, the morally related and morally unrelated dharmas, the dharmas of and beyond the world, the dharmas with and without desirable tastes, the controversial and the not controversial dharmas, the holy and not holy dharmas, the flawed and flawless dharmas, the dharmas in the three realms and the dharmas beyond the three realms, and the conditioned and the unconditioned realms. Why? All these dharmas are without self-nature. No one should be able to stay in mindfulness or reflect on the dharmas without self-nature. Why? To stay away from mindfulness and reflection is to be mindful in compliance with the dharma. Well-Appearing One, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas should

cultivate and learn the mindfulness in compliance with the dharma in this way. If they can do this, they will be able to make virtuous karmas, cultivate all learning, and practice virtuous actions step by step. If the great bodhisattvas can make virtuous karmas, cultivate all kinds of learning, and practice all virtuous actions in this way, they will be able to fulfill the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena, and realize and attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. Well-Appearing One, as these great bodhisattvas adopt nonnature as skillful means, they will become awakened that all dharmas are without self-nature, in which there is neither thinking nor nonthinking. Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas should cultivate and learn the mindfulness in compliance with the dharma in this way. In the nonnature of all dharmas, the dharma is unattainable, not to mention the mindfulness in compliance with the dharma.

(The Buddha taught how great bodhisattvas learn to stay in the mindfulness in compliance with the dharma.)

"Well-Appearing One, how should great bodhisattvas cultivate and learn the mindfulness in compliance with the sangha? When cultivating and learning the mindfulness in compliance with the sangha, the great bodhisattvas should think, 'The Buddha's disciples all possess the aggregates of pure precept, concentration, wisdom, liberation, and the knowledge and views of liberation; these are manifested by the unconditioned reality. Besides, the stream-entry practitioners and stream-enterers, once-return practitioners and once-returners, nonreturn practitioners and nonreturners, and arhat practitioners and arhats are also manifested by the unconditioned reality. The self-nature of all these dharmas is without nature. Because of this cause and condition, we should not reflect on them. Why? All holy monastics do not have self-nature. No one can stay in mindfulness of or reflect on the sangha which is without self-nature. Why? Being detached from mindfulness and reflection is regarded compliant with the sangha.' Well-Appearing One, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas should cultivate and learn the mindfulness in compliance with the sangha in this way. If they can do this, they will be able to make virtuous karmas, cultivate all kinds of learning, and practice all virtuous actions step by step; fulfill the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena; and realize and attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. Well-Appearing One, as these great bodhisattvas adopt nonnature of all

dharmas as skillful means, they will become awakened that all dharmas are without self-nature, in which, there is neither thinking nor nonthinking. Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas should cultivate and learn the mindfulness in compliance with the sangha in this way. In the nonnature of all dharmas, the sangha is unattainable, not to mention the mindfulness in compliance with the sangha.

(The Buddha taught how great bodhisattvas cultivate and learn to stay mindful of the sangha, the community of monastics.)

"Well-Appearing One, how should great bodhisattvas cultivate and learn the mindfulness in compliance with precept? Since aspiring to the bodhi, the great bodhisattvas should stay in the mindfulness that the holy precept is without leaks and cracks, flaws and filths. It is ungraspable and cannot be attached to, worthy of offerings, and admired and upheld by the wise ones, who value it as exquisite and most virtuous. They should reflect on precept by following superior concentrations. However, as the holy precept is without nature, no one can reflect on it. Why? Being detached from mindfulness and reflection is regarded compliant with precept. Well-Appearing One, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas should cultivate and learn the mindfulness in compliance with precept in this way. They thus can make virtuous karmas, cultivate all learning, and practice all virtuous actions step by step. They can fulfill the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena, and realize and attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. Well-Appearing One, as these great bodhisattvas adopt nonnature of all dharmas as skillful means, they will become awakened that all dharmas are without self-nature. In nonnature, there is neither thinking nor nonthinking. Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas should cultivate and learn the mindfulness in compliance with precept in this way. In the nonnature of all dharmas, precept is unattainable, not to mention the mindfulness in compliance with precept.

(The Buddha taught the right way of learning and cultivating the mindfulness in compliance with precept.)

"Well-Appearing One, how should the great bodhisattvas cultivate and learn the mindfulness in compliance with equanimity? Since the time aspiring to the bodhi, the great

bodhisattvas should stay in a mindfulness of equanimity to renounce themselves, renounce others, renounce properties, and renounce dharmas. When practicing renunciation and giving, they should think that they can or cannot renounce and give, nor should they reflect on the things renounced and the blessings and effects they can attain. Why? All such dharmas are without self-nature. No one can keep in mindfulness of or reflect on the dharmas without self-nature. Why? Being detached from mindfulness and reflection is regarded compliant with equanimity. Well-Appearing One, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas should cultivate and learn the mindfulness in compliance with equanimity in this way, so that they can make virtuous karmas, cultivate all kinds of learning, and practice all virtuous actions step by step. They also can fulfill the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena, and thus realize and attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. Well-Appearing One, as these great bodhisattvas adopt nonnature of all dharmas as skillful means, they will become awakened that all dharmas are without self-nature; in nonnature, there is neither thinking nor nonthinking. Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas should cultivate and learn the mindfulness in compliance with equanimity in this way. In the nonnature of all dharmas, equanimity is unattainable, not to mention the mindfulness in compliance with equanimity.

(The Buddha taught how great bodhisattvas learn and cultivate to stay in mindfulness in compliance with equanimity.)

"Well-Appearing One, how should great bodhisattvas cultivate and learn mindfulness in compliance with heaven? Since the time aspiring to the bodhi, the great bodhisattvas should think, 'Those reborn in the Heaven of Four Great Kings and so forth, and Heaven of Enjoying Other-Made Changes because must have developed pure belief, observed precept, heard correct dharma, practiced equanimity, and attained wisdom. Now I have also had such similar merits and virtues as the heavenly beings do.' They should also think, 'Various stream-enterers were reborn in the six heavens within the realm of desire, and various nonreturners were reborn in the upper two realms. All these things are unattainable, so we should not reflect on them. Why? These heavens are without self-nature. We cannot stay in mindfulness of or reflect on the dharmas without self-nature. Being detached from mindfulness and reflection is regarded compliant with heaven.' Well-Appearing One, when great bodhisattvas cultivate and learn the fathomless prajna

paramita, they should cultivate and learn mindfulness of and reflection on heaven in this way, so that they can make virtuous karmas, cultivate various kinds of learning, and practice all virtuous actions step by step to fulfill the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena, and realize and attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. Well-Appearing One, as these great bodhisattvas adopt nonnature of all dharmas as skillful means, they will become awakened that all dharmas are without self-nature, in which, there is neither thinking nor nonthinking. Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas should cultivate and learn the mindfulness in compliance with heaven in this way. As in the nonnature of all dharmas, heaven is unattainable, not to mention the mindfulness in compliance with heaven.

(The Buddha stated how great bodhisattvas learn and cultivate to stay in mindfulness in compliance with heaven.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, when the great bodhisattvas practice the fathomless prajna paramita to fulfill virtuous karmas, all kinds of learning, and all virtuous actions, they should adopt nonnature of all dharmas as skillful means to learn internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature; the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and the noble eightfold path; the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations; and the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations. They should adopt nonnature of all dharmas as skillful means to learn the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration; giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita; the stages of great bodhisattva; 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; and the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena.

"Well-Appearing One, when the great bodhisattvas cultivate and learn the bodhi path in this way, they are awakened that the self-nature of all dharmas is nonnature, in which not a little bit of mindfulness is attainable, let alone the mindfulness of matter, feeling, thinking, action, and

consciousness; the mindfulness of the eye sphere, ear sphere, and so forth, and conscious sphere; the mindfulness of the sight sphere, sound sphere, and so forth, and mental-image sphere; the mindfulness of the eye realm, ear realm, and so forth, and conscious realm; the mindfulness of the sight realm, sound realm, and so forth, and mental-image realm; the mindfulness of the eye consciousness realm, ear consciousness realm, and so forth, and conscious consciousness realm; the mindfulness of the eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact; the mindfulness of the feelings produced by eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact; the mindfulness of the earth realm, water realm, and so forth, and consciousness realm; the mindfulness of cause and condition, consecutive thoughts, conditions that stimulate the mind, and the conditions that reinforce main causes; the mindfulness of ignorance, action, consciousness, and so forth, and old age and death; the mindfulness of giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita; the mindfulness of internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature; the mindfulness of realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable; the mindfulness of the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering; the mindfulness of the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path; the mindfulness of the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations; the mindfulness of the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplation; the mindfulness of the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration; the mindfulness of the stage of pure contemplation, stage of embryonic Buddha nature, and so forth, and stage of Thus-Comer; the mindfulness of the stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilements, and so forth, and stage of dharma cloud; the mindfulness of all dharani gates and all samadhi gates; the mindfulness of the five eyes and six supernatural powers; the mindfulness of the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power; the mindfulness of the thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features; the mindfulness of staying in correct mindfulness and always dwelling in equanimity; the mindfulness of the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena; the mindfulness of stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi; the mindfulness of all great bodhisattva actions; the mindfulness of the

unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas; and the mindfulness of the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. The mindfulness of all these dharmas is unattainable. Well-Appearing One, it does not make sense to say that such various kinds of mindfulness and the dharmas of which the great bodhisattvas are mindful are existent.

(The Buddha taught that it does not make sense to assert that all these kinds of mindfulness and the dharmas of which the great bodhisattvas are mindful are attainable and existent.)

"Therefore, Well-Appearing One, as the great bodhisattvas practice the fathomless prajna paramita to make virtuous karmas, cultivate all kinds of learning, and practice virtuous actions step by step, their minds do not move because all dharmas do not have self-nature."

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One said to the Buddha, "World-Honored One, if all dharmas do not have self-nature, then matter, feeling, thinking, action, consciousness, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge should not exist. There should be no Buddha, dharma, and sangha; no contaminated or purified effects of the paths; and no attainment and intuitive contemplation. All dharmas should be nonexistent."

The Buddha asked Well-Appearing One, "What do you think about this? Can nature and nonnature be attained within the nonnature of all dharmas?"

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

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, "If in nonnature of all dharmas, both nature and nonnature are unattainable, why do you claim that if all dharmas do not have self-nature, there should be no matter, feeling, thinking, action, consciousness, and so forth, and the attainment and intuitive contemplation. Then all dharmas should be nonexistent?"

Well-Appearing One replied, "I am not skeptical about the meaning of this truth. However, future bhiksus might pursue the effect of voice-hearer, self-enlightened one, or the Buddha, and think, 'If all dharmas do not have self-nature, who is contaminated, purified, bound, liberated?' Misunderstanding the meanings of contamination, purification, bondage, and liberation may lead them to ruin precepts, correct views, demeanors, and pure livelihood, and this might cause them to fall into severe suffering in the three evil destinies and cannot get rid of

them. I anticipate the possibility of such outcome, which is why I make this statement, though I have no doubt about it."

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, "Excellent, excellent! It is great that you ask this question for the sake of the future bhiksus. In the nonnature of all dharmas, both existent beings and nonexistent beings are unattainable."

(The Buddha concluded that within nonnature of all dharmas, no existent or nonexistent beings are attainable.)

## Chapter 74

## Formlessness

### Section 1

(In the Second Assembly)

At that time, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "World-Honored One, if the self-nature of all dharmas is nonnature, why do great bodhisattvas pursue the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi to bring benefits and happiness to all sentient beings?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "Although the self-nature of all dharmas is nonnature, the great bodhisattvas still intend to bring benefits and happiness to all sentient beings. Why? It is because sentient beings possess incorrect views and believe in the discontinuation or permanence of life. They insist to dwell in attainment and do not want to change their minds. They are attached to ignorant and upside-down views and thus it turns out very difficult for them to become liberated. Well-Appearing One, you must know that those

dwelling in attainment will attain nothing; they will not attain intuitive insight into the truth and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi."

(The Buddha explained why great bodhisattvas understanding all dharmas as unattainable still seek unsurpassed bodhi to help and benefit sentient beings.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, "If attachment to attainment does not lead to intuitive insight and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, does non-attainment attain intuitive insight and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi?"

The Buddha replied, "Nonattainment itself is attainment, intuitive insight, and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. Why? Nonattainment does not destroy the forms of the dharma realm. Well-Appearing One, you must know that if ones try to attain intuitive insight or the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi within nonattainment, they will destroy dharma realm."

(The Buddha responded that nonattainment itself is attainment of insightful understanding and the unsurpassed bodhi. Those trying to attain something within nonattainment are contrary to dharma nature.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, "If attachment to attainment does not lead to intuitive insight and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi; If nonattainment is the attainment of intuitive insight and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi; and if within nonattainment there is no attainment, intuitive insight, and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, then how can great bodhisattvas cultivate to progress from the first stage through the tenth stage? How can they attain the dharma forbearance of nonarising? How can they attain the supernatural powers that mature at different times and in different types? How can they attain giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita that mature at different times and in different types? How can they dwell in the dharma of arising that matures at different times and in different types to assist the sentient beings to mature, and dignify and purify the Buddha lands? How can they gain the virtuous roots caused by making offerings respectfully to the Buddhas, ensuring these virtuous roots unexhausted until attaining

the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi? How can the Buddhas' relics and disciples continue to be respected and receive offerings even after the Buddhas enter nirvana?"

The Buddha explained to Well-Appearing One, "Because all dharmas are unattainable, the great bodhisattvas can attain the dharma forbearance of nonarising when they reach the first stage, second stage, and so forth, and the tenth stage. This enables them to attain the supernatural powers that mature in different types and at different times; attain giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita that mature in different type and at different time. They thus can dwell in the dharmas that mature in different types and at different times to assist sentient beings to mature, dignify and purify the Buddha lands, and make best offerings respectfully to various Buddhas. The virtuous roots derived from making these offerings persist without exhaustion even after achieving the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. After entering nirvana, their relics and disciples will continue to be honored and receive offerings made by followers as the powers of virtuous roots persist."

(The Buddha explained how great bodhisattvas cultivate to progress through the bodhisattva stages, develop virtuous roots, and continue to be respected even after entering nirvana, within the context that all dharmas are unattainable.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "If all dharmas are unattainable, what is the difference between giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna paramitas and various supernatural powers?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "For those free from attainment, the six paramitas and various supernatural powers are not different. For those attached to attainment, different forms of the six paramitas are taught expediently to free them from various defiled attachments."

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "Based on what cause and condition to say that for those free from attainment, the six paramitas and the supernatural powers are not different?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "When the great bodhisattvas cultivate the fathomless prajna paramita, they practice giving without attaining giving, the givers, the

receivers, the things given, and the effects of giving. They observe and protect pure precept without attaining pure precept. They cultivate forbearance without attaining forbearance. They work diligently without attaining diligence. They enter various meditations without attaining meditations. They elicit prajna without attaining prajna. They activate supernatural powers without attaining supernatural powers. They cultivate the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and the noble eightfold path without attaining the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path. They cultivate the three liberation gates without attaining the three liberation gates. They cultivate the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations without attaining the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations. They cultivate the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations without attaining the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations. They cultivate the stages of bodhisattva without attaining the stages of bodhisattva. They cultivate the dharani gates and samadhi gates without attaining the dharani gates and samadhi gates. They cultivate the five eyes and six supernatural powers without attaining the five eyes and six supernatural powers. They cultivate the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power without attaining the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power. They cultivate staying in correct mindfulness and always dwelling in equanimity without attaining staying in correct mindfulness and dwelling in equanimity. They cultivate the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena without attaining the perfect knowledge of everything, the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena. They assist the sentient beings to mature without attaining the sentient beings. They dignify and purify the Buddha lands without attaining the Buddha lands; and they realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi without attaining the Buddha dharma. Thus, Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas should practice the unattainable, fathomless prajna paramita. If the great bodhisattvas practice the unattainable, fathomless prajna paramita, they will not be destroyed by evil demons and their associates."

(The Buddha taught why the six paramitas and the supernatural powers are essentially not different for those free from attainment.)

At that time, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, “World-Honored One, how can great bodhisattvas practice the fathomless prajna paramita and use one mind that arises to absorb the six paramitas; the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations; the thirty-seven factors for enlightenment; the three liberation gates; the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations; 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 dwelling in equanimity; the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena; and the thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “When the great bodhisattvas practice the fathomless prajna paramita, all giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita that they cultivate should be integrated with prajna paramita to achieve perfection. And so on, the thirty-two perfect major marks and the eighty distinguishing minor features that they cultivate should be integrated with prajna paramita to achieve perfection. Thus, Well-Appearing One, when cultivating the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas should absorb the six paramitas, the four meditations, and so forth, and the thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features with one mind.”

(The Buddha responded to Well-Appearing One how great bodhisattvas cultivate prajna paramita and use one mind to absorb all six paramitas, and so forth, and the perfect marks and distinguishing minor features.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, “World-Honored One, when the great bodhisattvas practice the fathomless prajna paramita, why are the six paramitas, four meditations, and so forth, and the thirty-two perfect major marks and the eighty distinguishing minor features integrated with prajna paramita by using one mind, as all their accomplishments will be absorbed by prajna paramita?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “When the great bodhisattvas practice the fathomless prajna paramita, all giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita that they cultivate will become far away from dualistic thinking because of being absorbed by prajna paramita, And so on, the thirty-two perfect major marks and the eighty distinguishing minor features that they cultivate will also become far away from dualistic thinking because of being absorbed by prajna paramita.”

(The Buddha said that all holy dharmas cultivated by great bodhisattvas will transcend dualistic thinking as they are absorbed by prajna paramita.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, “When practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, how do great bodhisattvas practice giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita without holding dualistic thinking? How do they elicit the thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features without holding dualistic thinking?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “When practicing the fathomless prajna paramita to fulfill giving paramita, the great bodhisattvas will absorb all paramitas, four meditations, and so forth, and the thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features into giving paramita to fulfill giving paramita. Because of this cause and condition, they can stay away from dualistic thinking. Similarly, when they would like to fulfill the eighty distinguishing features, they will also absorb all paramitas, four meditations, and so forth, and the thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features into the eighty distinguishing minor features to fulfill the eighty distinguishing minor features. Because of this cause and condition, they can stay away from dualistic thinking.

(The Buddha explained how great bodhisattvas can practice various holy dharmas without holding dualistic thinking.)

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, if the great bodhisattvas would like to practice giving paramita, they should dwell in a flawless mind to practice giving paramita. If they would like to practice pure-precept paramita, forbearance paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita, they should dwell in a flawless mind to

practice pure-precept paramita, forbearance paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita. If they practice giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita in this way, they will stay away from dualistic thinking. Similarly, if they would like to elicit the thirty-two perfect major marks, they should dwell in a flawless mind to elicit the thirty-two perfect major marks. If they would like to elicit the eighty distinguishing minor features, they should dwell in a flawless mind to elicit the eighty distinguishing minor features. If they elicit thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features in this way, they will be able to stay away from dualistic thinking."

(The Buddha taught more how great bodhisattvas can cultivate various holy dharmas without holding dualistic thinking.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, "How do the great bodhisattvas dwell in a flawless mind to practice giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and eighty distinguishing minor features when they practice the fathomless prajna paramita?"

(Well-Appearing One asked again how great bodhisattvas dwell in a flawless mind.)

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "When practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas should practice giving paramita without seeing the forms, namely, they will not see the one who practices giving, the things given, the one who receives, and the cause of practicing giving. When dwelling in such formless and flawless mind, they will practice giving paramita apart from greed and stinginess. At that time, they will not see the giving that they are practicing, this flawless mind, or even the Buddha dharma. This is how great bodhisattvas dwell in a flawless mind to practice giving paramita. They will also elicit the eighty distinguishing minor features with a mind apart from the forms; namely, they do not see the forms, do not see the one who elicits the eighty distinguishing minor features, the dharma elicited, and why and how the eighty distinguishing minor features are elicited. When dwelling in such formless and flawless mind, they elicit the eighty distinguishing minor features without contamination and attachment. At that time, they will not see the eighty distinguishing minor features that they elicit, this flawless mind, or even the Buddha dharma. This is how great bodhisattvas dwell in a flawless mind to elicit the eighty distinguishing minor features."

(The Buddha taught the way to stay in a flawless mind when practicing various holy dharmas.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, “If all dharmas have neither forms nor making, how will great bodhisattvas fulfill giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita, or fulfill the thirty-two perfect major marks and the eighty distinguishing minor features when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “When practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas should practice giving with a formless and flawless mind to offer various sentient beings whatever they need: head, eyes, marrow, brain, skins, muscles, limbs, sinews, bones, even life; the city, wife, the relatives they love, and all kinds of pretty things. When practicing such giving, if someone comes and expresses his disagreement, ‘Tut, tut, why do you do this useless giving, great gentleperson? Those who give in this way will always invite a lot of trouble.’ When hearing this statement, the great bodhisattvas do not withdraw from what they are doing, they will rather think, ‘That person does not agree with me, but I should not regret what I have done; instead, I should bravely and tirelessly give sentient beings what they need.’

“These great bodhisattvas thus transfer this giving along with all sentient beings equally toward the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. When undertaking giving and transference, they do not see the forms: Who gives? What are given? Who receives? How is the giving undertaken? Who transfers? What is transferred? How is the transference undertaken? Where the transference happens? All these dharmas cannot be seen. Why? All dharmas are empty because of internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature.

“After contemplating all dharmas as empty, the great bodhisattvas will further think, ‘Who transfers? What is transferred? How is transference made? Where the transference happens? All these dharmas are unattainable.’ Because of such contemplation and mindfulness, the transference that these great bodhisattvas undertake is named the virtuous transference. Because of this transference, the great bodhisattvas will be able to assist the sentient beings to mature and dignify and purify the Buddha lands. They can fulfill giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, forbearance paramita, diligence paramita, meditation paramita, prajna paramita, and so forth, and the thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features.

"Although these great bodhisattvas can fulfill giving paramita, they do not absorb the fruits that mature in different type and at different time. Although they do not absorb fruits, they are able to freely make property and living supplies available as they wish due to their virtuous and pure giving. They can make what all sentient beings need available as the heavenly beings in the Heaven of Enjoying Other-Made Changes do. They can make the most wonderful offerings respectfully to esteem and acclaim various Buddhas. They can prepare and satisfy whatever heavenly and human beings need. Because of this giving paramita, they absorb various sentient beings, establish them expediently in the three vehicles, and bring benefits and happiness to all of them according to individual needs.

"Thus, Well-Appearing One, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, these great bodhisattvas can fulfill giving paramita and the rest of merits and virtues as all dharmas are without forms and doings. It is because of the powers of the mind which is apart from forms and flaws."

(The Buddha gave giving as example to demonstrate how to fulfill holy dharmas with a formless and flawless mind as all dharmas are without forms and doings.)

Fascicle 467

Chapter 74

Formlessness

Section 2

(In the Second Assembly)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas should observe pure precept with a flawless and formless mind. Precept is inherently virtuous and pure, absorbed by the holy flawless factors. It is without deficiency, cracks, and filth. It stays away from attainment and attachment. It is worthy of the offerings made by the wise ones, and their admiration. The pure precept does not grasp all dharmas, nor is it attached to them. Because of pure precept, the great bodhisattvas do not grasp or become attached to 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 realm, and so forth, and conscious consciousness realm; the thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features; the noble families of Ksatriya, Brahman, elders, and lay believers; the Heaven of 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; the Heaven of Boundless Emptiness, Heaven of Boundless Consciousness, and so forth, and Heaven of Nonthinking and Not Nonthinking; stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi; and wheel-turning king, other smaller kings, and prime ministers. Rather, they will transfer such pure precept along with sentient beings equally toward the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. When undertaking the transference, they adopt formlessness, nonattainment, nonduality, formlessness, nonattainment, and nonduality as skillful means, in terms of the worldly way

instead of the ultimate meaning. Because of this cause and condition, all Buddha dharmas will be fulfilled.

"Because of the expedient skillfulness of pure-precept paramita, the great bodhisattvas initiate and cultivate four meditations diligently and activate expediently various supernatural powers without contamination. They use pure heavenly eye that matures in different type and at different time to see the Buddhas in the boundless worlds of the ten directions who peacefully conduct their Buddha worlds and teach sentient beings correct dharma. The great bodhisattvas will not forget what they have seen until attaining the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. They also use their extraordinary, pure heavenly ear to continuously hear the teachings given by the Buddhas in the boundless worlds of the ten directions. They will not forget the dharma they have heard until they attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. They will follow the teachings they heard to undertake beneficial things for others and never let the time pass in vain. These great bodhisattvas will again use supernatural power of reading others' minds to know the minds and associated images of the Buddhas and all sentient beings in the boundless worlds of the ten directions and elicit all beneficial things for sentient beings. They will further use supernatural powers of knowing previous lives to know how various sentient beings made karmas in the past, and how they received positive or negative effects caused by the karmas. After knowing their previous karmas, they will further encourage sentient beings to do beneficial things to create positive causes. They will also use their flawless perfect knowledge to well establish sentient beings and allow them to dwell peacefully in stream-entry effect, once-return effect, nonreturn effect, arhat effect, self-enlightenment bodhi, bodhisattva effect, or the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. In summary, these great bodhisattvas will expediently assist various sentient beings to dwell in superior and virtuous states based on their birth places and individual abilities.

"Well-Appearing One, these great bodhisattvas thus will practice and fulfill pure precept and the rest of merits and virtues within formless dharmas and the dharmas of nonaction when they practice the fathomless prajna paramita with the powers of mind, which are formless and flawless.

(The Buddha taught how great bodhisattvas cultivate pure precept with formless and flawless mind.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas should be able to cultivate forbearance paramita with formless and flawless mind when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita.

"Since the time beginning to aspire to the bodhi until finally sitting peacefully on the throne of wonderful bodhi, the great bodhisattvas have never allowed a thought of anger or hatred to arise even when all sentient beings want to kill them with swords, sticks, tiles, or stones. When such things occur, the great bodhisattvas should cultivate two kinds of forbearance. First, they respond to rebukes, insults, and harm with patience rather than anger. Second, they should practice dharma forbearance of nonarising.

"As someone rebukes and insults them, or tries to kill them with swords and sticks, they should think, 'Who can rebuke and insult? Who can do harm? Who can be rebuked and insulted? Who can be harmed? Who is angry? Who can forbear?' They should further reflect on the dharmas as empty in the final analysis. As the dharmas are unattainable, let alone the dharma nature. As the dharma nature is nonexistent, let alone the sentient beings. When contemplating in this way, they will see those who rebuke and insult, those rebuked and insulted, those who harm, and those harmed are all nonexistent. Even if their bodies are cut into many small pieces, they will refrain from anger. If they continuously contemplate all dharmas in this way, they will attain the dharma forbearance of nonarising. What is the dharma forbearance of nonarising? It means vexations do not arise and subtle and exquisite wisdom persists uninterruptedly. Besides, they contemplate dharmas as without arising in the final analysis. This is the dharma forbearance of nonarising.

(The Buddha taught how great bodhisattvas practiced forbearance paramita with formless and flawless mind to dwell in two kinds of forbearance. He also explained the meaning of dharma forbearance of nonarising.)

"As great bodhisattvas dwell in these two kinds of forbearance, they are able to cultivate and fulfill giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita quickly.

They are able to cultivate and fulfill 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 contemplation; the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration; the stages of bodhisattva; all dharani gates and all samadhi; 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; and the thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features quickly.

(The merits great bodhisattvas gain from practicing two kinds of forbearance.)

"When the great bodhisattvas dwell peacefully in all Buddha dharmas, they will fulfill the supernatural powers that belong to the flawless holy ones, are beyond the world, and not shared by voice-hearers or self-enlightened ones. When dwelling peacefully in the superior supernatural powers, they will see with heavenly eye the Buddhas in the boundless worlds of the ten directions, who are conducting their worlds peacefully and teaching correct dharma to sentient beings. They will always initiate the mindfulness compliant with the Buddha until attaining the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. They will hear with pure heavenly ear the dharma teaching given by the Buddhas in the ten directions. After hearing the dharma, they will embrace it and never forget it. They will further lecture on what they have heard from the Buddhas for sentient beings. With the supernatural power of reading others' minds, they can accurately know the minds and the associated images of all Buddhas. They also can accurately know the minds and the associated images of bodhisattvas, voice-hearers, and self-enlightened ones. They also can accurately know the minds and the associated images of the rest of sentient beings, so that they can teach them correct dharma in a way suitable for them, letting them gain definitive understanding. With the supernatural power of knowing previous lives of all sentient beings, they know well the different virtuous roots of sentient beings. They further expediently demonstrate for, suggest, encourage, admire, and celebrate the sentient beings to bring them superior benefits, peace, and happiness. Finally, with the flawless knowledge, they establish

sentient beings in the three vehicles suitable for each of them to let them get rid of birth, old age, illness, and death.

(The Buddha provided guidance on utilizing supernatural powers to benefit sentient beings.)

"As the great bodhisattvas practice the fathomless prajna paramita, achieve superior expedient skillfulness, dignify and purify the Buddha lands, and assist sentient beings to mature, they will attain the perfect knowledge of all phenomena before long, and will finally attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi and turn the wonderful dharma wheel to deliver sentient beings.

"Well-Appearing One, this is how great bodhisattvas practice the fathomless prajna paramita to fulfill forbearance paramita and the rest of merits and virtues within the dharmas without forms and doings with the powers of their formless and flawless mind.

(The Buddha concluded the way of fulfilling forbearance paramita with formless and flawless mind.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas should be able to cultivate diligence with a formless and flawless mind when they practice the fathomless prajna paramita. As they achieve brave diligence in body and mind, they can enter and fully dwell in the first meditation, and so forth, and enter and fully dwell in the fourth meditation to elicit numberless supernatural transformations. They can touch and rub the sun and moon with their hands and turn them freely without difficulty. Because they have achieved brave and powerful diligence in body, they can travel to as many Buddha worlds in the ten directions as the sands of the Ganges and make wonderful drinks, food, clothing, beds, bedding, medicines, and other living supplies as offerings to esteem and acclaim the Buddhas, the World-Honored Ones, who are teaching the correct dharma. The rewards caused by these virtuous roots will remain unexhausted until they attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. With the support of the powers caused by their increased virtuous roots, they will finally become a Buddha. After that they will receive immeasurable offerings, such as drinks, food, clothing, beds, bedding, medicines, and other living supplies, made respectfully by numberless heavenly beings, human beings, asuras, and so forth, with admiration and acclamation. After entering nirvana, due to the powers of these

virtuous roots, their relics and disciples will continue to receive the offerings made respectfully by numberless heavenly beings, human beings, asuras, and so forth of the world, with admiration and acclamation.

"These great bodhisattvas can use their supernatural powers to travel to as many Buddha lands as the sands of the Ganges, listening to Buddhas' teachings of correct dharma. After hearing the dharma, they will embrace it and never forget it until they attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. With the supernatural powers, they will go to as many Buddha worlds in the ten directions as the sands of the Ganges to assist the sentient beings to mature, dignify and purify the Buddha lands, and diligently and attentively cultivate and learn the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. After fulfilling it, they will realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi and turn the wonderful dharma wheel to deliver all sentient beings.

(The Buddha stated how great bodhisattvas cultivated diligence with formless and flawless mind to elicit supernatural powers, enabling them to traverse many Buddha lands, hear and learn correct dharma, achieve unsurpassed bodhi, and deliver sentient beings.)

"Well-Appearing One, because the great bodhisattvas have achieved brave diligence in body and mind when they practice the fathomless prajna paramita, they can fulfill diligence paramita quickly.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, because they have achieved brave and powerful diligence in body and mind when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, they can fulfill diligence paramita absorbed by various flawless holy paths and their factors quickly and thus prevent those not virtuous karmas from arising in body, speech, and mind.

(The positive effects gained by practicing diligence.)

"These great bodhisattvas do not grasp or become attached to the dharmas whether they are 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 do not grasp or become attached to the dharmas whether they are within conditioned realm or unconditioned realm; within the realm of desire, form, or formlessness; and within the flawed or flawless realm. The great bodhisattvas

do not grasp or become attached to the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, or four formless concentrations; the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, four powers, five roots, five powers, seven factors for enlightenment, or noble eightfold path; the liberation gate of emptiness, formlessness, or nonaspiration. They do not grasp or become attached to the dharmas whether they are giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, or prajna paramita; internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, or emptiness of selfless self-nature; realness, dharma realm, and so forth, or the realm of the inconceivable; the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, or the path for the cessation of suffering; the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, or the ten universal contemplations; the stage of pure contemplation, stage of embryonic Buddha nature, and so forth, or the stage of Thus-Comer; the stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilements, and so forth, or the stage of dharma cloud; all dharani gates or all samadhi gates; the five eyes or the six supernatural powers; the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, or the eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power; the thirty-two perfect major marks or the eighty distinguishing minor features; staying in correct mindfulness or dwelling in equanimity at all times; the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, or the perfect knowledge of all phenomena; impermanence, suffering, emptiness, or selflessness; stream-entry effect, once-return effect, nonreturn effect, arhat effect, or self-enlightenment bodhi; all bodhisattva actions or not bodhisattva actions; the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi or not the unsurpassed bodhi. They do not grasp or become attached to the sentient beings whether they are stream-enters, once-returners, nonreturners, arhats, self-enlightened ones, great bodhisattvas, or the Thus-Comers. They do not grasp or become attached to the sentient beings whether they are manifested by the lower dharma, manifested by the average dharma, or manifested by the superior dharma. They do not grasp or become attached to sentient beings whether they are in upper level, middle level, or lower level; they are manifested by the voice-hearer vehicle, the self-enlightenment bodhi vehicle, or the unsurpassed vehicle. These great bodhisattvas do not grasp or become attached to these dharmas and sentient beings. Why? It is because all dharmas and sentient beings do not have self-nature; you cannot grasp them or become attached to them.

(The great bodhisattvas are not attached to sentient beings and dharmas regardless of their conditions or levels.)

"Because of the brave and powerful mind of diligence, these great bodhisattvas always do beneficial things for all sentient beings, but they attain nothing from sentient beings. They can fulfill the diligence paramita, but they do not attain anything from diligence paramita. They can fulfill all Buddha dharma, but they do not attain anything from Buddha dharma. They can dignify and purify all Buddha lands, but they do not attain anything from Buddha lands.

(The great bodhisattvas work diligently to benefit the worlds and the sentient being, but they do not gain anything in return.)

"As great bodhisattvas achieve such diligence in body and mind, they are able to stay away from evil dharmas and absorb virtuous dharmas, without attachment. They can benefit all sentient beings by using supernatural powers to manifest all Buddha worlds as they wish freely and without hindrance, such as making wonderful flowers rain from heaven, dispersing precious fragrances, playing beautiful music, and causing lightning to shake the land. They can also manifest a magnificent seven-treasure world, emit lights from their bodies to shine all over the dark corners of the world, and emanate fragrances to drive unpleasant odors away. They can manifest the great worship hall to guide numberless sentient beings without annoying them, so that the sentient beings will walk on correct path, stay away from killing, stealing, and so forth, and hold incorrect views. They can absorb sentient beings by means of giving, pure precept, and so forth, and prajna. They are willing to give everything they possess, including properties, spouses, king's throne, bodily parts, and even their lives. They expediently benefit various sentient beings dependent on individual needs and conditions.

(According to the Buddha, when practicing diligence paramita, the great bodhisattvas are willing to give all they possess and manifest the correct dharma by means of supernatural powers to expediently help sentient beings according to individual differences.)

"Well-Appearing One, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas thus can fulfill diligence paramita and the rest of merits and virtues with a formless and flawless mind within the dharmas that do not have forms and doings.

(In these paragraphs, the Buddha explained how great bodhisattvas fulfill diligence paramita with a formless and flawless mind when cultivating prajna paramita.)

"Furthermore, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas should cultivate meditation with a formless and flawless mind. They fulfill various Buddha concentrations and the rest of concentrations. They stay away from the evil, greedy, and not virtuous dharmas and enter the first meditation, and fully dwell in it. With general contemplation and specific investigation, they experience joy and pleasure caused by getting away. Eventually, they enter the fourth meditation, fully dwelling in a pure state of equanimity without pleasure and pain, in which the previously existing joy and worry disappear. They maintain a global connection through the consistent practice of loving-kindness, compassion, joy, and equanimity.

(The Buddha described how great bodhisattvas achieve the fourth meditation and dwell in pure equanimity with four immeasurable minds: loving-kindness, compassion, joy, and equanimity.)

"These great bodhisattvas will further surpass the thinking of material and substantial beings, enter the boundless emptiness and fully dwell in it without reflection. They finally transcend the state of nothingness and enter the state of nonthinking and not nonthinking and fully dwell in it. As dwelling peacefully in meditation pramita, the great bodhisattvas can enter and get out of the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations freely and at ease, in both straightforward and backward directions.

"These great bodhisattvas can fully dwell in the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration. They can also fully dwell in samadhi without interruption, Lightning-Like Samadhi, Holy and Correct Samadhi, and Diamond-Like Samadhi. As dwelling peacefully in meditation paramita, these great bodhisattvas can cultivate and fulfill the thirty-seven aids to enlightenment and the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths. By absorbing all kinds of samadhi with the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, they surpass the stage of pure contemplation, stage of embryonic Buddha nature, and so forth, and the stage of self-enlightenment bodhi and enter the correct bodhisattva nature of nonarising. After that, they will cultivate and fulfill the ten stages of bodhisattva, achieving the stage of Thus-Comer. When

progressing step by step and gradually in the process of cultivation, they do not stop at any stage until they achieve the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge.

(The great bodhisattvas cultivate and fulfill various concentrations and samadhi step by step without stopping at any stage until attaining the unsurpassed bodhi.)

"Dwelling peacefully in meditation paramita, the great bodhisattvas make offerings respectfully to esteem and acclaim the Buddhas, the World-Honored Ones from one Buddha country to the other. They plant various virtuous roots in every Buddha's place, assist sentient beings to mature, and dignify and purify the Buddha lands. They travel from one world to the other to benefit sentient beings and never get tired physically and mentally. They absorb sentient beings with giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, forbearance paramita, diligence paramita, meditation paramita, and prajna paramita and with the aggregates of precept, concentration, wisdom, liberation, and the knowledge and views of liberation. They teach sentient beings expediently, letting them dwell peacefully in stream-entry effect, once-return effect, nonreturn effect, arhat effect, self-enlightenment bodhi, or the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. They adjust their methods of guidance expediently to properly help sentient beings in accord with the growth and increase of their virtuous roots and virtuous dharmas.

(The great bodhisattvas assist sentient beings with methods suited to individual merits and virtues.)

"When dwelling peacefully in meditation paramita, these great bodhisattvas can initiate all dharani gates and all samadhi gates. They attain the superior four unhindered understandings and supernatural powers that mature in different types and at different times.

"When attaining the superior supernatural powers, the great bodhisattvas no longer experience birth through a mother's womb, thus avoiding the pleasure and impurities associated with the ordinary process of birth. Why? These great bodhisattvas have seen and understood that the dharma nature is like transformed things, and all phenomena are like illusions. Nevertheless, they continue to benefit the sentient beings with profound compassion. They are more than willing to assist sentient beings although they realize that all sentient beings and establishments

are unattainable. They thus work hard to let all sentient beings stay peacefully in the unattainable dharma. They do this in terms of the worldly way rather than the ultimate meaning.

“These great bodhisattvas can dwell peacefully in meditation paramita, cultivate all kinds of meditation, liberation, samadhi, samapatti, and so forth, and never stay away from meditation paramita until fulfilling the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi that they are pursuing.

“These great bodhisattvas expediently initiate the perfect knowledge of all phenomena when practicing the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths. They dwell peacefully in the perfect knowledge to permanently terminate enduring dispositions of vexations. They can correctly benefit themselves and others. They work together with all heavenly beings, human beings, asuras, and so forth to make the fields of bliss pure and thus are worthy of the homage paid and the offerings made by the sentient beings in the world.

“This is how great bodhisattvas practice the fathomless prajna paramita to fulfill meditation paramita and other merits and virtues with their formless and flawless minds within the dharmas that are without forms and action.

(The Buddha taught how great bodhisattvas, driven by boundless compassion over sentient beings, use formless and flawless mind to practice prajna paramita, fulfill meditation paramita, dwell in various samadhi, stay in perfect knowledge, and permanently terminate enduring disposition of vexations.)

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas should be able to cultivate prajna with the formless and flawless mind.

“These great bodhisattvas do not see any dharma really accomplish anything. They do not see matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness accomplish anything. They do not see matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness arise. They do not see matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness extinguish. They do not see matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness increase. They do not see matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness decrease. They do not see matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness accumulate. They do not see matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness disperse. And so on, they do not see all flawed dharmas or flawless dharmas accomplish anything. They do not see all flawed or

flawless dharmas arise. They do not see all flawed or flawless dharmas extinguish. They do not see all flawed or flawless dharmas increase. They do not see all flawed or flawless dharmas decrease. They do not see all flawed or flawless dharmas accumulate. They do not see all flawed or all flawless dharmas disperse. They contemplate matter and get to know that matter is illusory, not sold, and not at ease. They also contemplate feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness and get to know that they are illusory, not solid, and not at ease. And so on, they contemplate all flawed dharmas and all flawless dharmas and get to realize that they are illusory, not solid, and not at ease.

"As these great bodhisattvas contemplate in this way, they do not attain the self-nature of matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness. And so on, they do not attain the self-nature of all flawed dharmas and the self-nature of all flawless dharmas.

"When practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas contemplate in this way and develop a deep belief and understanding that the self-nature of all dharmas is without nature. Based on belief and understanding, they can practice internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature. As they practice in this way, they are not attached to all dharmas; namely, they are not attached to 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 realm, 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. They are not attached to the earth realm, and so forth, and consciousness realm; cause and condition, consecutive thoughts, conditions that stimulate the mind, and the conditions that reinforce main causes; 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, and so forth, and ten universal contemplations; the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration; the stage of pure contemplation, stage of embryonic Buddha nature, and so forth, and stage of Thus-Comer; the stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilements, and so forth, and 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; the thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor marks; 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; stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi; all bodhisattva great actions; and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas.

"When practicing the nonexistent fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas can fulfill the path of bodhisattva and the six paramitas. They can 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; the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration; the stages of bodhisattva; 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 dwelling in equanimity; the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena; and the thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor marks.

(The Buddha said that when practicing prajna with formless and flawless mind, the great bodhisattvas do not see the five aggregates and the flawed or flawless dharmas accomplish, arise, extinguish, increase, decrease, accumulate, and disperse. They do not attain the self-nature of all these dharmas. They will believe and understand that the self-nature of all dharmas is nonnature.

They can cultivate and fulfill various superior dharmas without attachment based on such belief and understanding.)

"After fulfilling the path of bodhisattva, they can further fulfill the path of Buddha to get out of all kinds of darkness; namely, they can fulfill the six paramitas and the rest of immeasurable Buddha dharmas.

"As these great bodhisattvas dwell peacefully in the path of Buddha to stay away from darkness, they initiate superior supernatural powers and absorb various sentient beings either through giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, or through the prajna suited to individual situation. If the aggregates of precept, concentration, wisdom, liberation, and knowledge and views of liberation are more suitable for sentient beings, they will adopt these aggregates to absorb sentient beings. They will also let sentient beings dwell peacefully in stream-entry effect, once-return effect, nonreturn effect, arhat effect, and self-enlightenment bodhi suited to them.

(These great bodhisattvas assist sentient beings to achieve the vehicles suited to them.)

"These great bodhisattvas can use their supernatural powers freely to traverse as many worlds as the sands of the Ganges. They can easily turn the world into treasures if they wish. If they intend to provide various worlds with different kinds of treasures, they can do so to effectively satisfy sentient beings.

(Great bodhisattvas can use supernatural powers to satisfy the needs of sentient beings.)

"These great bodhisattvas will travel from one world to the other to benefit immeasurable sentient beings, bringing them peace and happiness. As they see the wonderful phenomena of the worlds, they will absorb the magnificent Buddha lands they prefer. For instance, the wonderful entertainments and music preferred by the heavenly beings in the Heaven of Enjoying Other-Made Changes will be emulated by great bodhisattvas. These great bodhisattvas will incorporate various immeasurable magnificent Buddha lands they choose and make such subtle, wonderful, and uncontaminated dharmas reappear in their Buddha lands.

"These great bodhisattvas will practice the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths through giving, pure precept, and so forth, and prajna paramitas; various exquisite supernatural powers; and the path of bodhisattvas that arise in different times and at different places. As they fulfill the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, they will be able to realize and attain the perfect knowledge of all phenomena. Once achieving this perfect knowledge, they no longer absorb various dharmas. Namely, they do not absorb matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness. They do not absorb the virtuous or not virtuous dharmas, the morally related or morally unrelated dharmas, the dharmas of or beyond the world, the flawed or flawless dharmas, and the conditioned or unconditioned dharmas. They do not absorb the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi that they have realized and attained. They do not absorb living supplies in Buddha lands, in which the sentient beings do not absorb all dharmas either. Why? The great bodhisattvas have not absorbed all dharmas. All dharmas are unattainable. The great bodhisattvas thus correctly teach sentient beings that dharma nature does not absorb anything.

"Well-Appearing One, this is how great bodhisattvas practice the fathomless prajna paramita to fulfill prajna paramita and the rest of various merits and virtues with their formless and flawless minds within the dharmas that are without forms and doings."

## Chapter 75

## No Mixture

### Section 1

### (In the Second Assembly)

At that time, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "World-Honored One, how can one fulfill the six paramitas within the dharmas that are unmixed,

formless, and empty? How can one establish differences among all indistinguishable dharmas? How can one realize the different forms of various dharmas? How can one absorb all six paramitas, various kinds of emptiness, and so forth, and the dharmas of and beyond the world in prajna paramita? How can one establish the formless form in all dharmas with different forms? How can one establish the different forms of dharmas into one-form dharmas--the formless dharmas?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "When practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas dwell peacefully in the five aggregates that are like the dreams, echoes, images, shadows, illusory images of water under sunlight, illusions, and transformed things to practice giving, observe precept, learn forbearance, cultivate diligence, cultivate concentration, and learn wisdom. They thus realize that the five aggregates, resembling dreams, echoes, and so forth, and transformed things, are all with one form, namely, formlessness. Because of this cause and condition, you must know that all givers, receivers, the things given, the nature of giving, the effect of giving, and the conditions of giving are considered equivalent to formlessness.

"If the great bodhisattvas can practice giving with such knowledge, they are able to fulfill giving paramita. If they can fulfill giving paramita, they will not stay away from pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna paramitas. If they can dwell peacefully in these six paramitas, they will be able to fulfill the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations; the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path; the three liberation gates; 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 eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations; the stages of bodhisattva; the five hundred dharani gates and five hundred samadhi gates; the five eyes and the six supernatural powers; the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and the 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.

(The Buddha taught that great bodhisattvas living in the five aggregates are like in dreams and so forth. They practice the six paramitas to realize the five aggregates and all aspects of giving are formless. When practicing giving in this way, they will not only fulfill giving paramita but also fulfill other five paramitas and the rest of superior holy dharmas.)

"As dwelling peacefully in such holy flawless dharmas that mature in different ways and at different times, great bodhisattvas traverse as many Buddha worlds in the ten directions as the sands of the Ganges and make immeasurable best offerings respectfully to esteem and acclaim the Buddhas, the World-Honored Ones. When working to bring benefits, peace, and happiness to sentient beings, they will absorb them by giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita or the rest of virtuous dharmas suited to individual sentient beings.

"Because the great bodhisattvas have achieved all superior virtuous roots, they feel at ease with all dharmas. While experiencing birth and death, they remain uncontaminated by the faults of birth and death. To bring benefits and happiness to various sentient beings, they accept wealth, nobility, and freedom of human and heavenly beings. With the mighty powers of wealth and nobility, they can do a lot of things to benefit sentient beings. They adopt the four approaches of absorption to absorb sentient beings. Because they know that all dharmas are without forms, they do not dwell in stream-entry effect or self-enlightenment bodhi although they have been awakened to it. Why? These great bodhisattvas have already understood all dharmas as they really are. They choose not to stay in two vehicles in order to attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge.

(The Buddha said that great bodhisattvas experiencing birth and death are not contaminated by them. Awakened to the paths of voice-hearer and self-enlightened one but choosing to transcend them to seek perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge.)

"Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas realize that all dharmas are formless; giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita and the rest of immeasurable and boundless Buddha dharmas are formless too. They thus can fulfill all Buddha dharmas and attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas dwell peacefully in the five aggregates that are like dreams, echoes, images, shadows, illusory images of water under sunlight, illusions, and transformed things to fulfill pure-precept paramita. As these great bodhisattvas realize accurately that the five aggregates are like dreams, echoes, and so forth, and transformed things, they are able to fulfill the formless pure-precept paramita. Pure precept does not have deficiency or crack, flaw or dirt. It is not grasping, and is free from attachment, so is admired by the wise ones. To accept, embraces, and observe it well and ultimately will make one become flawless and holy. It should be absorbed into the factors for the path beyond the world. When dwelling peacefully in pure precept, one will be able to accept and embrace the established precept, natural precept, precept for behaviors, precept manifested in rules, the spirit of the precept, precept for here and now, precept not for here and now, precept for demeanors, and precept not for demeanors.

(The Buddha described the features of pure precept and taught that great bodhisattvas should fulfill pure precept by dwelling in and realizing the five aggregates as dreams, and so forth, and transformed things. To observe pure precept makes one holy and pure.)

"As the great bodhisattvas achieve the purity of precepts, they will not grasp or be attached to them. They do not think, 'I will be reborn in a noble family of Ksatriya, Brahman, elder, or lay believer to enjoy wealth, nobility, and freedom if I observe pure precept.' They will not think, 'I will become a small king, great king, wheel-turning king, or a high-ranking official to enjoy wealth, nobility, and freedom because of observing pure precept.' Nor will they think, 'I will attain stream-entry effect, once-return effect, nonreturn effect, arhat effect, or self-enlightenment bodhi; I will enter the correct bodhisattva nature of nonarising; I will attain bodhisattva forbearance of nonarising; or I will attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi because I observe pure precept.' Why? All dharmas have only one form, namely, formlessness, nondwelling, and nonattainment. The formless dharmas cannot attain formlessness; the dharmas with forms cannot attain forms; the formless dharmas cannot attain forms; and the dharmas with forms cannot attain formlessness. Because of this cause and condition, all are unattainable.

(As the great bodhisattvas achieve pure precept and understand all dharmas as formless, without dwelling, and unattainable, they will be detached from various grasping thoughts.)

"Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas thus can fulfill formless pure-precept paramita quickly. They will further enter and attain the correct bodhisattva nature of nonarising before long. They continue to cultivate the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena. They will achieve the five supernatural powers, five hundred dharani gates, and five hundred samadhi gates that mature in different ways and at different times, and dwell peacefully in them. They will further attain the four unhindered understandings. As traveling from one Buddha country to the other, they will stay close to various Buddhas, the World-Honored Ones, and make offerings respectfully to them. They will assist the sentient beings to mature and dignify and purify the Buddha lands.

(The Buddha delineated the steps of cultivation great bodhisattvas would undertake upon fulfilling pure precept.)

"In order to guide sentient beings, the great bodhisattvas reincarnate among different destinies, remain unaffected by these destinies, resembling transformed beings who appear to walk, stay, sit, and lie while do not truly engage in those actions. They perform beneficial deeds without becoming attached to sentient beings or their conditions. A Thus-Comer, One Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened One named Virtuous Tranquility once attained the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi and turned the wonderful dharma wheel. He had converted immeasurable sentient beings and allowed them to become free from birth and death and attain nirvana. But among them, none was good enough can be conferred by the Thus-Comer the prophecy of attaining the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. This Thus-Comer thus made a transformed Buddha as his successor before he himself passed away and entered the nirvana without remainder. The transformed Buddha stayed in the world for one kalpa and selected one bodhisattva and conferred on him the prophecy of attaining the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, while he himself also passed away and entered the nirvana without remainder. The transformed Buddha did many beneficial things for sentient beings but attained nothing. He did not attain matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness. He did not attain flawed dharmas, flawless dharmas, or sentient beings. Similarly, the great bodhisattvas offer a lot

of services to help others, but they themselves do not attain anything.

(The Buddha said that great bodhisattvas always offer much without attaining anything.)

"Well-Appearing One, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas can fulfill pure-precept paramita. Because of the fulfillment of pure precept, they can absorb all Buddha dharmas and attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas dwell in the five aggregates that are like dreams, echoes, images, shadows, illusory images of water under sunlight, illusions, and transformed things to fulfill forbearance paramita. Because these great bodhisattvas accurately know the five aggregates are like dreams, echoes, and so forth, and transformed things, they can fulfill the formless forbearance paramita.

(The Buddha said that great bodhisattvas can fulfill forbearance paramita because they understand the five aggregates as dreams and so forth.)

"Well-Appearing One, how can great bodhisattvas fulfill the formless forbearance paramita upon understanding accurately that the five aggregates are like dreams, echoes, and so forth, and transformed things when they practice the fathomless prajna paramita? Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas know accurately that the five aggregates do not have real forms to cultivate the two kinds of forbearance, they will be able to fulfill the formless forbearance paramita. What are they? They are accepting and enduring with tranquility and contemplating and investigating forbearance.

(The Buddha taught that based on accurate understanding of formless five aggregates and fulfillment of two kinds of forbearance, great bodhisattvas can fulfill formless forbearance paramita.)

"To accept and endure with tranquility means that from the moment of aspiration until sitting peacefully on the throne of exquisite bodhi, great bodhisattvas should not entertain the thoughts of hatred or vengeance, even when subjected to slander, insults, scorn, rebuke, or physical attacks with stones, tiles, and swords by others. Rather, they will think, 'Those sentient beings should be pitied. They are tortured by turbulent minds and not in peace, so they initiated such bad karmas to me. I should not hate them or get angry.' They will further think, 'I absorbed

traits from adversaries, causing them to act against me. I should blame myself, not them.' When contemplating and investigating carefully in this way, the bodhisattvas will initiate loving-kindness and compassion on those sentient beings. This is named the forbearance with acceptance in tranquility.

(The Buddha suggested great bodhisattvas to practice forbearance with acceptance in tranquility.)

"To contemplate and investigate forbearance means that the great bodhisattvas should think in this way, 'All dharmas and their phenomena are like illusions, illusory and unreal, and not free and at ease. They are also like empty space, which is selfless. 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 all unattainable; they are caused by illusory differentiations and created by mind. Who scolds me? Who insults me? Who tries to kill me with tiles, stones, swords, and sticks? Who are scolded, insulted, and killed? All these are caused by illusory differentiations of one's mind, so I should not be attached to them. These various dharmas are unattainable because of emptiness of self-nature and emptiness of ultimate meaning.' As the great bodhisattvas contemplate and investigate carefully in this way, they realize accurately that all dharmas and their phenomena are empty and tranquil; they should not have any thought other than this one. This is named the forbearance based on contemplation and investigation.

(The Buddha continued to elaborate the meaning of forbearance based on contemplation and investigation.)

"Because of cultivating and learning such two kinds of forbearance, the great bodhisattvas are able to fulfill the formless forbearance paramita. Because of fulfilling the formless forbearance paramita, they are able to attain the forbearance of nonarising."

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "World-Honored One, what is named the dharma forbearance of nonarising? What will be terminated in the dharma forbearance of nonarising? What kind of knowledge is it?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “The power of the dharma forbearance of nonarising will not allow a little bit of evil, not virtuous dharma to arise. This is why it is named nonarising. It will not allow vexations caused by selfness and the associated arrogance to arise ultimately. The truth one should accept is all dharmas and phenomena are like dreams, echoes, and so forth, and transformed things. This is named the perfect knowledge of forbearance. When attaining this knowledge, one attains the dharma forbearance of nonarising.”

(The Buddha explained to Well-Appearing One what the dharma forbearance of nonarising is.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, “What is the difference between the dharma forbearance of nonarising of voice-hearers and self-enlightened ones and the dharma forbearance of nonarising of bodhisattvas?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “The knowledge and the termination of vexations possessed by stream-enters, once-returners, and so forth, and self-enlightened ones are also shared by great bodhisattvas. But the forbearance of nonarising in the final analysis of all dharmas is the forbearance for great bodhisattvas, which is not shared by voice-hearers and self-enlightened ones. This is the difference.

(The dharma forbearance of nonarising, as understood by voice-hearers and self-enlightened ones differs from that of great bodhisattvas. For great bodhisattvas, the forbearance of nonarising means that various dharmas do not arise in the final analysis.)

“You must know, Well-Appearing One, because the great bodhisattvas have achieved such superior forbearance, they will surpass voice-hearers and self-enlightened ones. As dwelling peacefully in such forbearance, the great bodhisattvas can practice the path of bodhisattva and fulfill the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths. Upon achieving the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, the great bodhisattvas will not stay far away from the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path; the three liberation gates; and the supernatural powers that mature in different ways and at different times. Because they do not stay far away from the supernatural powers, they can go from one Buddha country to the other, stay close to various Buddhas, the World-Honored Ones, make offerings to esteem and acclaim them. They will in the meantime assist the sentient beings to

mature and dignify and purify the Buddha lands. After accomplishing these tasks, they will realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi instantaneously when they align with prajna.

(The Buddha said that achieving bodhisattva's dharma forbearance of nonarising enables great bodhisattvas to undertake numerous Buddhist services to assist sentient beings and dignify and purify Buddha lands.)

"Well-Appearing One, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas can fulfill the formless forbearance paramita quickly. Because of fulfilling this forbearance paramita, they can fulfill all Buddha dharmas and realize and attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge."

Fascicle 468

Chapter 75

No Mixture

Section 2

(In the Second Assembly)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas dwell in the five aggregates that are like dreams, echoes, images, shadows, illusory images of water under sunlight, illusions, and transformed things. They should realize that the five aggregates are like dreams, echoes, and so forth, and transformed things to initiate a brave diligence in body and mind.

"By initiating brave diligence in body, these great bodhisattvas can elicit the superior and quick supernatural powers and go to as many Buddha lands in the ten directions as the sands of the Ganges, in which they stay close to the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones, make best offerings respectfully to esteem and acclaim them. They plant various kinds of virtuous roots in the Buddhas' places; bring benefits, peace, and happiness to sentient beings; assist sentient beings to mature; and dignify and purify the Buddha lands. They work diligently in body, assist sentient beings to grow, and establish them expediently to dwell peacefully and ultimately in the dharma of the three vehicles in accord with individual conditions.

"Well-Appearing One, because of the diligence in body, the great bodhisattvas can practice the fathomless prajna paramita to fulfill the formless diligence paramita. Further with brave and powerful diligence in mind, they can activate the holy paths absorbed in various holy flawless factors to fulfill diligence paramita. The virtuous dharmas are absorbed in these holy factors: 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 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 stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilements, and so forth, and stage of dharma cloud; all dharani gates and all samadhi gates; 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 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; and the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena. With diligence in mind, the great bodhisattvas' physical features become perfect, and their bodies radiate great lights to illuminate boundless realms. As their diligence in mind develops perfectly, their disposition of vexations is permanently eliminated. Consequently, they can realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, turn the wonderful dharma wheel, and achieve the thirty-two perfect major marks. These achievements cause the three realms to shake in six different ways, and sentient beings within the realms are bathed in light and comfort. The sentient beings witness all these changes, hear the correct dharma and achieve nonregression on their path, and develop to individual highest potential.

"Well-Appearing One, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas will fulfill and dwell peacefully in diligence paramita. They will fulfill all Buddha dharmas and realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi before long.

(The Buddha described that great bodhisattvas stay in five aggregates and view them as dreams, and so forth, and transformed things to activate diligence in body and mind and fulfill diligence to benefit sentient beings.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas dwell peacefully in the five aggregates that are like dreams, echoes, images, shadows, illusory images of water under sunlight, illusions, and transformed things to fulfill meditation paramita. Well-Appearing One, how do great bodhisattvas succeed to achieve this? When practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas should accurately realize

that the five aggregates are like dreams, echoes, and so forth, and transformed things; they are without real forms. After the accurate realization, they enter the first, second, third, and the fourth meditation; enter the immeasurable loving-kindness, compassion, joy, and equanimity; enter the concentration of boundless emptiness, concentration of boundless consciousness, concentration of nothingness, and concentration of nonthinking and not nonthinking; cultivate the samadhi of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration; cultivate Lightning-Like Samadhi, Diamond-Like Samadhi, and Holy Correct Samadhi; and dwell in Diamond-Like Samadhi. They thus dwell fully in all superior concentrations, including the concentrations shared by two vehicles, except the concentration of Thus-Comer. But they are not attached to these meditations, immeasurable minds, and formless concentrations, nor the effects caused by them. Why? It is because these great bodhisattvas know accurately that the meditations, immeasurable minds, formless concentrations, and all other dharmas are without forms and nature; and that formlessness should not be attached or addicted to formlessness, and nonnature should not be attached or addicted to nonnature. Because of being away from attachment and addiction, they will not follow or be restricted by the powers of meditations, immeasurable minds, and formless concentrations to be reborn in the realm of form or formlessness. These great bodhisattvas do not attain all realms, do not attain those who enter concentrations, the concentrations that the practitioners enter, or the locations and causes of entering concentrations.

"Because the great bodhisattvas attain nothing in all dharmas, they can fulfill the formless meditation paramita quickly and are able to surpass the stage of the voice-hearer and the stage of the self-enlightened one."

(The Buddha said that because the great bodhisattvas cultivate meditation by viewing five aggregates as dreams, and so forth, and transformed things, they are not attached to and attain the concentrations, those who practice concentrations, and so forth. They thus can fulfill meditation paramita quickly and transcend the two vehicles.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "World-Honored One, how do these great bodhisattvas fulfill the formless meditation paramita and surpass the stage of voice-hearer or self-enlightened one?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “Because these great bodhisattvas have well learned internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature, they are able to fulfill the formless meditation paramita and surpass the stage of voice-hearer or self-enlightened one. As dwelling in various kinds of emptiness, the great bodhisattvas do not attain all dharmas. They do not see any dharma that is not empty. As dwelling in emptiness, the great bodhisattvas do not attain stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi; nor do they attain various great bodhisattva actions and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas. It is because emptiness is also empty. As dwelling in emptiness, these great bodhisattvas will surpass the stage of voice-hearer or self-enlightened one and realize the correct bodhisattva nature of nonarising.”

(The Buddha explained how great bodhisattvas dwell in emptiness and stay away from attainment, surpassing two vehicles to enter onto the bodhisattva nature of nonarising.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, “What are the concepts of arising and nonarising perceived by great bodhisattvas?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “The great bodhisattvas view all kinds of attainment as arising, while view all kinds of nonattainment as nonarising.”

(The Buddha taught that great bodhisattvas view attainment as arising, nonattainment as nonarising.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, “World-Honored One, what dharmas are viewed as attainment by the great bodhisattvas? What are viewed as nonattainment by them?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “The great bodhisattvas view all dharmas as attainment. That is, the great bodhisattvas view matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness as attainment. They view the eye sphere, ear sphere, and so forth, and conscious sphere as attainment. They view the sight sphere, sound sphere, and so forth, and mental-image sphere as attainment. They view the eye realm, ear realm, and so forth, and conscious realm as attainment. They view the sight realm, sound realm, and so forth, and mental-image realm as attainment. They view the eye consciousness realm, ear consciousness realm, and so forth, and

conscious consciousness realm as attainment. They view the eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact as attainment. They view the feelings produced by eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact as attainment. They view the earth realm, water realm, and so forth, and consciousness realm as attainment. They view cause and condition, consecutive thoughts, conditions that stimulate the mind, and the conditions that reinforce main causes as attainment. They view ignorance, action, consciousness, and so forth, and old age and dearth as attainment. They view giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita as attainment. They view internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature as attainment. They view realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable as attainment. They view the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering as attainment. They view the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path as attainment. They view the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration as attainment. They view the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations as attainment. They view the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations as attainment. They view the stage of pure contemplation, stage of embryonic Buddha nature, and so forth, and stage of Thus-Comer as attainment. They view the stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilements, and so forth, and stage of dharma cloud as attainment. They view all dharani gates and all samadhi gates as attainment. They view the five eyes and six supernatural powers as attainment. They view the Buddha’s ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha’s wisdom and power as attainment. They view the thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor marks as attainment. They view staying in correct mindfulness and dwelling in equanimity at all times as attainment. They view the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena as attainment. They view stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi as attainment. They view all great bodhisattva actions as attainment. They view the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas as attainment. And they view the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge as attainment. Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas have viewed all these various dharma gates as attainment. Attainment is named arising.

(The Buddha said that great bodhisattvas view all dharmas as sort of attainment, which is arising.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas view all dharmas without action, gaining, speaking, or manifestation as nonattainment. That is, the great bodhisattvas view matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness without action, gaining, speaking, or manifestation as nonattainment. Why? It is because the self-nature of matter, feeling, and so forth, and consciousness has no action, gaining, speaking, or manifestation. The great bodhisattvas view the eye sphere, ear sphere, and so forth, and conscious sphere without action, gaining, speaking, or manifestation as nonattainment. Why? It is because the self-nature of the eye sphere, ear sphere, and so forth, and conscious sphere has no action, gaining, speaking, or manifestation. The great bodhisattvas view the sight sphere, sound sphere, and so forth, and mental-image sphere without action, gaining, speaking, or manifestation as nonattainment. Why? It is because the self-nature of the sight sphere, sound sphere, and so forth, and mental-image sphere has no action, gaining, speaking, or manifestation. The great bodhisattvas view the eye realm, ear realm, and so forth, and conscious realm without action, gaining, speaking, or manifestation as nonattainment. Why? It is because the self-nature of the eye realm, ear realm, and so forth, and conscious realm has no action, gaining, speaking, or manifestation. The great bodhisattvas view the sight realm, sound realm, and so forth, and mental-image realm without action, gaining, speaking, or manifestation as nonattainment. Why? It is because the self-nature of the sight realm, sound realm, and so forth, and mental-image realm has no action, gaining, speaking, or manifestation. The great bodhisattvas view the eye consciousness realm, ear consciousness realm, and so forth, and conscious consciousness realm without action, gaining, speaking, or manifestation as nonattainment. Why? It is because the self-nature of the eye consciousness realm, ear consciousness realm, and so forth, and conscious consciousness realm has no action, gaining, speaking, or manifestation. The great bodhisattvas view the eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact without action, gaining, speaking, or manifestation as nonattainment. Why? It is because the self-nature of the eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact has no action, gaining, speaking, or manifestation. The great bodhisattvas view the feelings produced by eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact without action, gaining, speaking, or manifestation as nonattainment. Why? It

is because the self-nature of the feelings produced by eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact has no action, gaining, speaking, or manifestation. The great bodhisattvas view the earth realm, water realm, and so forth, and consciousness realm without action, gaining, speaking, or manifestation as nonattainment. Why? It is because the self-nature of the earth realm, water realm, and so forth, and consciousness realm has no action, gaining, speaking, or manifestation. The great bodhisattvas view cause and condition, consecutive thoughts, conditions that stimulate the mind, and the conditions that reinforce main causes without action, gaining, speaking, or manifestation as nonattainment. Why? It is because the self-nature of cause and condition, consecutive thoughts, conditions that stimulate the mind, and the conditions that reinforce main causes has no action, gaining, speaking, or manifestation. The great bodhisattvas view ignorance, action, consciousness, and so forth, and old age and death without action, gaining, speaking, or manifestation as nonattainment. Why? It is because the self-nature of ignorance, action, consciousness, and so forth, and old age and death has no action, gaining, speaking, or manifestation. The great bodhisattvas view giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita without action, gaining, speaking, or manifestation as nonattainment. Why? It is because the self-nature of giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita has no action, gaining, speaking, or manifestation. The great bodhisattvas view internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature without action, gaining, speaking, or manifestation as nonattainment. Why? It is because the self-nature of internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature has no action, gaining, speaking, or manifestation. The great bodhisattvas view realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable without action, gaining, speaking, or manifestation as nonattainment. Why? It is because the self-nature of realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable has no action, gaining, speaking, or manifestation. The great bodhisattvas view the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering without action, gaining, speaking, or manifestation as nonattainment. Why? It is because the self-nature of the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering has no action, gaining, speaking, or manifestation. The great bodhisattvas view the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path without action, gaining, speaking, or manifestation as nonattainment. Why? It is because the self-

nature of the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path has no action, gaining, speaking, or manifestation. The great bodhisattvas view liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration without action, gaining, speaking, or manifestation as nonattainment. Why? It is because the self-nature of the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration has no action, gaining, speaking, or manifestation. The great bodhisattvas view the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations without action, gaining, speaking, or manifestation as nonattainment. Why? It is because the self-nature of the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations has no action, gaining, speaking, or manifestation. The great bodhisattvas view the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations without action, gaining, speaking, or manifestation as nonattainment. Why? It is because the self-nature of the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations has no action, gaining, speaking, or manifestation. The great bodhisattvas view the stage of pure contemplation, stage of embryonic Buddha nature, and so forth, and stage of Thus-Comer without action, gaining, speaking, or manifestation as nonattainment. Why? It is because the self-nature of the stage of pure contemplation, stage of embryonic Buddha nature, and so forth, and stage of Thus-Comer has no action, gaining, speaking, or manifestation. The great bodhisattvas view the stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilements, and so forth, and stage of dharma cloud without action, gaining, speaking, or manifestation as nonattainment. Why? It is because the self-nature of the stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilements, and so forth, and stage of dharma cloud has no action, gaining, speaking, or manifestation. The great bodhisattvas view all dharani gates and all samadhi gates without action, gaining, speaking, or manifestation as nonattainment. Why? It is because the self-nature of all dharani gates and all samadhi gates has no action, gaining, speaking, or manifestation. The great bodhisattvas view the five eyes and six supernatural powers without action, gaining, speaking, or manifestation as nonattainment. Why? It is because the self-nature of the five eyes and six supernatural powers has no action, gaining, speaking, or manifestation. The great bodhisattvas view the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power without action, gaining, speaking, or manifestation as nonattainment. Why? It is because the self-naturesof the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen

distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power have no action, gaining, speaking, or manifestation. The great bodhisattvas view the thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor marks without action, gaining, speaking, or manifestation as nonattainment. Why? It is because the self-nature of the thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor marks has no action, gaining, speaking, or manifestation. The great bodhisattvas view staying in correct mindfulness and dwelling in equanimity at all times without action, gaining, speaking, or manifestation as nonattainment. Why? It is because the self-nature of staying in correct mindfulness and dwelling in equanimity at all times has no action, gaining, speaking, or manifestation. The great bodhisattvas view the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena without action, gaining, speaking, or manifestation as nonattainment. Why? It is because the self-nature of the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena has no action, gaining, speaking, or manifestation. The great bodhisattvas view stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi without action, gaining, speaking, or manifestation as nonattainment. Why? It is because the self-nature of stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi has no action, gaining, speaking, or manifestation. The great bodhisattvas view all great bodhisattva actions without action, gaining, speaking, or manifestation as nonattainment. Why? It is because the self-nature of all great bodhisattva actions has no action, gaining, speaking, or manifestation. The great bodhisattvas view the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas without action, gaining, speaking, or manifestation as nonattainment. Why? It is because the self-nature of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas has no action, gaining, speaking, or manifestation. The great bodhisattvas view the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge without action, gaining, speaking, or manifestation as nonattainment. Why? It is because the self-nature of the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge has no action, gaining, speaking, or manifestation.

(The Buddha taught that great bodhisattvas view all dharmas without action, gaining, speaking, or manifestation as nonattainment based on the understanding that the self-nature of all dharmas have no action, gaining, speaking, or manifestation.)

"Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas regard the dharma gate of no action, no gaining, no speaking, or no manifestation as nonattainment. Being without attainment is named nonarising. After great bodhisattvas enter the correct nature of nonarising, they will fulfill all meditations, liberations, samadhi, and samapatti. They will not follow or be driven by destined powers, much less likely following the powers of vexations such as greed, anger, and ignorance. It does not make sense to say that they will be dominated by the powers of vexations in rebirth or they will dwell in vexations to make various negative karmas and thus fall in reincarnation. Although they dwell in the illusion-like aggregates and undertake many beneficial things for sentient beings, they do not attain the illusion-like aggregates or sentient beings. They have been tirelessly dedicated to the task of assisting sentient beings to mature and dignifying and purifying the Buddha lands without attainment.

(The Buddha further commended the great bodhisattvas dedicated to assisting sentient beings and dignifying and purifying Buddha lands without attainment.)

"Well-Appearing One, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas thus can fulfill the formless meditation paramita quickly. Because of the fulfillment of meditation paramita, they can realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi before long and turn the wonderful dharma wheel to deliver all sentient beings. This dharma wheel is named nonattainment.

(The Buddha named such dharma wheel turned by great bodhisattvas as nonattainment.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas should dwell peacefully in the five aggregates that are like dreams, echoes, images, shadows, illusory images of water under sunlight, illusions, and transformed things to fulfill prajna paramita. If the great bodhisattvas can fully realize the natures and forms of all dharmas as dreams, echoes, and so forth, and transformed things, they will be able to fulfill the formless prajna paramita."

(The Buddha taught that the great bodhisattvas who ultimately understand the nature and forms of all dharmas as dreams, and so forth will achieve prajna paramita.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, “World-Honored One, how do great bodhisattvas realize the nature and forms of all dharmas as dreams, echoes, and so forth, and transformed things when they practice the fathomless prajna paramita?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “When practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas will not see the dreams or the ones who see the dreams. They will not hear the echoes and the ones who hear the echoes. They will not see the images or the ones who see the images. They will not see the shadows or the ones who see the shadows. They will not see illusory images of water under sunlight or the ones who see illusory images. They will not see illusions or the ones who see illusions. They will not see transformed things or the ones who see transformed things. Why? The dreams, echoes, and so forth, and transformed things are the forms to which the ignorant ordinary sentient beings will be attached with upside-down delusion. The arhats, self-enlightened ones, great bodhisattvas, and Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Ones do not see the dreams, echoes, and so forth, and transformed things. Why? It is because the nature of all dharmas is nonnature; it is without formation, reality, forms, actions, and real nature and equivalent to nirvana. As the nature of all dharmas is nonnature, and has no formation, reality, and so forth, and is equivalent to nirvana, great bodhisattvas should not think all dharmas have nature, formation, reality, forms, actions, and real nature when they practice the fathomless prajna paramita. It does not make sense for great bodhisattvas to think in this way. Why? If all dharmas have a little bit of self-nature, formation, reality, forms, actions, and real nature, the fathomless prajna paramita that the great bodhisattvas practice should not be prajna paramita.

(The Buddha explained how great bodhisattvas understand all dharmas as dreams, and so forth, and transformed things and why they should not view all dharmas as having real self-nature.)

“Therefore, Well-Appearing One, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas should not be attached to matter, feeling, and so forth, and consciousness. They should not be attached to the eye sphere, ear sphere, and so forth, and conscious sphere. They should not be attached to the sight sphere, sound sphere, and so forth, and mental-image sphere. They should not be attached to the eye realm, ear realm, and so forth, and conscious realm. They should not be attached to the sight realm, sound realm, and so forth, and mental-

image realm. They should not be attached to the eye consciousness realm, ear consciousness realm, and so forth, and conscious consciousness realm. They should not be attached to eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact. They should not be attached to the feelings produced by eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact. They should not be attached to the earth realm, water realm, and so forth, and consciousness realm. They should not be attached to cause and condition, consecutive thoughts, conditions that stimulate the mind, and the conditions that reinforce main causes. They should not be attached to various dharmas caused by conditions. They should not be attached to ignorance, action, consciousness, and so forth, and old age and death. They should not be attached to the realm of desire, form, or formlessness. They should not be attached to all meditations, liberations, samadhi, and samapatti. They should not be attached to the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path. They should not be attached to the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration. They should not be attached to giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita. They should not be attached to the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering. They should not be attached to internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature. They should not be attached to realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable. They should not be attached to the stage of pure contemplation, stage of embryonic Buddha nature, and so forth, and stage of Thus-Comer. They should not be attached to the stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilements, and so forth, and stage of dharma cloud. They should not be attached to all dharani gates and all samadhi gates. They should not be attached to the five eyes and six supernatural powers. They should not be attached to the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power. They should not be attached to the thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor marks. They should not be attached to staying in correct mindfulness and always dwelling in equanimity. They should not be attached to the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena. They should not be attached to stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi. They should not be attached to all great bodhisattva actions. They should not be attached to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi

of the Buddhas. And they should not be attached to the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge.

(The Buddha thus advised that great bodhisattvas, knowing that all dharmas do not have self-nature, should not be attached to the five aggregates, six inner and outer spheres, perception process, fundamental elements of the world, three realms, and various superior holy dharmas, as well as the effects of cultivating the dharma of three vehicles.)

"As great bodhisattvas practice the fathomless prajna paramita without attachment to these dharma gates, they are able to fulfill the first stage, second stage, and so forth, and the tenth stage of bodhisattva without being attached to these stages. Why? They do not attain the ones who fulfill the dharmas and the dharmas fulfilled in the first stage, second stage, and so forth, and the tenth stage, therefore, they are not attached to these stages. Although these great bodhisattvas practice the fathomless prajna paramita, they do not attain the fathomless prajna paramita. Because they do not attain the fathomless prajna paramita, they will not attain all dharmas. The great bodhisattvas have contemplated and understood that although prajna paramita absorbs all dharmas, it does not attain all dharmas. Why? The dharmas and prajna paramita are neither different nor separate. Why? Dharma nature should not be regarded as different from realness, dharma realm, and reality. All dharmas are not mixed or different."

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "World-Honored One, if the natures of all dharmas are not mixed or different, why do we have various different dharma gates: virtuous, not virtuous, and neutral; flawed and flawless; of the world and beyond the world; conditioned and unconditioned?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One by asking, "What do you think about this? In the real nature of all dharmas, can we say that some dharmas are virtuous, some are not virtuous, some are neutral, some are flawed, some are flawless, some are of the world, some are beyond the world, some are conditioned, some are unconditioned, some are stream-entry effect, some are once-return effect, some are nonreturn effect, some are arhat effect, some are self-enlightenment bodhi, some are great bodhisattva actions, and some are the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas?"

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

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, “Because of this cause and condition, you must know that all dharmas are not mixed or different; they are without forms, arising, extinction, hindrance, speaking, or manifestation. You must know, Well-Appearing One, during the time when I learned bodhisattva path, I did not attain the self-nature of the dharmas; namely, I did not attain matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness. I did not attain the eye sphere, ear sphere, and so forth, and conscious sphere. I did not attain the sight sphere, sound sphere, and so forth, and mental-image sphere. I did not attain the eye realm, ear realm, and so forth, and conscious realm. I did not attain the sight realm, sound realm, and so forth, and mental-image realm. I did not attain the eye consciousness realm, ear consciousness realm, and so forth, and conscious consciousness realm. I did not attain eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact. I did not attain the feelings produced by eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact. I did not attain the earth realm, water realm, and so forth, and consciousness realm. I did not attain cause and condition, consecutive thoughts, conditions that stimulate the mind, and the conditions that reinforce main causes. I did not attain ignorance, action, consciousness, and so forth, and old age and death. I did not attain the realm of desire, form, or formlessness. I did not attain the virtuous or the not virtuous dharmas. I did not attain the morally related dharmas or morally unrelated dharmas. I did not attain the flawed dharmas or flawless dharmas. I did not attain the dharmas of the world or beyond the world. I did not attain the conditioned or unconditioned dharmas. I did not attain the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path. I did not attain the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations. I did not attain the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations. I did not attain the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration. I did not attain the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering. I did not attain giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita. I did not attain internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature. I did not attain realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable. I did not attain the stage of pure contemplation, stage of embryonic Buddha nature, and so forth, and stage of Thus-Comer. I did

not attain the stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilements, and so forth, and stage of dharma cloud. I did not attain all dharani gates and all samadhi gates. I did not attain the five eyes and the six supernatural powers. I did not attain the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power. I did not attain the thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor marks. I did not attain staying in correct mindfulness and always dwelling in equanimity. I did not attain the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena. I did not attain stream-entry effect, one-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi. I did not attain all great bodhisattva actions and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas.

"Well-Appearing One, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas thus should consistently learn the self-nature of all dharmas since the moment aspiring to until peacefully sitting on the throne of wonderful bodhi. If they can learn the self-nature of all dharmas well, they will purify the path of great bodhi. They will also fulfill various bodhisattva actions, assist the sentient beings to mature, and dignify and purify the Buddha lands. They will realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly, turn the wonderful dharma wheel, and expediently tame the sentient beings by means of the three vehicles, allowing them to become free from the reincarnation in the three realms, and realize insightfully and attain the ultimate peace and happiness of nirvana.

"Well-Appearing One, this is how great bodhisattvas adopt formlessness as skillful means to cultivate and learn prajna paramita."

(The Buddha taught that all dharmas are not mixed and different. In the real nature of all dharmas, great bodhisattvas should not differentiate that some dharmas are virtuous, not virtuous, or neutral; some are flawed or flawless, conditioned or unconditioned, and so forth. He said that when he was a bodhisattva, he did not differentiate and attain various dharmas. Learning well the self-nature of all dharmas enables one to purify great bodhi path and fulfill bodhisattva path.)

# Chapter 76

## The Forms of Virtues

### Section 1

### (In the Second Assembly)

At that time, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, “World-Honored One, if all dharmas are nothing other than dreams, echoes, images, shadows, images of water under sunlight, illusions, and transformed things; are not real and without nature; and their particular characteristics are all empty, then how can we distinguish the virtuous dharmas from the not virtuous dharmas, morally related dharmas from the morally unrelated dharmas, the flawless dharmas from the flawed dharmas, the dharmas beyond the world from the dharmas of the world, and the unconditioned dharmas from the conditioned dharmas? How can we distinguish among stream-entry dharma and effect, once-return dharma and effect, non-return dharma and effect, arhat dharma and effect, the dharma of self-enlightened one and self-enlightenment bodhi, the stages of great bodhisattva and the dharma of bodhisattva stages, and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas and the dharma for realizing and attaining the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “Ignorant ordinary sentient beings have not heard about the truth, so when they see dreams, they will attain dreams; when they see dreamers, they will attain dreamers; and so forth, when they see the transformed things, they will attain the transformed things. These ignorant sentient beings have not heard about the truth, so they fall into upside-down attachment, and thus will create not virtuous karmas of body, speech, and mind; virtuous karmas of body, speech, and mind; neutral karmas of body, speech, and mind; not bliss-inviting karmas of body, speech, and mind; bliss-inviting karmas of body, speech, and mind; and the motionless karmas of body, speech, and mind. They will endlessly reincarnate in birth and death because of their attainment of dharnas.

"On the other hand, the great bodhisattvas have been used to contemplate and investigate all dharmas with two kinds of emptiness when they practice the fathomless prajna paramita: emptiness in the final analysis and emptiness of nontemporality. They have dwelled peacefully in these two kinds of emptiness and taught correct dharma to various sentient beings.

"They will teach, 'You must know that matter is empty and without selfness and the associated images; feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness are empty and without selfness and the associated images. The eye sphere is empty and without selfness and the associated images; the ear, nose, tongue, body, and conscious spheres are empty and without selfness and the associated images. The sigh sphere is empty and without selfness and the associated images; the sound, smell, taste, touch, and mental-image spheres are empty and without selfness and the associated images. The eye realm is empty and without selfness and the associated images; the ear, nose, tongue, body, and conscious realms are empty and without selfness and the associated images. The sight realm is empty and without selfness and the associated images; the sound, smell, taste, touch, and mental-image realms are empty and without selfness and the associated images. The eye consciousness realm is empty and without selfness and the associated images; the ear consciousness, nose consciousness, tongue consciousness, body consciousness, and conscious consciousness realms are empty and without selfness and the associated images. The eye contact is empty and without selfness and the associated images; the ear, nose, tongue, body, and conscious contacts are empty and without selfness and the associated images. The feelings produced by the eye contact are empty and without selfness and the associated images; the feelings produced by the ear, nose, tongue, body, and conscious contacts are empty and without selfness and the associated images. The earth realm is empty and without selfness and the associated images; the water, fire, wind, space, and consciousness realms are empty and without selfness and the associated images. Cause and condition, consecutive thoughts in sequence, conditions that stimulate the mind, and the conditions that reinforce main causes are empty and without selfness and the associated images. The dharmas caused by conditions are empty and without selfness and the associated images. Ignorance is empty and without selfness and the associated images; action, consciousness, name and form, six sense spheres, contact, reception, craving, grasping, existence, birth, old age, and death are empty and without selfness and the associated images. The virtuous dharmas and the not virtuous dharmas are empty and without

selfness and the associated images. The morally related dharmas and the morally unrelated dharmas are empty and without selfness and the associated images. The flawed and flawless dharmas are empty and without selfness and the associated images. The dharmas of the world and the dharmas beyond the world are empty and without selfness and the associated images. The conditioned dharmas and the unconditioned dharmas are empty and without selfness and the associated images. Giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita are empty and without selfness and the associated images. Internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature are empty and without selfness and the associated images. Realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable are empty and without selfness and the associated images. The noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering are empty and without selfness and the associated images. The four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and the noble eightfold path are empty and without selfness and the associated images. The four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations are empty and without selfness and the associated images. The eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations are empty and without selfness and the associated images. The stage of pure contemplation, stage of embryonic Buddha nature, and so forth, and stage of Thus-Comer are empty and without selfness and the associated images. The stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilements, and so forth, and stage of dharma cloud are empty and without selfness and the associated images. All dharani gates and all samadhi gates are empty and without selfness and the associated images. The five eyes and the six supernatural powers are empty and without selfness and the associated images. The Buddha’s ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha’s wisdom and power are empty and without selfness and the associated images. The thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor marks are empty and without selfness and the associated images. Staying in correct mindfulness and always dwelling in equanimity are empty and without selfness and the associated images. The perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena are empty and without selfness and the associated images. Stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi are empty and without selfness and the associated images. All great bodhisattva actions are

empty and without selfness and the associated images. The unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas is empty and without selfness and the associated images.'

"These great bodhisattvas will further teach sentient beings, 'You must know that matter, like dreams, echoes, and so forth, and transformed things, has no self-nature; feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness, like dreams, echoes, and so forth, and transformed things, have no self-nature. The eye sphere, like dreams, echoes, and so forth, and transformed things, has no self-nature; the ear, nose, tongue, body, and conscious spheres, like dreams, echoes, and so forth, and transformed things, have no self-nature. The sight sphere, like dreams, echoes, and so forth, and transformed things, has no self-nature; the sound, smell, taste, touch, and mental-image spheres, like dreams, echoes, and so forth, and transformed things, have no self-nature. The eye realm, like dreams, echoes, and so forth, and transformed things, has no self-nature; the ear, nose, tongue, body, and conscious realms, like dreams, echoes, and so forth, and transformed things, have no self-nature. The sight realm, like dreams, echoes, and so forth, and transformed things, has no self-nature; the sound, smell, taste, touch, and mental-image realms, like dreams, echoes, and so forth, and transformed things, have no self-nature. The eye consciousness realm, like dreams, echoes, and so forth, and transformed things, has no self-nature; the ear consciousness, nose consciousness, tongue consciousness, body consciousness, and conscious consciousness realms, like dreams, echoes, and so forth, and transformed things, have no self-nature. The eye contact, like dreams, echoes, and so forth, and transformed things, has no self-nature; the ear, nose, tongue, body, and conscious contacts, like dreams, echoes, and so forth, and transformed things, have no self-nature. The feelings produced by eye contact, like dreams, echoes, and so forth, and transformed things, have no self-nature; the feelings produced by ear, nose, tongue, body, and conscious contacts, like dreams, echoes, and so forth, and transformed things, have no self-nature. The earth realm, like dreams, echoes, and so forth, and transformed things, has no self-nature; the water, fire, wind, space, and consciousness realms, like dreams, echoes, and so forth, and transformed things, have no self-nature. Cause and condition, like dreams, echoes, and so forth, and transformed things, have no self-nature; the consecutive thoughts in sequence, conditions that stimulate the mind, and the conditions that reinforce main causes, like dreams, echoes, and so forth, and transformed things, have no self-nature. Ignorance, like dreams, echoes, and so forth, and transformed things, has no self-nature; action,

consciousness, name and form, six sense spheres, contact, reception, craving, gasping, existence, birth, old age, and death, like dreams, echoes, and so forth, and transformed things, have no self-nature. The virtuous dharmas, like dreams, echoes, and so forth, and transformed things, have no self-nature; the not virtuous dharmas, like dreams, echoes, and so forth, and transformed things, have no self-nature. The morally related dharmas, like dreams, echoes, and so forth, the transformed things, have no self-nature; the morally unrelated dharmas, like dreams, echoes, and so forth, and transformed things, have no self-nature. The flawed dharmas, like dreams, echoes, and so forth, and transformed things, have no self-nature; the flawless dharmas, like dreams, echoes, and so forth, and transformed things, have no self-nature. The dharmas of the world, like dreams, echoes, and so forth, and transformed things, have no self-nature; the dharmas beyond the world, like dreams, echoes, and so forth, and transformed things, have no self-nature. The conditioned dharmas, like dreams, echoes, and so forth, and transformed things, have no self-nature; the unconditioned dharmas, like dreams, echoes, and so forth, and transformed things, have no self-nature. Giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita, like dreams, echoes, and so forth, and transformed things, have no self-nature. Internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature, like dreams, echoes, and so forth, and transformed things, have no self-nature. Realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable, like dreams, echoes, and so forth, and transformed things, have no self-nature. The noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering, like dreams, echoes, and so forth, and transformed things, have no self-nature. The four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path, like dreams, echoes, and so forth, and transformed things, have no self-nature. The liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration, like dreams, echoes, and so forth, and transformed things, have no self-nature. The four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations, like dreams, echoes, and so forth, and transformed things, have no self-nature. The eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations, like dreams, echoes, and so forth, and transformed things, have no self-nature. The stage of pure contemplation, stage of embryonic Buddha nature, and so forth, and stage of Thus-Comer, like dreams, echoes, and so forth, and transformed things, have no self-nature. The stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilements, and so forth, and stage of dharma cloud, like dreams, echoes,

and so forth, and transformed things, have no self-nature. All dharani gates and all samadhi gates, like dreams, echoes, and so forth, and transformed things, have no self-nature. The five eyes and six supernatural powers, like dreams, echoes, and so forth, and transformed things, have no self-nature. The Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power, like dreams, echoes, and so forth, and transformed things, have no self-nature. The thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features, like dreams, echoes, and so forth, and transformed things, have no self-nature. Staying in correct mindfulness and always dwelling in equanimity, like dreams, echoes, and so forth, and transformed things, have no self-nature. The perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena, like dreams, echoes, and so forth, and transformed things, have no self-nature. Stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi, like dreams, echoes, and so forth, and transformed things, have no self-nature. All great bodhisattva actions, like dreams, echoes, and so forth, and transformed things, have no self-nature. The unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas, like dreams, echoes, and so forth, and transformed things, has no self-nature.'

"These great bodhisattvas will further teach, 'You must know that in dreams, echoes, and so forth, and transformed things, there are no matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness; no eye sphere, ear sphere, and so forth, and conscious sphere; no sight sphere, sound sphere, and so forth, and mental-image sphere; no eye realm, ear realm, and so forth, and conscious realm; no sight realm, sound realm, and so forth, and mental-image realm; no eye consciousness realm, ear consciousness realm, and so forth, and conscious consciousness realm; no eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact; no feelings produced by eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact; no earth realm, water realm, and so forth, and consciousness realm; no cause and condition, consecutive thoughts, conditions that stimulate the mind, and conditions that reinforce main causes; no ignorance, action, consciousness, and so forth, and old age and death; no virtuous or not virtuous dharmas; no morally related or morally unrelated dharmas; no flawed or flawless dharmas; no dharmas of or beyond the world; no conditioned or unconditioned dharmas; no giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita; no internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so

forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature; no realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable; no noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering; no four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path; no liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration; no four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations; no eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations; no stage of pure contemplation, stage of embryonic Buddha nature, and so forth, and stage of Thus-Comer; no stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilements, and so forth, and stage of dharma cloud; no dharani gates and samadhi gates; no five eyes and six supernatural powers; no Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power; no thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features; no staying in correct mindfulness and dwelling in equanimity at all times; no perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena; no stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi; no great bodhisattva actions; no unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas; no dreams and dreamers; no echoes and echoes hearers; no images and images seers; no shadows and shadows viewers; no illusory images of water under sunlight and viewers of illusory images of water under sunlight; no illusions and viewers of illusions; and no transformed things and viewers of transformed things.'

(Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, how can great bodhisattvas distinguish between virtuous from not virtuous dharmas if all dharmas are like dreams and transformed things? The Buddha replied that ignorant beings do not hear and understand the truth, so they attain dreams when seeing dreams, and attain transformed things when seeing transformed things. The upside-down attachment makes them reincarnate endlessly in birth and death. Great bodhisattvas are used to stay in two kinds of emptiness and teach sentient beings that all dharmas are empty and have no self-nature. In dreams and so forth, various dharmas are nonexistent.)

"These great bodhisattvas will further teach sentient beings, 'You must know that all dharmas are not real; their nature is nonnature. It is because of delusive differentiation that non-aggregate, non-realm, non-contact, and non-feeling are viewed as real.'

"These great bodhisattvas will continue to teach sentient beings, 'You must know that the nature of all dharmas, such as the nature of aggregates, spheres, and realms is caused by upside-down conditions, resulting from karmas maturing in different types and at different times. Why do you think unreal delusions as real?'

"These great bodhisattvas at that time will expediently relieve sentient beings from stinginess with their great supernatural powers of expedient skillfulness. After that, they will further teach sentient beings to cultivate giving paramita. By practicing giving, the sentient beings will gain great fortune, noble positions, and freedom. The great bodhisattvas will guide them to cultivate pure-precept paramita. Observing pure precepts allows sentient beings to be reborn in virtuous destinies with dignity and freedom. The great bodhisattvas again will recue sentient beings by teaching them forbearance paramita. Practicing forbearance paramita leads sentient beings to attain dharma forbearance of nonarising quickly. The great bodhisattvas will continue to assist sentient beings by teaching them diligence paramita. Through diligence, the sentient beings will not regress in cultivating various virtuous dharmas until they achieve the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. These great bodhisattvas will further deliver them by teaching them meditation paramita. These meditations enable sentient beings to be reborn in the world of Brahma and dwell peacefully in freedom and ease of the first meditation. From the first meditation, they progress to dwell peacefully in the second meditation, third meditation, and so forth, and the concentration of nonthinking and not nonthinking. The great bodhisattvas will further expediently assist sentient being to dwell in the three vehicles; the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path; the three liberation gates; the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations; the four noble truths; the six paramitas; 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 stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilements, and so forth, and stage of dharma cloud; the dharani gates and the 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; correct mindfulness and equanimity at all times; the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena.

"If the sentient beings are addicted to the effects caused by the conditional giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, prajna, and the rest of virtuous dharmas, these great bodhisattvas will expediently guide them to dwell in the realm of nirvana without remainder. The great bodhisattvas can dwell in immaterial, invisible, and unsubstantial genuine flawless dharmas because of practicing the expedient skillfulness of the fathomless prajna paramita. If the sentient beings are eligible to attain stream-entry effect, once-return effect, nonreturn effect, arhat effect, self-enlightenment bodhi, or the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, these great bodhisattvas will demonstrate for, persuade, encourage, admire, celebrate, and help them expediently, so that the sentient beings can attain stream-entry effect, once-return effect, arhat effect, self-enlightenment bodhi, or the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.

"Well-Appearing One, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas thus are able to contemplate the two kinds of emptiness and get to know that all dharmas are like dreams, echoes, and so forth, and transformed things; that all dharmas are not real, without nature, and their particular characteristics are empty. Nevertheless, the great bodhisattvas remain working hard to establish, without chaos and disorder, the virtuous and the not virtuous dharmas, the morally related and the morally unrelated dharmas, and so forth, and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas."

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Chapter 76

The Forms of Virtues

Section 2

(In the Second Assembly

At that time, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One said to the Buddha, “World-Honored One, these great bodhisattvas are rare and unique! They practice the fathomless prajna paramita and contemplate the two kinds of emptiness, getting to know that various dharmas are like dreams, echoes, images, shadows, illusory images of water under sunlight, illusions, and transformed things; that various dharmas are not real, without nature, and their characteristics are empty. However, the great bodhisattvas still work hard to establish the differences among various dharmas without chaos and disorder, such as the differences between virtuous and not virtuous dharmas.”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “Yes, it is as you say. These great bodhisattvas are rare and unique! When they practice the fathomless prajna paramita, they contemplate the two kinds of emptiness and get to know that various dharmas are like dreams, echoes, and so forth; that they are not real and without nature, and their characteristics are empty. However, they still work hard to establish the differences among various dharmas without disorder, such as the differences between the virtuous and not virtuous dharmas. When they practice the fathomless prajna paramita, they can perform rare and unique dharmas that voice-hearers or self-enlightened ones cannot imagine and achieve. As voice-hearers and self-enlightened ones cannot outdebate great bodhisattvas, not to mention the ordinary sentient beings can.”

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, “What are the rare and unique dharmas that voice-hearers and self-enlightened ones cannot imagine and achieve, but great bodhisattvas can when they practice the fathomless prajna paramita?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One: “Please listen carefully and attentively, I will explain respectively all rare and unique dharmas that various great bodhisattvas achieve when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita.

“Well-Appearing One, when practicing fathomless prajna paramita, various great bodhisattvas will dwell peacefully in giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita that mature in different types and at different times. They will also dwell peacefully in the five supernatural powers; the thirty-seven aids to enlightenment; the dharani gates and samadhi gates; 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; and the rest of immeasurable and boundless Buddha dharmas. The great bodhisattvas will go to the worlds in the ten directions, absorb sentient beings with giving, pure precept, and so forth, and prajna; the first meditation, second meditation, and so forth, and the concentration of nonthinking and not nonthinking; immeasurable loving-kindness, immeasurable compassion, immeasurable joy, and immeasurable equanimity; the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path; the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration; or the rest of virtuous dharmas that are suitable for individuals.”

(The Buddha explained to Well-Appearing One about the rare and unique dharmas that great bodhisattvas can achieve but voice-hearers or self-enlightened ones cannot.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, “How do great bodhisattvas dwell peacefully in the paramitas, the five supernatural powers, and so forth, that mature in different types and at different times, and absorb sentient beings with giving, pure precept, and so forth?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “When practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, various great bodhisattvas will give sentient beings whatever they need. If they need food, the great bodhisattvas will give them food; if they need clothes, the great bodhisattvas will give them clothes. If they need vehicles, fragrant flowers, beds, bedding, houses, lamps, medicines, or any other living supplies, the great bodhisattvas will also give these things to

satisfy their needs. These great bodhisattvas will also offer fragrant flowers, treasure banners, canopies, music and entertainment, lamps, and oils in addition to living supplies to voice-hearers, self-enlightened ones, bodhisattvas, and Buddhas, the World-Honored Ones. The great bodhisattvas will practice giving with tranquil and equal minds apart from differentiation. They give equally to both those who follow and those who break precepts. They give equally to both humans and nonhumans, Buddhists and non-Buddhists, the holy and ordinary ones, people of high social class and low social class, and Buddhas and animals. They view all sentient beings equally when practicing giving without differentiating they are much blessed or less blessed. Why? It is because these great bodhisattvas understand that all characteristics are empty; within emptiness, nothing is higher or lower, nobler or inferior. That is why they practice giving without differentiation. Because these great bodhisattvas practice giving without differentiation, they will achieve the dharma of no differentiation. They thus can fulfill the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths and the rest of immeasurable merits and virtues of various Buddhas.

(The Buddha taught that great bodhisattvas who practice giving without differentiation will fulfill the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths and other merits and virtues.)

"You must know, Well-Appearing One, if great bodhisattvas see someone asking for alms and think, 'This person can create a field of bliss like a Buddha, so I will give. This animal cannot create such a field, so I will not give.' Then these great bodhisattvas have violated the way of bodhisattva. Why? The great bodhisattvas should first purify their own minds before purifying the field of bliss. Therefore, when seeing someone asking for alms, they should not think, 'I will give to this sentient being, but not that sentient being.' If they think in this way, they do not act in accord with the great bodhi they are seeking. The great bodhi will inspire them to think that I should serve as the island, house, and asylum so that sentient beings can rely on me. When seeing someone asking for alms, they should think, 'These sentient beings are poor and lonely, I should help them so that they will not steal, will be easily satisfied, and can also learn to give to others. Because of this cause and condition, they will stay away from killing, stealing, and so forth, and speaking filthy words. They will be able to tame greed, anger, and incorrect views, so that will be reborn in the noble family of Ksatriya, Brahman, the elder, or the layperson, or in a wealthy family, in which they will enjoy rich and happy life and cultivate various good karmas. It is likely because of practicing giving, they will gradually approach the

perfect tranquility through the three vehicles and finally realize and attain the voice-hearer effects, self-enlightenment bodhi, or the unsurpassed realm of nirvana.'

(The Buddha further explained that practicing generosity towards others will yield numerous positive outcomes for the recipients.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, if an adversary or others come to the great bodhisattvas' places to do harm to them or ask for the parts of their bodies or properties, these great bodhisattvas should not think, 'I should give to this person, but I should not give to another one.' Rather, they should give whatever is asked with an equal mind. Why? These great bodhisattvas have pursued the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi not for the sake of their own bodies or properties, but for the sake of benefiting various sentient beings universally. If they decide that they will give to these people but not to other people, they will be scolded by the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones and other holy ones, such as the bodhisattvas, self-enlightened ones, voice-hearers, heavenly beings, human beings, asuras, and so forth, 'You have aspired to the great bodhi and vowed to bring benefits and happiness to all sentient beings universally, serving as the house, island, and asylum for those in need so that they can rely on you, now how can you say that you will give to these persons, but not to others?'

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas are practicing the fathomless prajna paramita when some human beings and nonhuman beings come to ask for marrows, hands, and feet. These great bodhisattvas should not decide to give to some ones, but not to others. Rather, they should think, 'I will give to all to satisfy their requests.' Why? These great bodhisattvas have always thought, 'I am born here to benefit all sentient beings. So, I should always give no matter who comes and whatever is asked.' Therefore, when seeing beggars, the great bodhisattvas will think, 'I received this body merely for their sake. If they did not come to pick it up themselves, I would deliver it to them. Now they have already come, there is no reason that I will not give.' After having this thought, they will rejoice and celebrate and cut their own limbs off and give them to the beggars. The great bodhisattvas will further say joyfully, 'Now, I have gained a lot. I have given up all defilements and purified my body.'

(The Buddha advised that great bodhisattvas should practice giving with an equal mind. They should always keep in mind that they are born to benefit all sentient beings universally.)

"Well-Appearing One, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas should learn in this way.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, as the great bodhisattvas saw the beggar and had such a thought arising in their minds, 'Who is the giver? Who is the receiver? What is given? Why is giving? How is giving done? The self-nature of various dharmas is unattainable. Why? These various dharmas are empty in the final analysis, and in empty dharmas, there is no giving or stealing, no giving or receiving.' Well-Appearing One, this is how various great bodhisattvas learn the truth that all dharmas are empty when they practice fathomless prajna paramita. The dharmas are empty because of internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature. If great bodhisattvas dwell peacefully and uninterruptedly in such emptiness when they practice giving, and thus fulfill giving paramita, they will have no differentiation and hatred arising in their minds when their bodies are cut off or their internal organs and external properties are taken by others. They will rather stay in this thought: The sentient beings and all dharmas are empty. Who harms my body? Who takes my property and body? Who is the one to be cut off and taken? And who is contemplating?

(The Buddha further taught that great bodhisattvas should practice giving with the thought that all sentient beings and all dharmas are empty.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, as I looked at as many worlds of the ten directions as the sands of the Ganges with my Buddha eye, I saw some great bodhisattvas volunteered to enter hells to help sentient beings. They saw how sentient beings suffered there, so they would demonstrate and guide them through three steps: supernatural transformation, description, and cautions. These bodhisattvas used supernatural powers to end torture caused by boiling oil, fire, and knives in hell. They documented the thoughts and feelings of these sentient beings, then taught them dharma. Then they gave cautions to guide sentient beings to initiate loving-kindness, compassion, joy, and equanimity and activate their pure faith, so that they could get rid of hell and be reborn in heaven or the human world; then following the paths of three vehicles to cease suffering and realize and attain the ultimate happiness in nirvana gradually.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, as I looked at as many worlds of the ten directions as the sands of the Ganges with my Buddha eye, I saw some great bodhisattvas had served and made offerings to various Buddhas, the World-Honored Ones. As they did so, they were filled with deep delight, joy, love, and respect. They listened carefully and respectfully to the correct dharma taught by the Buddhas; they accepted, embraced, read, and recited it, and would never forget it until attaining the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. They correctly repeated what they had heard to teach sentient beings, leading them to attain superior benefits, peace, and happiness.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, when I looked at as many various worlds of the ten directions as the sands of the Ganges with my Buddha eye, I saw a great bodhisattva who chose to renounce his body and life to benefit various sentient beings in the realm of animals. Seeing the animals killing each other because of hunger, this great bodhisattva initiated deep compassion over the animals, so fed them with the hands and feet cut off from his own body. After eating the bodhisattva's body, the animals felt gratitude and felt shame. Because of this cause and condition, these animals got rid of the realm of animals and were reborn as heavenly beings or human beings. They were fortunate to encounter the Thus-Comer, One Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened One and heard correct dharma taught by the Thus-Comer. They practiced and cultivated as they were taught to achieve perfect tranquility; gradually they entered nirvana through the unsurpassed great vehicle, the self-enlightened one vehicle, or the voice-hearer vehicle. Well-Appearing One, various great bodhisattvas can undertake many difficult things in the world to benefit all sentient beings. To achieve this noble objective, they initiate aspiration to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi and encourage others to do so. They not only practice various correct actions themselves but also encourage others to practice.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, as I looked at as many worlds of the ten directions as the sands of the Ganges with my Buddha eye, I saw one great bodhisattva volunteer to relieve ghosts from suffering caused by hunger and thirst. When their suffering ended, they felt gratitude, shame, and respect for the bodhisattva. So, the great bodhisattva taught them the essential meanings of getting away from stinginess to elicit a generous mind of practicing giving. Because of this cause and condition, these sentient beings could get rid of the realm of hungry

ghosts and were reborn as heavenly beings or human beings. They were fortunate to encounter the Thus-Comer, One Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened One, listened respectfully to his dharma teaching, and made offerings to the Buddha. They gradually cultivated the correct actions of the three vehicles and finally realized and entered the realm of nirvana of the unsurpassed vehicle, the self-enlightened one vehicle, or the voice-hearer vehicle. Well-Appearing One, various great bodhisattvas thus can dwell peacefully in great compassion toward sentient beings and initiate boundless expedient skillfulness to allow the sentient beings to enter the nirvana of the unsurpassed vehicle, the self-enlightened one vehicle, or the voice-hearer vehicle.

(The Buddha explained, in the paragraphs above and below, how great bodhisattvas could adopt different ways to help sentient beings in suffering and guide them to enter the three vehicles.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, as I looked at as many worlds in the ten directions as the sands of the Ganges with my Buddha eye, I saw a great bodhisattva who taught correct dharma expediently and skillfully to the heavenly beings from the Heaven of Four Great Kings, Heaven of Thirty-Three Smaller Heavens, and so forth, and Heaven of Enjoying Other-Made Changes. These heavenly beings heard the correct dharma, cultivated it diligently through the three vehicles, and gradually they entered the realm of nirvana. You must know, Well-Appearing One, some heavenly sons were addicted to the pleasures of five desires of the heaven and the palaces full of various treasures in which they lived, so the great bodhisattva set the palaces on fire to burned them all. These heavenly sons were terrified and got tired, the great bodhisattva thus taught them the dharma: 'Various heavenly sons, you should contemplate and see that various things in the world are impermanent, painful, empty, and without selfness. They are not reliable, so the wise should not be addicted and attached to them.' The heavenly sons heard this dharma voice and became disgusted with five desires. Then they contemplated their own bodies and lives, and saw them as illusory and impermanent, just like plantains, lightning, or the illusory images of water under sunlight; they also viewed the palaces as prisons. After having such contemplation, they started to cultivate correct actions diligently. Gradually they approached perfect tranquility through the three vehicles and entered nirvana.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, as I looked at as many worlds in the ten directions as the sands of the Ganges with my Buddha eye, I saw a great bodhisattva who found that various heavenly beings in the Heavens of Brahma were attached to various incorrect views. The great bodhisattva tried to guide them expediently to get rid of the incorrect views, so said to them, 'Heavenly beings, why do you have such incorrect views about the empty, formless, illusory, and unreal five aggregates? You must get rid of the incorrect views and accept the correct dharma, so that you can enjoy long-lasting peace and happiness.' Well-Appearing One, this is how great bodhisattvas dwell peacefully in great compassion to teach sentient beings the essential meanings. Well-Appearing One, this is the very rare and unique way possessed by the great bodhisattvas.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, as I looked at as many worlds in the ten directions as the sands of the Ganges with my unhindered pure Buddha eye, I saw some great bodhisattvas absorb sentient beings with four approaches of absorption. What are the four approaches? The first is giving. The second is speaking kind and good words. The third is doing beneficial things for others. The fourth is getting along with others in harmony and empathy.

(The Buddha taught the four approaches for effective communication and guidance with sentient beings.)

"Well-Appearing One, how do great bodhisattvas absorb various sentient beings with giving? Well-Appearing One, various great bodhisattvas adopt two kinds of giving to absorb various sentient beings. One is property giving, and the other one is dharma giving.

"Well-Appearing One, how do great bodhisattvas absorb various sentient beings with property giving? Well-Appearing One, when practicing fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas will give various kinds of food, drinks, clothing, houses, beds and bedding, vehicles, lamps, music and entertainment, fragrant flowers, treasure banners, canopies, and jewel necklaces to sentient beings. They will give gold, silver, beryl, cat's-eye, crystal, white jade shell, jade, bright green gemstone, large blue gemstone, jewel, pearl, rare stone, rare pestle, and red lotus treasure to sentient beings. They will give wives, concubines, men, women, senior and junior servants, guards, elephants, horses, cows, sheep, and medicines to sentient beings. They will give treasures, storage, cities, villages, and the throne of the king to sentient beings. They

will also give body, hands, feet, limbs, head, eyes, and marrows to sentient beings. They will put all kinds of materials at the intersections of the roads, standing on a high platform and yelling: ‘Whatever you need, you may come and take them away as if they were your own belongings. You may even take my body, hands, feet, limbs, head, eyes, and marrows. I will never say no to you!’

(The Buddha elaborated the meaning of property giving.)

“After giving sentient beings all they need, the great bodhisattvas will further give them correct dharma, encourage them to take refuge in the three gems: the Buddha, the dharma, and the sangha. They will guide them to accept and uphold the five precepts for lay believers, eight precepts for lay believers, or the path of the ten virtuous karmas. They will teach them to cultivate and learn the first, second, third, and fourth meditations; cultivate and learn immeasurable loving-kindness, compassion, joy, and equanimity; cultivate and learn the concentrations of boundless emptiness, boundless consciousness, nothingness, and nonthinking and not nonthinking; cultivate and learn the mindfulness in compliance with the Buddha, and so forth, and heaven; cultivate and learn to contemplate on impurity and stay in mindfulness of inhalation and exhalation; cultivate and learn the thinking of impermanence, and so forth, and extinction; cultivate and learn the four bases of mindfulness, and so forth, and noble eightfold path; cultivate and learn the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration; cultivate and learn the eight liberations, and so forth, and ten universal contemplations; and cultivate and learn giving paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita. They will instruct them to dwell peacefully in internal emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature; dwell peacefully in realness, 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 cessation of suffering; cultivate and learn all dharani gates and all samadhi gates; cultivate and learn the stage of pure contemplation, and so forth, and stage of Thus-Comer; cultivate and learn the stage of ecstasy, and so forth, and stage of dharma cloud; cultivate and learn the five eyes and six supernatural powers; cultivate and learn the Buddha’s ten abilities, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha’s wisdom and power; cultivate and learn the thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features; cultivate and learn staying in correct mindfulness and dwelling in equanimity; cultivate and learn the perfect knowledge of

everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena; cultivate and learn the stream-entry effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi; cultivate and learn all bodhisattva actions; or cultivate and learn the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal Bodhi of various Buddhas.

(The Buddha elaborated the meaning and methods of practicing dharma giving.)

"Well-Appearing One, when practicing the expedient skillfulness of the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas should assist sentient beings to dwell in the unsurpassed dharma of peace and stability and even attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge after giving them properties. Well-Appearing One, this is the very rare and unique dharma that great bodhisattvas possess when they practice the fathomless prajna paramita.

(The Buddha suggested that great bodhisattvas should assist sentient beings to attain the unsurpassed dharma, the so-called dharma giving, after giving property.)

"Well-Appearing One, how should great bodhisattvas absorb sentient beings with dharma giving when practicing fathomless prajna paramita? Well-Appearing One, there are two kinds of dharma giving. One is the dharma giving of the world, while the other is the dharma giving beyond the world.

(The Buddha taught that two kinds of dharma giving should be used to absorb sentient beings: the dharma giving of the world and the dharma giving beyond the world.)

"What is the dharma giving of the world? It means that when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas should lecture on, explain, analyze, and demonstrate the exquisite dharmas of the world, such as the contemplation of impurity, mindfulness in inhalation and exhalation, four meditations, four immeasurable minds, four formless concentrations, five supernatural powers, as well as other dharmas shared by ordinary sentient beings. This is the dharma giving of the world. Well-Appearing One, why is this giving named so? The reason is that learning this dharma cannot allow one to ultimately get away from the world. Hence, it has this name.

(The Buddha explained what the dharma of the world is, and why it is so named.)

"Well-Appearing One, after practicing the wonderful dharma giving of the world, the great bodhisattvas will further adopt various expedient ways to guide and instruct sentient beings, so that they can get away from the dharmas of the world to dwell in holy dharmas and attain the effects of holy dharmas. Well-Appearing One, what are the holy dharmas? What are the effects of the holy dharmas? Well-Appearing One, the holy dharmas indicate the thirty-seven aids to enlightenment, the three liberation gates, and so forth. The effects of the holy dharmas are the stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and the self-enlightenment bodhi. Well-Appearing One, why is this dharma named beyond the world? The reason is that learning this dharma will allow learners to get away from the world. Hence, it is so named.

(The Buddha explained what the dharma beyond the world is, and why it is so named.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the holy dharmas for great bodhisattvas are the six paramitas, eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, ten universal contemplations, dharani gates, samadhi gates, stages of bodhisattva, five eyes, six supernatural powers, 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, the way of staying in correct mindfulness, the nature of 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. These are all flawless dharmas. The effect of the holy dharmas refers to the realm of great nirvana of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi possessed by the Buddha.

(The Buddha listed the holy dharmas beyond the world and defined the effects derived from practicing holy dharmas.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, in addition to the superior virtuous dharmas mentioned above, the holy dharmas for great bodhisattvas also contain the knowledge of the stream-entry effect, once-return effect, nonreturn effect, arhat effect, self-enlightenment bodhi, and the knowledge of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas. They also refer to the knowledge of the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path; the knowledge of the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration; the knowledge of the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four

formless concentrations; the knowledge of the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations; the knowledge of giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita; the knowledge of all dharani gates and all samadhi gates; the knowledge of the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for cessation of suffering; the knowledge of internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature; the knowledge of realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable; the knowledge of the stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilements, and so forth, and stage of dharma cloud; the knowledge of the five eyes and six supernatural powers; the knowledge of the stage of pure contemplation, stage of embryonic Buddha nature, and so forth, and stage of Thus-Comer; the knowledge of the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power; the knowledge of the thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features; the knowledge of staying in correct mindfulness and dwelling in equanimity at all times; the knowledge of the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena; the knowledge of the virtuous and not virtuous dharmas; the knowledge of the morally related and morally unrelated dharmas; the knowledge of the flawed and flawless dharmas; the knowledge of the dharmas of the world and beyond the world; and the knowledge of the conditioned and unconditioned dharmas. These are all the holy dharmas. One effect of the holy dharmas is permanent termination of enduring disposition of vexations."

(The Buddha identified more holy dharmas and provided alternative definition of the effect of the holy dharma.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "World-Honored One, can great bodhisattvas also attain the perfect knowledge of all phenomena?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "Yes, the great bodhisattvas can also attain the perfect knowledge of all phenomena."

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, "If that is the case, what is the difference between great bodhisattva and Buddha?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “The great bodhisattvas should be the ones who are going to attain the perfect knowledge of all phenomena, while various Buddhas, the World-Honored Ones are those who have already attained the perfect knowledge of all phenomena. Why? It does not suggest any fundamental difference that exists between bodhisattvas and Buddhas, the World-Honored Ones. It means that both bodhisattvas and Buddhas, the World-Honored Ones, have dwelled in the nondifferentiated nature of all dharmas. While the bodhisattvas are still looking for a comprehensive knowledge of the forms of various dharmas, the Buddhas have already attained ultimate knowledge of various dharmas. The Buddhas are fully pure and can perfectly illumine the knowledge of all particular and common characteristics of all dharmas, leaving no dark corners in that knowledge. Those still in the state of causes are named bodhisattva, while those who have reached the ultimate state of effects are named Buddha, the World-Honored One. Both bodhisattvas and Buddhas are described as possessing the perfect knowledge of all phenomena, while distinct difference still remains.

(The Buddha pointed out the similarity and difference between bodhisattvas and Buddhas in attaining the perfect knowledge of all phenomena.)

“Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas practice the dharma giving of the world and further practice the dharma giving beyond the world. They practice the fathomless prajna paramita in an expedient and skillful way. They first practice giving to sentient beings through the virtuous dharmas of the world, then, they guide them to get tired of and leave these dharmas of the world and allow them to dwell peacefully in the flawless holy dharmas beyond the world, and so forth, as well as attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge.

(The Buddha taught how great bodhisattvas practice two kinds of giving in order.)

“Well-Appearing One, what are the holy dharmas beyond the world that various great bodhisattvas will teach and explain, analyze, and demonstrate for various sentient beings? Well-Appearing One, all virtuous dharmas not shared by ordinary sentient beings but will lead and allow sentient beings who have cultivated and learned these dharmas to get out of the world and dwell in peace and stability are named the holy dharmas beyond the world. They are thirty-seven aids to enlightenment, three liberation gates, eight liberations, nine concentrations in sequence, the knowledge of the four noble truths, paramitas, the knowledge of various kinds of emptiness,

ten stages of bodhisattva, five eyes, six supernatural powers, Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, four unhindered understandings, eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power, great loving-kindness, great compassion, great joy, great equanimity, thirty-two perfect major marks, eighty distinguishing minor features, all dharani gates, all samadhi gates, and so forth. All flawless virtuous dharmas are named the holy dharmas beyond the world. If the great bodhisattvas teach, explain, analyze, and demonstrate these dharmas for sentient beings, they are practicing the dharma giving beyond the world.

(The Buddha defined the holy dharmas beyond the world. He also taught precisely how great bodhisattvas should practice dharma giving beyond the world.)

"Well-Appearing One, what are the thirty-seven aids to enlightenment? They are 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 Buddha began to explain the contents of the thirty-seven aids to enlightenment.)

"Well-Appearing One, as great bodhisattvas dwell in and contemplate the inner body, outer body, and the inner-outer body, they remove worldly greed and worries with correct endeavors, correct knowledge, and correct views. They further contemplate the causes and the cessation of bodily suffering, getting to know that nothing in the world is reliable. They thus become free from all worldly attachments. This is the first base of mindfulness. They proceed to contemplate feelings, mind, and dharmas in a similar way. This practice is named the four bases of mindfulness.

(The Buddha explained the meanings of the four bases of mindfulness, which are contained in the thirty-seven aids to enlightenment.)

"Well-Appearing One, the four correct endeavors refer to the practice undertaken by the great bodhisattvas, who work assiduously and wholeheartedly to prevent evil, not virtuous dharmas from arising if they have not appeared yet; eliminate evil, not virtuous dharmas if they have already arisen; encourage virtuous dharmas to arise when absent; and foster virtuous dharmas to increase and grow, and never discontinue if they have already arisen.

(The Buddha taught about the four correct endeavors for bodhisattva path.)

"Well-Appearing One, the four bases of power mean that the great bodhisattvas definitely elicit the samadhi of motivation to achieve the first base of power in concentration; definitely practice the samadhi of diligence to achieve the second base of power in concentration; definitely stay in the samadhi of mindfulness to achieve the third base of power in concentration; and definitely practice the samadhi of contemplation to achieve the fourth base of power in concentration. They will dwell in disgust, getting away, and extinction and transfer the merits toward equanimity. These are the four bases of power.

(The Buddha taught about the four bases of power for bodhisattva path.)

"Well-Appearing One, the five roots are that the great bodhisattvas should undertake cultivation toward the bodhi based on the root of faith, root of diligence, root of mindfulness, root of concentration, and root of wisdom.

(The Buddha taught about the five roots for bodhisattva path.)

"Well-Appearing One, the five powers are the powers that the great bodhisattvas will activate and develop based on the roots of faith, diligence, mindfulness, concentration, and wisdom.

(The Buddha taught about the five powers caused by the five roots.)

"Well-Appearing One, the seven factors for enlightenment refer to the factors activated and developed by great bodhisattvas when working toward enlightenment. They are mindfulness, wise choice, diligence, joy, being at ease and relaxed, concentration, and equanimity.

(The Buddha taught the seven factors for enlightenment for bodhisattvas.)

"Well-Appearing One, the noble eightfold path refers to right views, right reflection, right speech, right karma, right livelihood, right diligence, right mindfulness, and right concentration initiated and developed by great bodhisattvas.

(The Buddha explained the noble eightfold path.)

"Well-Appearing One, the three liberation gates contain the gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration learned and cultivated by great bodhisattvas to achieve liberation. What is the liberation gate of emptiness? It focuses the mind on images of emptiness and selflessness. What is the liberation gate of formlessness? It focuses the mind on extinguishing and tranquil images. What is the liberation gate of nonaspiration? It focuses the mind on images of suffering and impermanence.

(The Buddha explained the three liberation gates.)

"Well-Appearing One, what are the eight liberations? The great bodhisattvas will contemplate various images of matters inside as there are images inside; this is the first liberation. They will further contemplate the images of matters outside as no more images inside; this is the second liberation. They will proceed to attain a pure, definite, and superior understanding of the body; this is the third liberation. Then they will transcend the thoughts of images, remove the thoughts of all substances, have no more reflection on thoughts, and enter the boundless emptiness, and fully dwell in it; this is the fourth liberation. They will transcend all spheres of boundless emptiness, enter the boundless consciousness, and fully dwell in it; this is the fifth liberation. They will further transcend all spheres of boundless consciousness, enter the concentration of nothingness, and fully dwell in it; this is the sixth liberation. They will advance to surpass all spheres of nothingness, enter the concentration of nonthinking and not nonthinking, and fully dwell in it; this is the seventh liberation. They will finally transcend all spheres of nonthinking and not nonthinking, enter the concentration of extinction, and fully dwell in it; this is the eighth liberation.

(The Buddha explained the meanings of the eight liberations.)

"Well-Appearing One, what are the nine concentrations in sequence? As staying away from the evil, not virtuous dharmas, the great bodhisattvas undertake both general contemplation and specific investigation in concentration. Because of getting away, their joy and pleasure arise. They thus fully dwell in the first meditation. This is the first concentration in sequence. As general contemplation and specific investigation cease, the great bodhisattvas feel pure equality inside; their minds now point to one objective. Their joy and pleasure arise because of concentration; they fully dwell in the second meditation. This is the second concentration in

sequence. The great bodhisattvas stay away from joy and dwell in equanimity. They feel pleasure because of correct mindfulness and correct knowledge. They now stay in the mindfulness of pleasure along with equanimity, as admired by the holy ones, and fully dwell in the third meditation. This is the third concentration in sequence. As both suffering and pleasure are terminated, and the previously existing joy and worries disappear, the great bodhisattvas fully dwell in the fourth meditation with the mindfulness of pure equanimity. This is the fourth concentration in sequence. After transcending all material thoughts and extinguishing all substantial thinking, the great bodhisattvas have no more reflections; they thus enter the concentration of boundless emptiness and fully dwell in it. This is the fifth concentration in sequence. As transcending the sixth concentration of boundless consciousness and the seventh concentration of nothingness, they wgo beyond all spheres of nonthinking and not nonthinking in the eighth concentration, enter the concentration of extinction and fully dwell in it. This is the ninth concentration in sequence. These are the nine concentrations in sequence.

(The Buddha explained the nine concentrations in sequence.)

"Well-Appearing One, the knowledge of the four noble truths means that the great bodhisattvas should have the knowledge of suffering, the knowledge of the cause of suffering, the knowledge of the cessation of suffering, and the knowledge of the path for cessation of suffering.

(The Buddha taught what the knowledge of the four noble truths is.)

"Well-Appearing One, paramita refers to giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, prajna, expedient skillfulness, exquisite aspiration, ability, and knowledge paramitas of great bodhisattvas.

(The Buddha listed the ten paramitas.)

"Well-Appearing One, the knowledge of various kinds of emptiness means the knowledge of internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature. Great bodhisattvas should also learn the knowledge of realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable.

(The Buddha listed the knowledge of emptiness and the knowledge of realness, and so forth.)

"Well-Appearing One, the ten stages of bodhisattva contain the stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilements, stage of emitting light, stage of flaming wisdom, stage of being extremely difficult to surpass, stage of realness manifestation, stage of going far away, stage of the unmovable, stage of expedient wisdom, and the stage of dharma cloud.

(The Buddha listed the ten stages of bodhisattva.)

"Well-Appearing One, the five eyes contain physical eye, heavenly eye, holy wisdom eye, dharma eye, and Buddha eye that the great bodhisattvas pursue.

(The Buddha listed the five eyes.)

"Well-Appearing One, the six supernatural powers contain the supernatural powers of making transformation, heavenly eye, heavenly ear, knowing others' minds, knowing previous lives, and flawless knowledge.

(The Buddha listed the six supernatural powers.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the Buddha's ten abilities contain ten abilities possessed only by the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened One. They are:

1. The ability to tell right from wrong as they really are.
2. The ability to accurately know the karmas and the dharmas received by sentient beings in the past, present, and future, including where, why, and how they happen and how the correspondent effects mature in different ways and at different times.
3. The ability to know accurately the differences among various realms of various worlds.
4. The ability to know the differences of various superior understandings, correct judgments, general contemplations, and specific investigations in the world as they really are.
5. The ability to know accurately the strengths and weaknesses of the dispositions of individual sentient beings as they really are.

6. The ability to know the characteristics of the five universal functions that are always concomitant with perceptive activities as they really are.
7. The ability to know accurately the characteristics and differences in meditation, liberation, samadhi, samapatti, contamination, and purification of sentient beings as they really are.
8. The ability to use pure heavenly eye to see various virtuous and evil things that sentient beings have done, knowing accurately that how they have fallen into inferior destinies because of evil actions in body, speech, and mind or because of incorrect views or slandering the holy ones and the sages; how sentient beings are reborn in superior destinies owing to positive actions of body, speech, and mind or because of correct views and admiring the holy ones and the sages. The Thus-Comers can use their pure and extraordinary heavenly eye to see how various sentient beings are addicted or not addicted to materials and thus are reborn in superior or inferior destinies owing to positive or negative karmas.
9. The ability is to know accurately one lifespan, ten lifespans, one hundred lifespans, one thousand lifespans, immeasurable lifespans, one kalpa, ten kalpas, one hundred kalpas, one thousand kalpas, or immeasurable kalpas of sentient beings in the past as they really were, including what they said, did, and in what forms they were.
10. The ability to know accurately those who have removed all flaws and attained the liberation of flawless mind; those who have accurately experienced genuine way of liberation in flawlessness, and realized and fully dwelled in the wisdom of flawlessness; those who have been perfectly awakened to realize, 'My life is now going to the end; my pure actions of celibacy are fully established and fulfilled; I have done all I should do; and no more rebirth will happen to me.'

    These are the Buddha's ten abilities.

(The Buddha explained the meanings of the Thus-Comer's ten abilities in detail.)

"Well-Appearing One, what are the four kinds of fearlessness?

1. As the Thus-Comer declares that he is the fully enlightened one, some sramanas (monks of various religions), Brahmans, heavenly demon kings, or other ordinary sentient beings will

challenge and argue against him, saying that his attainment of perfect enlightenment is not true. But the Buddha will not be scared because he can see clearly that their arguments are wrong. Instead, he will stay calm and in comfort and declare again that he is already a great immortal being of the highest position. The Thus-Comers thus makes lion roars and turn great wheel of Buddha dharma in the public, while all sramanas, Brahmans, demons, and the rest of the sentient beings absolutely cannot do as the Thus-comers do. This is the first kind of fearlessness.

2. As the Thus-Comer declares that his flaws and afflictions have been fully eliminated, some sramanas, Brahmans, and so forth will challenge and argue against him, saying that his flaws and afflictions are not completely removed. But the Buddha will not be scared at all because he can see clearly that their arguments are wrong. Instead, he will stay calm and in comfort and declare again that he is already a great immortal being of the highest position. The Thus-Comer thus makes lion roars and turns great wheel of Buddha dharma in the public, while all sramanas, Brahmans, demons, and the rest of the sentient beings absolutely cannot do as the Thus-comers do. This is the second kind of fearlessness.
3. As the Thus-Comer teaches the methods for removing obstacles in pursuing the truth, some sramanas, Brahmans, and so forth will challenge and argue against him, saying that the obstacles are not the real obstacles. But the Thus-Comer will not be scared at all because he can see clearly that their arguments are wrong. Instead, he will stay calm and in comfort and declare again that he is already a great immortal being of the highest position. The Thus-Comer thus makes lion roars and turns great wheel of Buddha dharma in the public, while all sramanas, Brahmans, demons, and the rest of the sentient beings absolutely cannot do as the Thus-Comer does. This is the third kind of fearlessness.

4. As the Thus-Comer teaches the methods for ceasing suffering, some sramanas, Brahmans, and so forth will challenge and argue against him, saying that his methods do not work for ceasing suffering, cannot make learners move on smoothly and enter nirvana. But the Thus-Comer will not be scared at all because he can see clearly that their arguments are wrong. Instead, he will stay calm and in comfort and declare again that he is already a great immortal being of the highest position. The Thus-Comer thus makes lion roars and turns great wheel of Buddha dharma in the public, while all sramanas, Brahmans, demons, and the rest of the

sentient beings absolutely cannot do as the Thus-Comer does. This is the fourth kind of fearlessness.

(The Buddha explained the Thus-Comer's four kinds of fearlessness.)

"Well-Appearing One, what are the four unhindered understandings? They include the unhindered ability to understand meanings, the dharma, and language, and the unhindered ability to debate and lecture. Well-Appearing One, what is the unhindered understanding of meanings? That is an unhindered knowledge to follow and realize the implied meanings. What is the unhindered ability to understand dharma? That is an unhindered knowledge to follow and grasp the teaching. What is the unhindered ability to understand language? That is an unhindered knowledge to comprehend and use language. What is the unhindered ability to debate and lecture? That is a seamless proficiency in debate and giving lectures.

(The Buddha explained the four unhindered understandings.)

"Well-Appearing One, these are the eighteen distinctive features of The Thus-Comer's wisdom and power:

1. The Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones are always flawless in actions.
2. Their speeches are flawless.
3. Their mindfulness is flawless.
4. They have no distraction in concentration.
5. They have no differentiation in thinking.
6. They always make wise choices.
7. They have no regression in aspiration.
8. They have no regression in diligence.
9. They have no regression in mindfulness.
10. They have no regression in prajna.
11. They have no regression in liberation.
12. They have no regression in the knowledge and the views of liberation.
13. They have no hindrance in knowing the past.

14. They have no hindrance in knowing the present.
15. They have no hindrance in knowing the future.
16. Their body karmas are in accord with knowledge.
17. Their speech karmas are in accord with knowledge.
18. Their mind karmas are in accord with knowledge.

These are the eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power.

(The Buddha explained the eighteen distinctive features of Thus-Comer's wisdom and power.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the thirty-two perfect marks refer to the Buddha's extraordinary features of body and demeanors:

1. The Buddha's feet have flat and full soles, which are exquisite and are as firm and stable as the bottom of a solid makeup case; wherever he walks, his soles touch the ground evenly and completely.
2. There are perfect thousand-spoke wheel signs on his soles.
3. His hands and feet are flexible and soft.
4. His fingers and toes are webbed, resembling those of the wild goose king.
5. He has slender and round fingers and toes.
6. He has wide, long, and perfect heels, matching the insteps very well.
7. He has slender, high, and full insteps, matching the heels very well.
8. He has slender and round shins in good proportion, like that of the deer king.
9. His slender and long arms extend past the knees like the trunk of the elephant king.
10. His male sex organ is concealed, resembling that of a dragon, a horse, or the elephant king.
11. There is one hair in each of his pores.
12. All his hair stands straight up in a right-handed rotation.

13. His skin is delicate and moisturized.

14. His skin is a clean, bright golden color.

15. His legs, palms, shoulders, and neck are delicate and full, and the muscles are soft.

16. He has perfect and wonderful shoulders and neck.

17. His shoulder blades and armpits are full and round.

18. His face and manner are perfect, proper, and upright.

19. The shape of his body is slender, wide, solemn, and upright.

20. The span of his arms equals the height of his body; the profile of his body is as perfect as a nyagrodha tree.

21. His upper body, chin, and chest are big and wide, resembling that of the lion king.

22. Bright light always radiates from his face.

23. He has forty neat and white teeth.

24. He has four white canine teeth.

25. He has flavored saliva, swallows smoothly, and always has the most delicious taste when eating.

26. His tongue is long, slender, pure, and broad and can reach the edge of his hair.

27. His voice is as loud and powerful as the heavenly drum. When he recites, his voice is so graceful and far-reaching that all listeners can hear him clearly and evenly. When he speaks, his voice vibrates with resonance.

28. His eyelashes are deep blue and neat, like that of a bull king.

29. His eyes are deep blue and bright.

30. His face is like a full moon, and his eyebrows are like the bows used by the heavenly gods.

31. There are white hairs between his eyebrows.

32. He has a bump on the top of the head.

These are the Thus-Comer's thirty-two perfect major marks."

Fascicle 470

Chapter 76

The Forms of Virtues

Section 3

(In the Second Assembly)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, what are the eighty distinguishing minor features of the Thus-Comer? They are:

1. The Thus-Comer's fingernails are long, narrow, thin, moist, smooth, bright, fresh, pure, and clean, and are of copper color.
2. His fingers are round, fine, long, and soft, and the joints are concealed.
3. All his limbs are of the same length; no space is left between fingers.
4. His limbs are round, dexterous, free, soft, and clean; they look bright and colorful as a lotus.
5. The sinews, arteries, and veins are well connected, but concealed.
6. Both his ankles are concealed.
7. When moving straight forward, the Thus-Comer's gait resembles a dragon king or an elephant king.
8. His gait is neat and solemn, which resembles a lion king.
9. His peaceful and moderate gait is like an ox king.
10. His graceful gait is like a swan king.
11. He looks back by turning his body around, resembling what a dragon king or elephant king does.
12. His limbs and their parts are well proportioned.
13. His joints fit together nicely, like a dragon coiling itself up.
14. His knees are firm and round and well proportioned.

15. His sex organs are pure, powerful, and complete, with exquisite lines and wrinkles.
16. His body and limbs are moist, soft, and shining without dust.
17. His gaze is solemn and fearless, showing no sign of timidity.
18. His body and limbs are thick, with strength, and well proportioned.
19. His body and limbs are steady, heavy, and complete, and never become loose.
20. His appearance is like a king of celestial beings, surrounded by solemn and pure light.
21. The Thus-Comer's body is surrounded by a light circle that always shines.
22. His abdomen is square, upright, soft, complete, and hidden.
23. His navel looks like a clockwise spiral, which is deep, round, pretty, pure, and brilliant.
24. He has a deep navel, neither bulging nor hollow, with a pretty periphery.
25. His skin is free from scabs, freckles, and black spots.
26. His palms are full and soft; his soles are flat.
27. His palm lines are long, straight, moist, bright, and not disconnected.
28. His lips are as bright and red as a binba fruit; his upper and lower lips are well proportioned.
29. His face is neither too long nor too short, neither too big nor too small, but is just the right size.
30. His tongue is soft, thin, broad, and long, and it is copper in color.
31. His voice is clear and bright and can spread far away like a roaring elephant king.
32. His wonderful voice has a rhythm that sounds like an echo in a deep valley.
33. His nose is tall, prominent, and thin; his nostrils are concealed.
34. His teeth are square, even, and fresh white.
35. His teeth are round, white, and sharp.
36. His eyes are clear and bright.
37. His eyes are long and broad, resembling the lovable petals of a green lotus.
38. His eyelashes are trim and thick and are not white in color.
39. His eyebrows are slender, thin, and soft, but not white.
40. His eyebrows are beautiful, smooth, and neat, and are dark red glazed in color.

41. His eyebrows are high, prominent, bright, and moist, shining like a new moon.

42. He has large, slender, and thick ears with perfect lobes.

43. His ears are beautiful, neat, and without any defect.

44. His appearance and demeanor will never disappoint or defile any viewer; they are pure, perfect, and attractive, and always invite respect and admiration.

45. His forehead is broad, full, even, and neat, and the shape is uniquely wonderful.

46. His upper body is perfectly composed; it is incomparably perfect, resembling a lion king.

47. His hair is slender and thick, dark purple in color, but not white.

48. His hair is fragrant, clean, soft, thin, pliable, and coiled.

49. His hair is even and neat, not twisted or messy.

50. His hair is strong, not broken or falling.

51. His hair is bright and smooth, with no dust on it.

52. His body is sturdy and full, even stronger than Nārāyana, the powerful god.

53. His body is tall and upright.

54. His organs are pure and perfect.

55. His body and limbs are incomparably superior and powerful.

56. His body and appearance always attract people; they always want to look at him.

57. His face has a perfectly proportioned length and width; it looks as bright, clear, and pure as a full moon.

58. He has a bright, easy, and peaceful face; he always smiles before he speaks; and he looks at people when he speaks.

59. His face is bright, easy, and pleasant; he never knits his brows, and no colors such as green indicating illness or red ever appear on his face.

60. His body and skin are pure and clean, having no bad smell or filthy things.

61. In all his pores there is always a kind of sweet and gratifying fragrance.

62. His face smells of the most pleasant fragrance.

63. His head is rounded and in perfect shape, like a canopy or a madana fruit.

64. His hair is purple, bright, and pure, resembling the beautiful iridescent hair on a peacock’s neck.

65. His voice reaches the listeners just loud enough to make each one satisfied.

66. The top of his head has never been overlooked.

67. His finger and toe webs are clear, solemn, and good looking; they are in beautiful copper-red color.

68. He walks with his feet off the ground, and a four-finger wide imprint is left on the ground when he passes.

69. He walks steadily, not staggering, and no guard is needed.

70. His powers and virtues are far-reaching but always keep people from fear and worry and make them happy and carefree.

71. His voice's pitch always pleases sentient beings when talking with them.

72. His lectures can always gratify the sentient beings' needs and favors.

73. Although he speaks in one voice, listeners can each gain the understanding they need.

74. His lectures are given in a reasonable order, and whatever he says is always good and based on causes and conditions.

75. He treats all sentient beings equally, admires good conduct and blames bad conduct, but has no love or hatred.

76. He watches and makes a perfect plan before taking actions. His own actions are a good model and can purify sentient beings' minds.

77. Sentient beings do not tire of looking at his good appearance.

78. His skull is solid and complete.

79. His appearance always looks young; he likes to visit the places where he previously lived.

80. His palms, soles, and chest are marked with auspicious and pleasant symbols in a red color.

These are the eighty distinguishing minor features of Thus-Comers.

(The Buddha enumerated the eighty distinctive characteristics of a Thus-Comer.)

"Well-Appearing One, because the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones have achieved such perfect features, their bodily lights can easily illuminate entire large threefold thousand world universally; if they intend, they will be able to illuminate immeasurable, boundless, and countless worlds universally. But because they

are compassionate over all sentient beings, they restrict their constant lights within a diameter of eight meters around their faces. If they do not restrict the bodily lights, the sun and moon will become dim, and the sentient beings will not be able to distinguish between the day from night, or recognize the passage of time, half a month, month, and the number of month and year, and just cannot do anything. The Buddha's bodily lights can easily illuminate entire large threefold thousand world and the immeasurable, boundless, and countless worlds. However, for the benefit of sentient beings, the Buddhas have adjusted the range and the brightness of the lights to ensure they are appropriate for the sentient beings, neither too much nor too little.

"Well-Appearing One, I had already accomplished all these merits, virtues, and superior benefits when I was cultivating prajna paramita as a great bodhisattva. This allowed me to attain dignified and magnificent features that bring unique and superior benefits, peace, joy, and happiness to sentient beings who see me.

"Therefore, Well-Appearing One, it is a unique and rare dharma if the great bodhisattvas can practice both property giving and dharma giving when cultivating the fathomless prajna paramita.

(The Buddha concluded that practicing both property giving and dharma giving will result in unique and superior benefits for sentient beings. This is the first of the approaches to absorb sentient beings by great bodhisattvas.)

"Well-Appearing One, how do great bodhisattvas absorb sentient beings by speaking kind and virtuous words? Well-Appearing One, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas should first speak to sentient beings of giving paramita with tender voices. Then they will teach pure-precept paramita, forbearance paramita, diligence paramita, meditation paramita, and finally prajna paramita, always with tender voices, to expediently absorb sentient beings. Well-Appearing One, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas should often talk to sentient beings about the six paramitas to absorb them. Why? It is because these six paramitas comprehensively comprise all virtuous dharmas.

(The Buddha proceeded to teach the second approach to absorb sentient beings: teaching them six paramitas expediently with kind and virtuous words.)

"Well-Appearing One, how do great bodhisattvas absorb sentient beings by doing beneficial things for them? Well-Appearing One, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas should consistently motivate sentient beings with various expedient methods to tirelessly cultivate and learn giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna paramitas, and the rest of superior virtuous dharmas.

(The third approach to absorb sentient beings: doing beneficial things for them.)

"Well-Appearing One, how do great bodhisattvas absorb sentient beings by getting along with them in harmony and empathy? Well-Appearing One, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas should apply their superior supernatural powers and great aspiration to expediently assist sentient beings in hells, realm of animals, realm of ghosts, the human world, and heavens by getting along with them well, so that they will gain superior benefits, peace, and happiness.

(The Buddha taught about the fourth approach to absorb sentient beings.)

"Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas can absorb sentient beings by practicing generous giving, speaking kind and virtuous words, doing beneficial things for them, and getting along with them in harmony and empathy, they do undertake a very rare and unique dharma.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, as I looked at as many worlds in the ten directions as the sands of the Ganges, I saw some great bodhisattvas who were giving cautions to and teaching other great bodhisattvas. They said, 'Come here, good gentlemen, you should learn how to activate various dharani gates of words. You should learn well to master one word, two words, and so forth, and ten words; you even should learn well to master twenty words, thirty words, and so forth, and one hundred, one thousand, ten thousand, and immeasurable words to elicit self-ease and freedom. You should also learn well to merge all languages into one word, two words, ten words, and so forth, and thirty words, or one hundred words, one thousand words, ten thousand words, and immeasurable words to elicit self-ease and freedom. You should learn well to absorb all words into one word or absorb one word into all words to elicit self-ease and freedom. You should also learn well to absorb the forty-two basic words into one word and absorb one word into forty-two basic words.' Well-Appearing One, these great bodhisattvas

should learn well to merge forty-two words into one word, or merge one word into forty-two words. After learning in this way, they will elicit expedient skillfulness in all words. After attaining such expedient skillfulness, they will further elicit expedient skillfulness in no words. The Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones are expedient and skillful in all dharmas and words. Because they are expedient and skillful in dharmas and words, they are also expedient and skillful in no words. Because of skillful means and skillfulness, they can lecture on the dharmas with words and the dharmas without words to the sentient beings; they also lecture on the dharmas without words by the dharmas with words. Why? To be apart from the words or no words are not different from the Buddha dharma. To transcend all names and words is named the real Buddha dharma. Why? It is because all dharmas and all sentient beings are empty in the final analysis."

(The Buddha taught about expedient skillfulness to know words and the absence of words. He conveyed that to transcend all names and words is the real Buddha dharma as all dharmas and sentient beings are empty in the final analysis.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "World-Honored One, if all dharmas and all sentient beings are empty in the final analysis, and because of the emptiness of nontemporality that they transcend all words and thus their self-nature is unattainable in the final analysis, then how do great bodhisattvas cultivate giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita? How do they cultivate the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations? How do they cultivate the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path? How do they cultivate the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration? How do they dwell peacefully in internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature? How do they dwell peacefully in realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable? How do they 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 they cultivate the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations? How do they cultivate the stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilements, and so forth, and stage of dharma cloud? How do they cultivate all dharani gates and all samadhi gates? How do they cultivate the five eyes and six supernatural

powers? 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? How do they cultivate to stay in correct mindfulness and always dwell in equanimity? How do they cultivate the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena? How do they cultivate the thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features? How do they dwell peacefully in the six paramitas and six supernatural powers that mature in different ways and at different times and teach the correct dharma to sentient beings?

(Well-Appearing One asked that if all dharmas are empty and unattainable, how can great bodhisattvas cultivate and dwell in various superior holy dharmas to assist sentient beings?)

"World-Honored One, because all sentient beings are unattainable, all establishments for sentient beings are also unattainable. Because all sentient beings are unattainable, matter, feeling, and so forth, and consciousness are unattainable; the eye sphere, ear sphere, and so forth, and conscious sphere are unattainable; the sight sphere, sound sphere, and so forth, and mental-image sphere are unattainable; the eye realm, ear realm, and so forth, and conscious realm are unattainable; the sight realm, sound realm, and so forth, and mental-image realm are unattainable; the eye consciousness realm, ear consciousness realm, and so forth, and conscious consciousness realm are unattainable; the eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact are unattainable; the feelings produced by eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact are unattainable; the earth realm, water realm, and so forth, and consciousness realm are unattainable; cause and condition, consecutive thoughts, conditions that stimulate the mind, and the conditions that reinforce main causes are unattainable; various dharmas produced by conditions are unattainable; ignorance, action, consciousness, and so forth, and old age and death are unattainable; giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita are unattainable; the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations are unattainable; the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path are unattainable; the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration are unattainable; internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature are unattainable; realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable are unattainable; the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering,

the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering are unattainable; the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations are unattainable; the stage of pure contemplation, stage of embryonic Buddha nature, and so forth, and stage of Thus-Comer are unattainable; the stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilements, and so forth, and stage of dharma cloud are unattainable; all dharani gates and all samadhi gates are unattainable; the five eyes and six supernatural powers are unattainable; the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power are unattainable; staying in correct mindfulness and always dwelling in equanimity are unattainable; the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena are unattainable; the stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi are unattainable; all great bodhisattva actions are unattainable; the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas is unattainable; and the thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor marks are also unattainable.

"World-Honored One, in nonattainment, there are no sentient beings or their establishment; no matter, feeling, and so forth, and consciousness and their establishment; no eye sphere, ear sphere, and so forth, and conscious sphere and their establishment; no sight sphere, sound sphere, and so forth, and mental-image sphere and their establishment; no eye realm, ear realm, and so forth, and conscious realm and their establishment; no sight realm, sound realm, and so forth, and mental-image realm and their establishment; no eye consciousness realm, ear consciousness realm, and so forth, and conscious consciousness realm and their establishment; no eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact and their establishment; no feelings produced by eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact and their establishment; no earth realm, water realm, and so forth, and consciousness realm and their establishment; no cause and condition, consecutive thoughts, conditions that stimulate the mind, and conditions that reinforce main causes and their establishment; no dharmas caused by conditions and their establishment; no ignorance, action, consciousness, and so forth, and old age and death and their establishment; no giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita and their establishment; no four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations and their establishment; no four bases of mindfulness, four correct

endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path and their establishment; no liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration and their establishment; no internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature and their establishment; no realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable and their establishment; no noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering and their establishment; no eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations and their establishment; no stage of pure contemplation, stage of embryonic Buddha nature, and so forth, and stage of Thus-Comer and their establishment; no stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilements, and so forth, and the of dharma cloud and their establishment; no dharani gates and samadhi gates and their establishment; no five eyes and six supernatural powers and their establishment; no Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power and their establishment; no staying in correct mindfulness and always dwelling in equanimity and their establishment; no perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena and their establishment; no stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi and their establishment; no great bodhisattva actions and their establishment; no unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas and its establishment; and no thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor marks and their establishment.

"World-Honored One, given the truth that all sentient beings and their establishments are unattainable and nonexistent, what dharma will the great bodhisattvas teach sentient beings when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita? World-Honored One, we should not say that the great bodhisattvas would dwell peacefully in incorrect dharma themselves and teach sentient beings incorrect dharma, encouraged them to dwell in incorrect dharma, and established all sentient beings in upside-down dharma. Why? When practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas cannot attain the bodhi, let alone they can attain the factors for the bodhi, the great bodhisattva, and the great bodhisattva dharma."

(Well-Appearing One further said that if all sentient beings are unattainable, then the five aggregates, six inner and outer spheres, six consciousness realms, six fundamental elements,

twelve chains of dependent origination, twenty kinds of emptiness, realness and so forth, six paramitas, as well as other superior holy dharmas and their establishments are also unattainable. Given this truth, what dharma will great bodhisattvas teach sentient beings?)

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “Yes, you asked a good question. As all sentient beings are unattainable, all establishments for sentient beings are also unattainable. As all dharmas are unattainable, all establishments for the dharmas are also unattainable. Because they are unattainable, they are nonexistent. Because they are nonexistent, you must know that internal dharmas, external dharmas, internal-external dharmas, emptiness, space, ultimate truth, conditioned phenomena, unconditioned reality, all dharmas in the final analysis, nontemporality, deconstruction and nondeconstruction, the original nature of all dharmas, the particular and common characteristics of all dharmas, all dharmas, nonattainment, selflessness, self-nature, and selfless self-nature are empty. You must know that because all sentient beings, all dharmas, and their establishments are nonexistent, 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 empty; the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering are empty; the aggregates of matter, feeling, and so forth, and consciousness are empty; the eye sphere, ear sphere, and so forth, and conscious sphere are empty; the sight sphere, ear sphere, and so forth, and mental-image sphere are empty; the eye realm, ear realm, and so forth, and conscious realm are empty; the sight realm, sound realm, and so forth, and mental-image realm are empty; the eye consciousness realm, ear consciousness realm, and so forth, and conscious consciousness realm are empty; the eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact are empty; the feelings produced by eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact are empty; the earth realm, water realm, and so forth, and consciousness realm are empty; cause and condition, consecutive thoughts, conditions that stimulate the mind, and the conditions that reinforce main causes are empty; the dharmas caused by conditions are empty; ignorance, action, consciousness, and so forth, and old age and death are empty; the ‘I,’ the sentient being, and so forth, and the knower and viewer are empty; giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita are empty; the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations are

empty; the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration are empty; the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations are empty; the stage of pure contemplation, stage of embryonic Buddha nature, and so forth, and stage of Thus-Comer are empty; the stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilements, and so forth, and stage of dharma cloud are empty; all dharani gates and all samadhi gates are empty; the five eyes and six supernatural powers are empty; the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power are empty; staying in correct mindfulness and dwelling in equanimity at all times are empty; the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena are empty; the stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi are empty; the bodhisattva nature of nonarising is empty; assisting sentient beings to mature and dignifying and purifying Buddha lands are empty; all great bodhisattva actions are empty; the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas is empty; and the thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features are empty.

"Well-Appearing One, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita and seeing that all dharmas are empty, the great bodhisattvas teach sentient beings about various dharmas so that they are able to stay away from the upside-down views. Although teaching the sentient beings of various dharmas, the great bodhisattvas do not attain sentient beings or dharmas. They neither make the forms of emptiness increase or decrease, nor grasp or renounce them. Because of this cause and condition, they teach various dharmas, but they do not say anything.

"Well-Appearing One, when contemplating all dharmas in this way, the great bodhisattvas will attain the unhindered knowledge. Because of this knowledge, they will not destroy the nondualistic nature of all dharmas. They lecture on this truth for sentient beings so that they will stay away from delusive thinking and upside-down attachments and thus are able to realize and attain the permanent ultimate happiness of nirvana through one of the three vehicles suited to each of them. A Thus-Comer, One Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened One made a transformed Buddha. This transformed Buddha further made immeasurable hundreds of thousands of koti nayuta transformed sentient beings and taught them to cultivate giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita;

cultivate the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations; 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; 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 eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations; cultivate the stage of pure contemplation, stage of embryonic Buddha nature, and so forth, and the stage of Thus-Comer; 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 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 the thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features; 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; dwell peacefully in stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi; dwell peacefully in the superior state of bodhisattva; or dwell peacefully in the unsurpassed bodhi. Well-Appearing One, what do you think about this? Would the transformed Buddha and transformed sentient being destroy and differentiate among all dharmas?"

(The Buddha agreed that as all sentient beings and all dharmas and their establishment are unattainable, the five aggregates, six inner and outer spheres, and so forth, and all superior holy dharmas are also empty. As great bodhisattvas realize this truth, they will teach sentient beings the reality of all dharmas with their unhindered knowledge, but they will not destroy the nondualistic nature of all dharmas; they will thus guide various sentient beings to stay away from incorrect views and delusive attachment. The Buddha further talked about the transformed Buddha and transformed sentient beings.)

Well-Appearing One replied to the Buddha, “No, even the transformed Buddha and the transformed sentient being would not destroy and differentiate among all dharmas because the transformed ones do not differentiate all dharmas.”

The Buddha said, “Well-Appearing One, because of this cause and condition, you must know that when the great bodhisattvas practice the fathomless prajna paramita, they will also teach sentient beings the dharmas suited to them to let them dwell peacefully in the right state, while the great bodhisattvas will neither destroy nor differentiate among the forms of the dharmas. The great bodhisattvas thus can relieve the sentient beings from delusive thinking and upside-down attachments, but they do not attain the sentient beings or the dharmas because they have adopted nonbondage and nonrelief as skillful means. Why?

“Well-Appearing One, the original nature of matter, feeling, and so forth, and consciousness is without bondage or relief. If their original nature of the dharmas is without bondage or relief, they should not be matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness. Why? Matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness are pure in the final analysis.

(The Buddha taught in this and the following paragraphs that the original nature of various dharmas is pure and the dharmas are pure in the final analysis, the dharmas thus are pure in the final analysis and are not the dharmas.)

“Well-Appearing One, the original nature of the eye sphere, ear sphere, and so forth, and conscious sphere is without bondage or relief. If their original nature is without bondage or relief, they should not be the eye sphere, ear sphere, and so forth, and conscious sphere. Why? It is because the eye sphere, ear sphere, and so forth, and conscious sphere are pure in the final analysis.

“Well-Appearing One, the original nature of the sight sphere, sound sphere, and so forth, and mental-image sphere is without bondage or relief. If their original nature is without bondage or relief, they should not be the sight sphere, sound sphere, and so forth, and mental-image sphere. Why? It is because the sight sphere, sound sphere, and so forth, and mental-image sphere are pure in the final analysis.

"Well-Appearing One, the original nature of the eye realm, ear realm, and so forth, and conscious realm is without bondage or relief. If their original nature is without bondage or relief, they should not be the eye realm, ear realm, and so forth, and conscious realm. Why? It is because the eye realm, ear realm, and so forth, and conscious realm are pure in the final analysis.

"Well-Appearing One, the original nature of the sight realm, sound realm, and so forth, and mental-image realm is without bondage or relief. If their original nature is without bondage or relief, they should not be the sight realm, sound realm, and so forth, and mental-image realm. Why? It is because the sight realm, sound realm, and so forth, and mental-image realm are pure in the final analysis.

"Well-Appearing One, the original nature of the eye consciousness realm, ear consciousness realm, and so forth, and conscious consciousness realm is without bondage or relief. If their original nature is without bondage or relief, they should not be the eye consciousness realm, ear consciousness, and so forth, and conscious consciousness realm. Why? It is because the eye consciousness realm, ear consciousness realm, and so forth, and conscious consciousness realm are pure in the final analysis.

"Well-Appearing One, the original nature of the eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact is without bondage or relief. If their original nature is without bondage or relief, they should not be the eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact. Why? It is because the eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact are pure in the final analysis.

"Well-Appearing One, the original nature of the feelings produced by eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact are without bondage or relief. If their original nature is without bondage or relief, they should not be the feelings produced by eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact. Why? It is because the feelings produced by eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact are pure in the final analysis.

"Well-Appearing One, the original nature of the earth realm, water realm, and so forth, and consciousness realm is without bondage or relief. If their original nature is without bondage or relief, they should not be the earth realm, water realm, and so forth, and consciousness realm.

Why? It is because the earth realm, water realm, and so forth, and consciousness realm are pure in the final analysis.

"Well-Appearing One, the original nature of cause and condition, consecutive thoughts, conditions that stimulate the mind, and the conditions that reinforce main causes is without bondage or relief. If their original nature is without bondage or relief, they should not be cause and condition, consecutive thoughts, conditions that stimulate the mind, and the conditions that reinforce main causes. Why? It is because cause and condition, consecutive thoughts, conditions that stimulate the mind, and the conditions that reinforce main causes are pure in the final analysis.

"Well-Appearing One, the original nature of the dharmas caused by conditions is without bondage or relief. If their original nature is without bondage or relief, they should not be the dharmas caused by conditions. Why? It is because the dharmas caused by conditions are pure in the final analysis.

"Well-Appearing One, the original nature of ignorance, action, and so forth, and old age and death is without bondage or relief. If their original nature without bondage or relief, they should not be ignorance, action, and so forth, and old age and death. Why? It is because ignorance, action, and so forth, and old age and death are pure in the final analysis.

"Well-Appearing One, the original nature of giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita is without bondage or relief. If their original nature is without bondage or relief, they should not be giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita. Why? It is because giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita are pure in the final analysis.

"Well-Appearing One, the original nature of the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations is without bondage or relief. If their original nature is without bondage or relief, they should not be the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations. Why? It is because the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations are pure in the final analysis.

“Well-Appearing One, the original nature of the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path is without bondage or relief. If their original nature is without bondage or relief, they should not be the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path. Why? It is because the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path are pure in the final analysis.

“Well-Appearing One, the original nature of the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration is without bondage or relief. If their original nature is without bondage or relief, they should not be the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration. Why? It is because the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration are pure in the final analysis.

“Well-Appearing One, the original nature of internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature is without bondage or relief. If their original nature is without bondage or relief, they should not be internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature. Why? It is because internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature are pure in the final analysis.

“Well-Appearing One, the original nature of realness, dharma ream, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable is without bondage or relief. If their original nature is without bondage or freedom, they should not be realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable. Why? It is because realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable are pure in the final analysis.

“Well-Appearing One, the original nature of the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering is without bondage or relief. If their original nature is without bondage or relief, they should not be the four noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering. Why? It is because the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering are pure in the final analysis.

“Well-Appearing One, the original nature of the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations is without bondage or relief. If their original nature is without bondage or relief, they should not be the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations. Why? It is because the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations are pure in the final analysis.

“Well-Appearing One, the original nature of the stage of pure contemplation, stage of embryonic Buddha nature, and so forth, and stage of Thus-Comer is without bondage or relief. If their original nature is without bondage or relief, they should not be the stage of pure contemplation, stage of embryonic Buddha nature, and so forth, and stage of Thus-Comer. Why? It is because the stage of pure contemplation, stage of embryonic Buddha nature, and so forth, and stage of Thus-Comer are pure in the final analysis.

“Well-Appearing One, the original nature of the stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilements, and so forth, and stage of dharma cloud is without bondage or relief. If their original nature is without bondage or relief, they should not be the stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilements, and so forth, and stage of dharma cloud. Why? It is because the stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilements, and so forth, and stage of dharma cloud are pure in the final analysis.

“Well-Appearing One, the original nature of the dharani gates and samadhi gates is without bondage or relief. If their original nature is without bondage or relief, they should not be the dharani gates and samadhi gates. Why? It is because the dharani gates and samadhi gates are pure in the final analysis.

“Well-Appearing One, the original nature of the five eyes and six supernatural powers is without bondage or relief. If their original nature is without bondage or relief, they should not be the five eyes and six supernatural powers. Why? It is because the five eyes and six supernatural powers are pure in the final analysis.

"Well-Appearing One, the original nature of the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power is without bondage or relief. If their original nature is without bondage or relief, they should not be the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power. Why? It is because the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power are pure in the final analysis.

"Well-Appearing One, the original nature of the thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features is without bondage or relief. If their original nature is without bondage or relief, they should not be the thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features. Why? It is because the thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features are pure in the final analysis.

"Well-Appearing One, the original nature of staying in correct mindfulness and always dwelling in equanimity is without bondage or relief. If their original nature is without bondage or relief, they should not be staying in correct mindfulness and always dwelling in equanimity. Why? It is because staying in correct mindfulness and always dwelling in equanimity are pure in the final analysis.

"Well-Appearing One, the original nature of the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena is without bondage or relief. If their original nature is without bondage or relief, they should not be the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena. Why? It is because the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena are pure in the final analysis.

"Well-Appearing One, the original nature of the stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi is without bondage or relief. If their original nature is without bondage or relief, they should not be the stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi. Why? It is because the stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi are pure in the final analysis.

“Well-Appearing One, the original nature of all great bodhisattva actions and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas is without bondage or relief. If their original nature is without bondage or relief, they should not be all great bodhisattva actions and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas. Why? It is because all great bodhisattva actions and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas are pure in the final analysis.

“Well-Appearing One, the original nature of the virtuous and not virtuous dharmas is without bondage or relief. If their original nature is without bondage or relief, they should not be the virtuous or not virtuous dharmas. Why? It is because the virtuous and not virtuous dharmas are pure in the final analysis.

“Well-Appearing One, the original nature of the morally related and morally unrelated dharmas is without bondage or relief. If their original nature is without bondage or relief, they should not be the morally related or morally unrelated dharmas. Why? The morally related and morally unrelated dharmas are pure in the final analysis.

“Well-Appearing One, the original nature of the flawed and flawless dharmas is without bondage or relief. If their original nature is without bondage or relief, they should not be the flawed or flawless dharmas. Why? The flawed and flawless dharmas are pure in the final analysis.

“Well-Appearing One, the original nature of the dharmas of the world and the dharmas beyond the world is without bondage or relief. If their original nature is without bondage or relief, they should not be the dharmas of or beyond the world. Why? The dharmas of and beyond the world are pure in the final analysis.

“Well-Appearing One, the original nature of the conditioned and unconditioned dharmas is without bondage or relief. If their original nature is without bondage or relief, they should not be the conditioned or unconditioned dharmas. Why? The conditioned and unconditioned dharmas are pure in the final analysis.

"Well-Appearing One, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, although the great bodhisattvas teach various dharmas for various sentient beings, they do not attain the sentient beings or dharma nature. Why? All sentient beings and dharmas are unattainable.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas should adopt nonattainment as skillful means to dwell in the nonattainment of all dharmas. That is, they should adopt nonattainment as skillful means to dwell in the emptiness of matter, feeling, and so forth, and consciousness; the emptiness of the eye sphere, ear sphere, and so forth, and conscious sphere; the emptiness of the sight sphere, sound sphere, and so forth, and mental-image sphere; the emptiness of the eye realm, ear realm, and so forth, and conscious realm; the emptiness of the sight realm, sound realm, and so forth, and mental-image realm; the emptiness of the eye consciousness realm, ear consciousness realm, and so forth, and conscious consciousness realm; the emptiness of the eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact; the emptiness of the feelings produced by eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact; the emptiness of the earth realm, water realm, and so forth, and consciousness realm; the emptiness of cause and condition, consecutive thoughts, conditions that stimulate the mind, and the conditions that reinforce main causes; the emptiness of ignorance, action, consciousness, and so forth, and old age and death; the emptiness of giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita; the emptiness of the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations; the emptiness of the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path; the emptiness of the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration; the emptiness of internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature; the emptiness of realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable; the emptiness of the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering; the emptiness of the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations; the emptiness of the stage of pure contemplation, stage of embryonic Buddha nature, and so forth, and stage of Thus-Comer; the emptiness of the stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilements, and so forth, and stage of dharma cloud; the emptiness of all dharani gates and all samadhi gates; the emptiness of the five eyes and six supernatural powers; 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; the emptiness of the thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features; the emptiness of staying in correct mindfulness and dwelling in equanimity at all times; the emptiness of the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena; the emptiness of stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi; the emptiness of all great bodhisattva actions and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas; the emptiness of the virtuous and not virtuous dharmas; the emptiness of the morally related and morally unrelated dharmas; the emptiness of the flawed and flawless dharmas; the emptiness of the dharmas of the world and beyond the world; and the emptiness of the conditioned and unconditioned dharmas.

(Therefore, the Buddha suggested that when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas should dwell in all dharmas by adopting nonattainment as skillful means.)

"Well-Appearing One, you must know that matter, feeling, and so forth, and consciousness dwell nowhere; the emptiness of matter, feeling, and so forth, and consciousness also dwells nowhere. Why? Matter, feeling, and so forth, and consciousness are without self-nature and unattainable; the emptiness of matter, feeling, and so forth, and consciousness is also without self-nature and unattainable. The dharmas that are without self-nature and unattainable do not dwell. And so on, all great bodhisattva actions and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas dwell nowhere; the emptiness of all great bodhisattva actions and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas also dwells nowhere. Why? All great bodhisattva actions and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas are without self-nature and unattainable; the emptiness of all great bodhisattva actions and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas is also without self-nature and unattainable. The dharmas that are without self-nature and unattainable do not dwell. The virtuous and the not virtuous dharmas dwell nowhere, the emptiness of the virtuous dharmas and not virtuous dharmas also dwells nowhere. Why? The virtuous and the not virtuous dharmas are without self-nature and unattainable; the emptiness of the virtuous dharmas and not virtuous dharmas is also without self-nature and unattainable. The dharmas that are without self-nature and unattainable do not dwell. The morally related and the morally unrelated dharmas dwell nowhere; the

emptiness of the morally related and morally unrelated dharmas also dwells nowhere. Why? The morally related and the morally unrelated dharmas are without self-nature and unattainable; the emptiness of the morally related and morally unrelated dharmas is also without self-nature and unattainable. The dharmas that are without self-nature and unattainable do not dwell. The flawed and the flawless dharmas dwell nowhere; the emptiness of the flawed and the flawless dharmas also dwells nowhere. Why? The flawed and the flawless dharmas are without self-nature and unattainable; the emptiness of the flawed and flawless dharmas is also without self-nature and unattainable. The dharmas that are without self-nature and unattainable do not dwell. The dharmas of the world and the dharmas beyond the world dwell nowhere; the emptiness of the dharmas of the world and beyond the world also dwells nowhere. Why? The dharmas of and beyond the world are without self-nature and unattainable; the emptiness of the dharmas of the world and beyond the world is also without self-nature and unattainable. The dharmas that are without self-nature and unattainable do not dwell. The conditioned and the unconditioned dharmas dwell nowhere; the emptiness of the conditioned dharmas and the unconditioned dharmas also dwells nowhere. Why? The conditioned and the unconditioned dharmas are without self-nature and unattainable; the emptiness of the conditioned and the unconditioned dharmas is also without self-nature and unattainable. The dharmas that are without self-nature and unattainable do not dwell.

(The Buddha taught that all dharmas and the emptiness of all dharmas do not dwell.)

"You must know, Well-Appearing One, the dharmas without nature do not dwell in the dharmas without nature; the dharmas with nature do not dwell in the dharmas with nature; the dharmas without nature do not dwell in the dharmas with nature; and the dharmas with nature do not dwell in the dharnas without nature. The dharmas with self-nature do not dwell in the dharmas with self-nature; the dharmas with other-nature do not dwell in the dharmas with other-nature; the dharmas with self-nature do not dwell in the dharmas with other-nature; and the dharmas with other-nature do not dwell in the dharmas with self-nature. Why? As all dharmas are unattainable, the unattainable dharmas will dwell nowhere.

(The Buddha further said that as all dharmas are unattainable, they will dwell nowhere.)

"Well-Appearing One, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas should use emptiness to relinquish dharmas, showing the real nature of dharmas to sentient beings. If the great bodhisattvas can practice prajna paramita in this way, they will stay away from faults and will be approved by the Buddhas, bodhisattvas, self-enlightened ones, voice-hearers, and other holly ones. Why? The Buddhas, bodhisattvas, self-enlightened ones, voice-hearers, and all other holly ones are also awakened to such dharma nature and teach sentient beings correctly. As they teach sentient beings about the dharmas, they do not turn or transgress the dharma nature. Why? The real nature of the dharmas is the real dharma realm, realness, and reality; and dharma realm, realness, and reality cannot be turned or transgressed. Why? The dharma realm, realness, and reality are without self-nature and unattainable, and the unattainable dharmas cannot be turned or transgressed."

(The Buddha explained the real nature of all dharmas.)

Fascicle 471

Chapter 76

The Forms of Virtues

Section 4

(In the Second Assembly)

At that time, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, “World-Honored One, if the genuine dharma realm, realness, and reality cannot be turned and transgressed, are they different from matter, feeling, and so forth, and consciousness? Are they different from the eye sphere, ear sphere, and so forth, and conscious sphere? Are they different from the sight sphere, sound sphere, and so forth, and mental-image sphere? Are they different from the eye realm, ear realm, and so forth, and conscious realm? Are they different from the sight realm, sound realm, and so forth, and mental-image realm? Are they different from the eye consciousness realm, ear consciousness realm, and so forth, and conscious consciousness realm? Are they different from the eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact? Are they different from the feelings produced by eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact? Are they different from the earth realm, water realm, and so forth, and consciousness realm? Are they different from cause and condition, consecutive thoughts, conditions that stimulate the mind, and the conditions that reinforce main causes? Are they different from various dharmas produced by conditions? Are they different from ignorance, action, consciousness, and so forth, and old age and death? Are they different from giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita? Are they different from the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations? Are they different from the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path? Are they different from the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration? Are they different from internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature? Are they different from realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable? Are they different from the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering,

the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering? Are they different from the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations, and ten universal contemplations? Are they different from the stage of pure contemplation, stage of embryonic Buddha nature, and so forth, and stage of Thus-Comer? Are they different from the stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilements, and so forth, and stage of dharma cloud? Are they different from all dharani gates and all samadhi gates? Are they different from the five eyes and six supernatural powers? Are they different from the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power? Are they different from the thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features? Are they different from staying in correct mindfulness and always dwelling in equanimity? Are they different from the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena? Are they different from the steam-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi? Are they different from all great bodhisattva actions? Are they different from the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas? Are they different from virtuous and not virtuous dharmas? Are they different from the morally related and morally unrelated dharmas? Are they different from the flawed and flawless dharmas? Are they different from the dharmas of the world and dharmas beyond the world? Are they different from the conditioned and unconditioned dharmas?"

(Well-Appearing One asked as the dharma realm, realness, and so forth do not turn and cannot be transgressed, will the dharma realm and so forth differ from various kinds of dharmas?)

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "Matter, feeling, and so forth, and consciousness are not different from the genuine dharma realm, realness, and reality. And so forth, all great bodhisattva actions and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas are not different from the genuine dharma realm, realness, and reality. The virtuous and not virtuous dharmas are not different from the genuine dharma realm, realness, and reality. The morally related and morally unrelated dharmas are not different from the genuine dharma realm, realness, and reality. The flawed and flawless dharmas are not different from the genuine dharma realm, realness, and reality. The dharmas of the world and beyond the world are not different from the genuine dharma realm, realness, and reality. The conditioned and unconditioned dharmas are not different from the genuine dharma realm, realness, and reality."

(The Buddha replied that they are not different.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, “If the dharmas such as matter, feeling, and so forth are not different from the genuine dharma realm, realness, and reality, why does the World-Honored One establish the negative karmas and their negative effects as correspondent with the rebirths in the realms of hells, animals, and ghosts? Why are the positive karmas and their positive effects established as correspondent with the rebirths in the human world and the heaven? Why are the negative and positive karmas and their effects established to separate those reborn in inferior destinies from those reborn in superior destinies? Why are the not negative and not positive karmas and their effects established as correspondent with stream-entry effect, once-return effect, nonreturn effect, arhat effect, self-enlightenment bodhi, and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “It is in terms of the worldly perspective rather than the ultimate meaning that I have established such causes and effects and their differences. By virtue of the ultimate meaning, no different causes and effects can be taught. Why? In the ultimate meaning, there is no differentiation among natures and forms of all dharmas; there is no speaking or manifestation either. So, how can there be different causes and effects?

(Responding to Well-Appearing One, the Buddha said it is in terms of the worldly perspective rather than ultimate meaning to establish different cause and effects as the dharmas are not different from the real dharma nature. Besides, this is efficient to teach sentient beings to make them understand the reality of dharmas.)

“Well-Appearing One, you must know that by virtue of the ultimate meaning of the truth, matter, feeling, and so forth, and consciousness are without arising, extinction, contamination, and purification because of the emptiness in the final analysis and the emptiness of nontemporality. The eye sphere, ear sphere, and so forth, and conscious sphere are without arising, extinction, contamination, and purification because of the emptiness in the final analysis and the emptiness of nontemporality. The sight sphere, sound sphere, and so forth, and mental-image sphere are without arising, extinction, contamination, and purification because of the emptiness in the final analysis and the emptiness of nontemporality. The eye realm, ear realm,

and so forth, and conscious realm are without arising, extinction, contamination, and purification because of the emptiness in the final analysis and the emptiness of nontemporality. The sight realm, sound realm, and so forth, and mental-image realm are without arising, extinction, contamination, and purification because of the emptiness in the final analysis and the emptiness of nontemporality. The eye consciousness realm, ear consciousness realm, and so forth, and conscious consciousness realm are without arising, extinction, contamination, and purification because of the emptiness in the final analysis and the emptiness of nontemporality. The eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact are without arising, extinction, contamination, and purification because of the emptiness in the final analysis and the emptiness of nontemporality. The feelings produced by eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact are without arising, extinction, contamination, and purification because of the emptiness in the final analysis and the emptiness of nontemporality. The earth realm, water realm, and so forth, and consciousness realm are without arising, extinction, contamination, and purification because of the emptiness in the final analysis and the emptiness of nontemporality. Cause and condition, consecutive thoughts, the conditions that stimulate the mind, and the conditions that reinforce main causes are without arising, extinction, contamination, and purification because of the emptiness in the final analysis and the emptiness of nontemporality. The dharmas produced by conditions are without arising, extinction, contamination, and purification because of the emptiness in the final analysis and the emptiness of nontemporality. Ignorance, action, and so forth, and old age and death are without arising, extinction, contamination, and purification because of the emptiness in the final analysis and the emptiness of nontemporality. Giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita are without arising, extinction, contamination, and purification because of the emptiness in the final analysis and the emptiness of nontemporality. The four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations are without arising, extinction, contamination, and purification because of the emptiness in the final analysis and the emptiness of nontemporality. The four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path are without arising, extinction, contamination, and purification because of the emptiness in the final analysis and the emptiness of nontemporality. The liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration are without arising, extinction, contamination, and purification because of the emptiness in the final analysis and the emptiness of nontemporality. Internal emptiness, external emptiness, and

so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature are without arising, extinction, contamination, and purification because of the emptiness in the final analysis and the emptiness of nontemporality. Realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable are without arising, extinction, contamination, and purification because of the emptiness in the final analysis and the emptiness of nontemporality. The noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering are without arising, extinction, contamination, and purification because of the emptiness in the final analysis and the emptiness of nontemporality. The eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations are without arising, extinction, contamination, and purification because of the emptiness in the final analysis and the emptiness of nontemporality. The stage of pure contemplation, stage of embryonic Buddha nature, and so forth, and the stage of Thus-Comer are without arising, extinction, contamination, and purification because of the emptiness in the final analysis and the emptiness of nontemporality. The stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilements, and so forth, and the stage of dharma cloud are without arising, extinction, contamination, and purification because of the emptiness in the final analysis and the emptiness of nontemporality. All dharani gates and all samadhi gates are without arising, extinction, contamination, and purification because of the emptiness in the final analysis and the emptiness of nontemporality. The five eyes and the six supernatural powers are without arising, extinction, contamination, and purification because of the emptiness in the final analysis and the emptiness of nontemporality. The Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and the eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power are without arising, extinction, contamination, and purification because of the emptiness in the final analysis and the emptiness nontemporality. The thirty-two perfect major marks and the eighty distinguishing minor features are without arising, extinction, contamination, and purification because of the emptiness in the final analysis and the emptiness of nontemporality. Staying in correct mindfulness and always dwelling in equanimity are without arising, extinction, contamination, and purification because of the emptiness in the final analysis and the emptiness of nontemporality. The perfect knowledge of everything, the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena are without arising, extinction, contamination, and purification because of the emptiness in the final analysis and the emptiness of nontemporality. The stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and the self-

enlightenment bodhi are without arising, extinction, contamination, and purification because of the emptiness in the final analysis and the emptiness of nontemporality. All great bodhisattva actions and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas are without arising, extinction, contamination, and purification because of the emptiness in the final analysis and the emptiness of nontemporality. The virtuous and the not virtuous dharmas are without arising, extinction, contamination, and purification because of the emptiness in the final analysis and the emptiness of nontemporality. The morally related and the morally unrelated dharmas are without arising, extinction, contamination, and purification because of the emptiness in the final analysis and the emptiness of nontemporality. The flawed and the flawless dharmas are without arising, extinction, contamination, and purification because of the emptiness in the final analysis and the emptiness of nontemporality. The dharmas of and beyond the world are without arising, extinction, contamination, and purification because of the emptiness in the final analysis and the emptiness of nontemporality. The conditioned and the unconditioned dharmas are without arising, extinction, contamination, and purification because of the emptiness in the final analysis and the emptiness of nontemporality."

(The Buddha further taught that by virtue of ultimate meaning, all dharmas—including the five aggregates, sensory spheres, fundamental world elements, the chains of dependent origination, various superior holy dharmas, and various types of dharmas—are devoid of arising, extinction, contamination, and purification because of the emptiness in the final analysis and the emptiness of nontemporality.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One said to the Buddha, "If it is in terms of the worldly perspective rather than the ultimate meaning to establish the differences among all kinds of causes and effects, then all ignorant ordinary sentient beings should possess stream-entry effect, once-return effect, nonreturn effect, arhat effect, self-enlightenment bodhi, and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas."

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, "What do you think about this? Are ordinary sentient beings really awakened to and understand the meanings of the worldly phenomena and their ultimate meaning? If they do, they must have attained stream-entry effect, once-return effect, nonreturn effect, arhat effect, self-enlightenment bodhi, or the unsurpassed, perfect, and

universal bodhi of the Buddhas. If they have not cultivated the holy paths and are not awakened to the worldly phenomena and their ultimate meaning, it should not be said that they have attained the holly effects. Only those who have been awakened to the worldly phenomena and the ultimate meaning can be considered to have achieved the various holly effects."

(The Buddha explained to Well-Appearing One that only those enlightened to the worldly phenomena and the ultimate meaning are said to have attained various holy effects.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, "Will the individuals who have cultivated the holy paths achieve the holy effects?"

The Buddha replied, "No."

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, "Is it possible for one to attain the holly effects without cultivating the holly paths?"

The Buddha replied, "No. You must know, Well-Appearing One, neither cultivation nor non-cultivation of the holy effects can result in the attainment of holly effects. Being apart from or dwelling in the holly paths will not lead to the holly effects either. Why? In terms of ultimate meaning, both holly paths and holly effects are unattainable, so are cultivation and noncultivation. Thus, Well-Appearing One, when the great bodhisattvas practice the fathomless prajna paramita, they have for the sake of sentient beings established the holly effects, but they do not differentiate among the levels of holly effects within the conditioned or the unconditioned realm."

(The Buddha taught that both holy paths and holy effects are unattainable, so we should not differentiate that one can attain the holy effects through or without cultivating the holy paths.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, "If the different levels of holly effects should not established in the conditioned and unconditioned realms, why do the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened One teach that the termination of the three bonds is named the attainment of the stream-entry effect; decrease of greedy desires and hatred is named the attainment of the once-return effect; permanently termination of the lower five bonds in the realm of desire is named the attainment of the

nonreturn effect; permanent termination of the upper five bonds in the realms of form and formlessness is named the attainment of the arhat effect; attaining the knowledge of the cause of suffering and the cessation of suffering is named the self-enlightenment bodhi; and the permanent termination of enduring disposition of vexations is named the realization of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas? World-Honored One, how can I understand the profound meanings the Buddha taught that there are no different levels of holly paths established in conditioned and unconditioned realms?"

(Well-Appearing One asked questions on behalf of the participants in the assembly who still had puzzles about Buddha's teaching in this regard.)

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, "What do you think about this? Are the holly effects, such as the stream-entry effect, once-return effect, nonreturn effect, arhat effect, self-enlightenment bodhi, and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas, conditioned or unconditioned?"

Well-Appearing One replied, "These holly effects are unconditioned."

The Buddha asked Well-Appearing One, "Are there differences in unconditioned dharmas?"

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

The Buddha asked Well-Appearing One, "What do you think about this? Do the good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth who have thoroughly understood that all conditioned and unconditioned dharmas share the same form, namely, formlessness, still distinguish between conditioned dharmas and unconditioned dharmas?"

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

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, "Therefore, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas should teach sentient beings not to differentiate among the dharma forms based on internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature.

"The great bodhisattvas are not attached to the dharmas themselves. They also teach others not to be attached to the dharmas. They teach them not to be attached to giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita; the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations; the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path; 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; the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations; the stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilements, and so forth, and the stage of dharma cloud; 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 the eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power; staying in correct mindfulness and always dwelling in equanimity; the perfect knowledge of everything, the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and the 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. Because the great bodhisattvas have been free from attachments, they will have no hindrances wherever they are.

(The Buddha explained that as holy paths and holy effects are empty and unattainable, and the great bodhisattvas are aware of the truth well, they will teach sentient beings to avoid attachment to various dharmas.)

"Although the transformed ones made by the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones have practiced giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, forbearance paramita, diligence paramita, meditation paramita, prajna paramita, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, they do not receive or dwell in the effects thus derived; they have no intentions other than assisting the sentient beings to enter nirvana. Therefore, when the great bodhisattvas practice the fathomless prajna paramita and are not attached to all dharmas whether virtuous or not virtuous, morally related or morally unrelated, flawed or flawless, of the world or beyond the world, and conditioned or

unconditioned, they will not encounter hindrances. Why? It is because they have thoroughly understood the real forms of all dharmas."

(The Buddha taught that owing to the thorough understanding of the real forms of the dharmas, the great bodhisattvas will not dwell in and be attached to the dharmas and the holy effects; they thus will not encounter hindrances.)

## Chapter 77

## The Thorough Understanding

### Section 1

### (In the Second Assembly)

At that time, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "World-Honored One, how do great bodhisattvas achieve a thorough understanding of the real forms of all dharmas when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "Like transformed ones, the great bodhisattvas, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, do not practice the bonds of greed, anger, and ignorance; the aggregates of matter, feeling, and so forth, 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 realm, 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; the cause and condition, consecutive thoughts, conditions that stimulate the mind, and the conditions that reinforce main causes; various dharmas produced by conditions; ignorance, action, consciousness, and so forth, and old age and death; giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita; the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations; the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path; 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; the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations; the stage of pure contemplation, stage of embryonic Buddha nature, and so forth, and the stage of Thus-Comer; the stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilements, and so forth, and the stage of dharma cloud; 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 the eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power; the thirty-two perfect major marks and the eighty distinguishing minor features; staying in correct mindfulness and always dwelling in equanimity; the perfect knowledge of everything, the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena; the stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and the self-enlightenment bodhi; all great bodhisattva actions; the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas; the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge; the interior and exterior dharmas; the hidden roots of vexations and complexes; the virtuous and the not virtuous dharmas; the morally related and the morally unrelated dharmas; the flawed and the flawless dharmas; the dharmas of and beyond the world; the conditioned and the unconditioned dharmas; and the holly paths and their effects. This is how the great bodhisattvas thoroughly understand the real forms of all dharmas as they really are."

(Responding to the question raised by Well-Appearing One: How will great bodhisattvas achieve a thorough understanding of the real forms of dharmas? The Buddha taught that great bodhisattvas should practice the fathomless prajna paramita as the transformed beings do: They

do not practice the bonds, spheres, realms, six paramitas, and so forth, various holy dharmas, and other established dharmas.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, “How do the transformed ones cultivate the holly paths?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “The transformed ones cultivate the holly paths without contamination or purification. They do not reincarnate in birth and death of various destinies.”

(The Buddha explained how transformed ones cultivate the holly paths.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, “When practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, how do great bodhisattvas thoroughly understand that all dharmas are unreal?”

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, “What do you think about this? Are the transformed ones made by all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones real? Do they have contamination and purification? Do they reincarnate in various destinies of birth and death?”

Well-Appearing One replied, “No, World-Honored One. The transformed ones made by all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones are not real at all. They have no contamination and purification; nor do they reincarnate in various destinies of birth and death.”

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, “When practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas should also thoroughly understand the real forms of all dharmas as they really are and realize that all dharmas are not real.”

(The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One that the great bodhisattvas should also thoroughly understand that all dharmas are unreal as the transformed ones and what they perform.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, “Are matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness like the transformed beings? Are 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, ear consciousness, nose consciousness, tongue consciousness, body consciousness, and conscious consciousness realms; the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and conscious contacts; the feelings produced by eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and conscious contacts; and the earth, water, fire, wind, space, and consciousness realms like transformed beings? Are cause and condition, consecutive thoughts, conditions that stimulate the mind, the conditions that reinforce main causes, and various dharmas produced by conditions like transformed beings? Are ignorance, action, consciousness, and so forth, and old age and death; giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna paramitas; the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations; the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path; the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration; internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature; and realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable like transformed beings? Are the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering like transformed beings? Are the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations; the stage of pure contemplation, stage of embryonic Buddha nature, and so forth, and stage of Thus-Comer; the stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilements, and so forth, and stage of dharma cloud; all dharani gates and all samadhi gates; the five eyes and the 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 always dwelling in equanimity; the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena; the stream-entry, once-return, nonreturn, and arhat effects and self-enlightenment bodhi; and all great bodhisattva actions and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas like transformed beings? Are virtuous and not virtuous dharmas, morally related and morally unrelated dharmas, flawed and flawless dharmas, the dharmas of and beyond the world, and the conditioned and unconditioned dharmas like transformed beings?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “Yes. All dharmas, such as matter, feeling, thinking, and so forth, are like the transformed beings.”

(The Buddha affirmed that all dharmas are like transformed beings.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, “If all dharmas are like the transformed beings, which are without real matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness, and so forth, and the conditioned and unconditioned dharmas, and in which there are no contamination and purification, no reincarnation in various destinies of birth and death, and no meaning of liberation attainable, then how can the great bodhisattvas assist the sentient beings to become superior ones?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One by asking, “What do you think about this? Do the great bodhisattvas see any sentient being become liberated from the realms of hells, animals, ghosts, human beings, and the heavens when practicing the bodhisattva path?”

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

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, “When practicing the bodhisattva path, the great bodhisattvas do not see any sentient being become liberated from the three realms. Why? It is because when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas have thoroughly known and seen that all dharmas are like the transformed beings that are unreal.”

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, “If the great bodhisattvas have thoroughly known that all dharmas are like the transformed beings and unreal, then why do they cultivate the six paramitas? Why do they cultivate the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations? Why do they cultivate the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path? Why do they cultivate the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration? Why do they dwell peacefully in internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature? Why do they dwell peacefully in realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable? Why do they dwell peacefully in the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering? Why do they cultivate the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in

sequence, and ten universal contemplations? Why do they cultivate the stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilements, and so forth, and the stage of dharma cloud? Why do they cultivate all dharani gates and all samadhi gates? Why do they cultivate the five eyes and the six supernatural powers? Why do they cultivate the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and the eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power? Why do they cultivate to stay in correct mindfulness and dwell in equanimity? Why do they cultivate the perfect knowledge of everything, the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena? Why do they cultivate all great bodhisattva actions? Why do they cultivate the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas? Why do they assist the sentient beings to mature? Why do they dignify and purify the Buddha lands?"

(Well-Appearing One asked that if the great bodhisattvas fully know that all dharmas are like the transformed beings and unreal, how do they dwell in and diligently cultivate various superior holy dharmas?)

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "If the sentient beings can thoroughly understand that all dharmas are like the transformed beings and unreal, the great bodhisattvas need not to cultivate various difficult actions of bodhisattva path for immeasurable kalpas for the sake of the sentient beings. Because the sentient beings cannot thoroughly understand that all dharmas are like the transformed beings and unreal, the great bodhisattvas feel obliged to willingly cultivate the challenging actions of bodhisattva path for immeasurable kalpas for the sake of the sentient beings.

(The Buddha replied that the great bodhisattvas perform the challenging bodhisattva actions with immeasurable compassion as the sentient beings are unaware that all dharmas are unreal.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas do not thoroughly understand that all dharmas are like the transformed beings and unreal, they are unable to cultivate the bodhisattva actions for the sake of sentient beings for immeasurable kalpas to assist the sentient beings to mature and dignify and purify the Buddha lands. Because the great bodhisattvas thoroughly understand that all dharmas are like the transformed beings and unreal, they are able to cultivate the six paramitas for immeasurable kalpas for the sake of the sentient

beings, assist the sentient beings to mature, dignify and purify the Buddha lands, and realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi."

At that time, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "World-Honored One, if all dharmas are like illusions, dreams, echoes, images, shadows, illusory images of water under sunlight, mirages, and transformed things, then where do the sentient beings whom the great bodhisattvas seek to rescue reside?"

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, "The sentient beings reside in the delusive, illusory differentiation of names and forms. When practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas will relieve the sentient beings from the delusive, illusory differentiation of names and forms."

(The Buddha taught that the great bodhisattvas would relieve the sentient beings from the delusive differentiations of names and forms.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, "What are the names? What are the forms?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "The names are like the guests; they are provisionally established to represent and express the meanings of 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; men and women; small and large; hells, animals, ghosts, human beings, and heavenly beings; the virtuous and not virtuous dharmas; the morally related and unrelated dharmas; the flawed and flawless dharmas; the dharmas of and beyond the world; the conditioned and unconditioned dharmas; the stream-entry effect, once-return effect, nonreturn effect, araht effect, and self-enlightenment bodhi; all great bodhisattva actions; the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of various Buddhas; the ordinary sentient beings; the voice-hearers; the self-enlightened ones; the bodhisattvas; and the Thus-Comers.

"Well-Appearing One, all these names are provisionally established to express various meanings. All names are not real. The conditioned dharmas are also merely the names; the

unconditioned dharmas are not real either. The ignorant ordinary sentient beings are mistakenly attached to all of them. The great bodhisattvas are full of compassion when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, so they expediently and skillfully teach the sentient beings to stay far away from attachment, and say, 'The names arise owing to delusive differentiation. They are provisionally established based on the combination of conditions. You should not be attached to them. The names are unreal; their self-nature is empty. Is any wise person attached to empty dharmas?' Therefore, Well-Appearing One, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas should teach sentient beings to relinquish the names of the dharmas.

(The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One that the names are the guests, the provisional existents representing the meanings of all existent dharmas. Great bodhisattvas should teach sentient beings to relinquish them.)

"Well-Appearing One, these are the names. There are two kinds of form to which ignorant sentient beings become attached: material form and immaterial form. What is the material form? It refers to all kinds of matters, containing matters in the past, future, and present and matters that are interior or exterior, fine or coarse, inferior or superior, and far or near. The self-nature of all these matters is empty, but the ignorant ones differentiate between them and are attached to them and their names. This is the material form. Ordinary sentient beings also become attached to immaterial matters, distinguishing and grasping them, which leads to various vexations. When practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas should expediently and skillfully teach these sentient beings to stay away from these two types of attachment. They should further teach them to dwell peacefully in the realm of formlessness. Although the sentient beings are taught to dwell peacefully in formlessness, they are not allowed to become attached to form or to formlessness. Well-Appearing One, this is how the great bodhisattvas practice the fathomless prajna paramita, expediently and skillfully guide sentient beings to stay far away from various forms and practice the realm of formlessness without attachment."

(The Buddha discussed the essential meaning of form, noting that there are two kinds of form to which ordinary sentient beings are attached. Great bodhisattvas should guide sentient beings to avoid such attachment.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, “As all dharmas have merely names and forms, which are provisionally established and arise from delusive discrimination with no real nature, how do great bodhisattvas foster virtuous dharmas themselves and encourage others to do so when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita? How do they further assist sentient beings to fulfill various stages of cultivation, establishing them well in the effects of the three vehicles suited to individual conditions?”

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, “If various dharmas were real and their names and forms were not established provisionally, then the great bodhisattvas, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, would not be able to foster their own virtuous dharmas and encourage others to do so. Because various dharmas are unreal and their names and forms are provisionally established, the great bodhisattvas can foster virtuous dharmas themselves and encourage others to do so. They can adopt formlessness as skillful means to fulfill prajna paramita, meditation paramita, and so forth, and giving paramita; the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations; the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path; 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; the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations; the stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilements, and so forth, and the stage of dharma cloud; 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 the 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 so that they can assist sentient beings to mature and dignify and purify the Buddha lands.

“Well-Appearing One, as all dharmas are unreal and their names and forms are merely provisionally established, the great bodhisattvas without upside-down attachment thus can adopt

formlessness as skillful means to improve and increase their own virtuous dharmas and let others improve and increase their virtuous dharmas.

(The Buddha emphasized that because various dharmas are unreal and their names and forms are provisionally established, the great bodhisattvas can foster virtuous dharmas themselves and allow others to do so.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, if there were a real form as little as the tip of a hair in all dharmas, the great bodhisattvas would not be able to become awakened to the flawless dharmas that are without form, mindfulness, and intention; they would not be able to realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi and establish sentient beings in flawless dharmas when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita. It is because all flawless dharmas are without forms, mindfulness, and intentions.

"Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas can establish sentient beings expediently and peacefully in flawless dharmas when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, they indeed do things beneficial for others."

(The Buddha indicated the beneficial things that great bodhisattvas should perform for sentient beings.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, "If the genuine flawless nature of all dharmas is without form, mindfulness, and intention, why does the World-Honored One teach disciples in various sutras to distinguish between the flawed dharmas and the flawless dharmas; the dharmas of the world and the dharmas beyond the world; the conditioned dharmas and the unconditioned dharmas; the controversial dharmas and the not controversial dharmas; the dharmas of drifting and the dharmas of extinction; and the dharma of voice-hearers, self-enlightened ones, bodhisattva, and Buddha?"

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, "What do you think about this? Are the flawed dharmas, the dharmas of the world, and so forth different from the formless flawless dharmas?"

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

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, “What do you think about this? Are the dharmas of voice-hearers, self-enlightened ones, and so forth different from the formless flawless dharmas?”

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

The Buddha asked Well-Appearing One, “Are the flawed dharmas, the dharmas of the world, and so forth the same as the formless flawless dharmas?”

Well-Appearing One replied, “Yes, World-Honored One.”

The Buddha asked Well-Appearing One: “Are the stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi the same as the formless flawless dharmas?”

Well-Appearing One replied, “Yes, World-Honored One.”

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, “Because of this cause and condition, you must know that all dharmas are not different or separate from the formless dharmas.

(The Buddha guided Well-Appearing One to this understanding: all dharmas are not different from the formless flawless dharmas.)

“You must know, Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas learn that all dharmas are without form, mindfulness, and intention, they will always be able to foster the virtuous dharmas that they practice. These virtuous dharmas are giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita; the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations; the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path; 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; the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations; the stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilements, 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 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 assisting sentient beings to mature and dignifying and purifying the Buddha lands. All such Buddha dharmas are fostered owing to the learning of formlessness, no mindfulness, and no intention. Why? Well-Appearing One, the three liberation gates have absorbed all wonderful virtuous dharmas. Why? The liberation gate of emptiness contemplates the particular characteristics of all dharmas as empty; the liberation gate of formlessness contemplates all dharmas as formless; and the liberation gate of nonaspiration contemplates all dharmas as without aspirations. By following these three gates the great bodhisattvas can absorb all superior virtuous dharmas. If they stay away from these three gates, the superior virtuous dharmas that they should cultivate and learn will not arise, grow, and increase.

(The Buddha taught that great bodhisattvas could foster various superior holy dharmas through the three liberation gates.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas can learn such three liberation gates, they will be able to learn the aggregates of matter, feeling, and so forth, and consciousness. They will also be able to learn 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 realm, 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; cause and condition, consecutive thoughts, conditions that stimulate the mind, and the conditions that reinforce main causes; various dharmas produced by conditions; ignorance, action, consciousness, and so forth, and old age and death; 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 four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations; the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path; the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations; the stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilements, 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 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; assisting the sentient beings to mature and dignifying and purifying the Buddha lands, and the rest of immeasurable and boundless Buddha dharmas."

(The Buddha further taught that the great bodhisattvas learning the three liberations could also learn the aggregates, spheres, realms, and so forth, and various superior virtuous dharmas.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "World-Honored One, why are the great bodhisattvas able to learn the aggregates of matter, feeling, and so forth, and consciousness if they learn the three liberation gates?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "If the great bodhisattvas get to accurately know the forms of matter, feeling, and so forth, and consciousness as they really are, including their arising, extinction, and realness, then the great bodhisattvas will be able to learn matter, feeling, and so forth, and consciousness as they should.

"Well-Appearing One, how do great bodhisattvas get to accurately know the forms of matter as they really are when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita? When practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas should realize that matter has holes and cracks; it is like froths that gather temporarily and is not solid at all. This is how great bodhisattvas get to know accurately the forms of matter as they really are when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita.

(The Buddha described in this and the following paragraphs how great bodhisattvas got to know the forms, including arising and extinction, and the realness of matter, feeling, and thinking as they really are based on the three liberation gates.)

"Well-Appearing One, how do great bodhisattvas get to know accurately the arising and extinction of matter as they really are when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita? When practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas should realize that matter comes from nowhere as it arises and goes nowhere as it extinguishes. Although it comes from nowhere and goes nowhere, its arising and extinction are correspondent. This is how the great bodhisattvas get to know accurately the arising and extinction of matter as they really are when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita.

"Well-Appearing One, how do great bodhisattvas get to know accurately the realness of matter as it really is when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita? When practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas should realize that the realness of matter is without arising or extinction, coming or going, contamination or purification, and increase or decrease. It is as it has always been. It is without illusion or mutation and thus is named realness. This is how the great bodhisattvas get to accurately know the realness of matter as it really is when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita.

"Well-Appearing One, how do great bodhisattvas get to know accurately the forms of feeling as they really are when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita? When practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas should realize that feeling is in the final analysis like a carbuncle or an arrow. It arises and extinguishes instantly like floating bubbles. It is unreal and unendurable. It arises from the combination of sense roots, objects, and consciousness. This is how the great bodhisattvas get to know accurately the forms of feeling as they really are.

"Well-Appearing One, how do great bodhisattvas get to know accurately the arising and extinction of feeling as they really are when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita? When practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas should realize that feeling comes from nowhere as it arises and goes nowhere as it extinguishes. Although it comes from nowhere and goes nowhere, its extinction is correspondent with its arising. This is how the great

bodhisattvas get to know accurately the arising and extinction of feeling when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita.

"Well-Appearing One, how do great bodhisattvas get to accurately know the realness of feeling as it really is when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita? When practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas should realize that the realness of feeling is without arising or extinction, coming or going, contamination or purification, and increase or decrease. It is as it has always been. It is without illusion or mutation and thus is named realness. This is how the great bodhisattvas get to know accurately the realness of feeling as it really is when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita.

"Well-Appearing One, how do great bodhisattvas get to know accurately the forms of thinking as they really are when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita? When practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas should realize that thinking is like the illusory images of water under sunlight that are unattainable. Thinking is produced by the combination of delusion and craving, expressed provisionally by language. This is how the great bodhisattvas get to know accurately the forms of thinking when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita.

"Well-Appearing One, how do great bodhisattvas get to know accurately the arising and extinction of thinking as they really are when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita? When practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas should realize that thinking comes from nowhere as it arises and goes nowhere as it extinguishes. Although it comes from nowhere and goes nowhere, its extinction is correspondent with its arising. This is how the great bodhisattvas get to know accurately the arising and extinction of thinking as they really are when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita.

"Well-Appearing One, how do great bodhisattvas accurately know the realness of thinking as it really is when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita? When practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas should realize that the realness of thinking is without arising or extinction, coming or going, contamination or purification, and increase or decrease. It is as it has always been. It is without illusion or mutation and thus is named realness. This is how the great bodhisattvas get to know accurately the realness of thinking as it really is when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita."

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Chapter 77

The Thorough Understanding

Section 2

(In the Second Assembly)

"Well-Appearing One, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, how do great bodhisattvas get to know accurately the forms of action? When practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas should realize that action is like a plantain, of which not a leaf is attainable. This is how the great bodhisattvas get to know accurately the forms of actions as they really are when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita.

(The Buddha taught in this and the following paragraphs how great bodhisattvas got to know the forms of action and consciousness, including their arising, extinction, and realness based on the learning of the three liberation gates.)

"Well-Appearing One, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, how do great bodhisattvas get to know accurately the arising and extinction of action? When practicing fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas should realize that action comes from nowhere as it arises and will go nowhere as it extinguishes. Although it comes from nowhere and goes nowhere, its extinction is correspondent with its arising. This is how the great bodhisattvas get to accurately know the arising and extinction of action as they really are when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita.

"Well-Appearing One, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, how do great bodhisattvas get to know accurately the realness of action? When practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas should realize that the realness of action is without arising or extinction, coming or going, contamination or purification, and increase or decrease. It is as it has always been. It is without illusion or mutation and thus is named realness. This is how the

great bodhisattvas get to know accurately the realness of action as it really is when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita.

"Well-Appearing One, how do great bodhisattvas get to know accurately the forms of consciousness as they really are when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita? When practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas should realize that consciousness is like the illusions caused by the combination of causes and conditions, which are provisionally established and unattainable. It is like master magician or disciples who make four transformed armies, the armies of elephants, horses, vehicles, and infantry, as well as other transformed phenomena at the intersection of road. All these phenomena look real, but they do not exist. So is consciousness, which is unattainable. This is how the great bodhisattvas get to know accurately the forms of consciousness as they really are when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita.

"Well-Appearing One, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, how do great bodhisattvas get to know accurately the arising and extinction of consciousness? When practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas should realize that consciousness comes from nowhere as it arises and goes nowhere as it extinguishes. Although it comes from nowhere and goes nowhere, its extinction is correspondent with its arising. This is how the great bodhisattvas get to know accurately the arising and extinction of consciousness as they really are when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita.

"Well-Appearing One, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, how do great bodhisattvas get to know accurately the realness of consciousness? When practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas should realize that the realness of consciousness is without arising or extinction, coming or going, contamination or purification, and increase or decrease. It is as it has always been. It is without illusion and mutation and thus is named realness. This is how the great bodhisattvas get to know accurately the realness of consciousness as it really is when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita.

"Well-Appearing One, if great bodhisattvas can learn such three liberation gates, they will be able to learn the aggregates of matter, feeling, action, thinking, and consciousness."

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, “Can great bodhisattvas also learn the eye sphere, ear sphere, and so forth, and conscious sphere if they learn the three liberation gates?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “Yes. When practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas should realize that the eye sphere and its self-nature, the ear sphere and its self-nature, and so forth, and the conscious sphere and its self-nature are empty and unattainable. Well-Appearing One, this is how the great bodhisattvas learn the eye sphere, ear sphere, and so forth, and conscious sphere based on the learning of the three liberation gates.”

(The Buddha taught in this and the following paragraphs how great bodhisattvas learn the six inner spheres, six outer spheres, six inner realms, six outer realms, six consciousness realms, six contacts, the feelings produced by six contacts, six fundamental elements of the world, cause and condition and so forth, dharmas produced by conditions, twelve chains of dependent origination, twenty kinds of emptiness, and so forth, and the rest of numberless superior Buddha dharmas based on the three liberation gates.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, “Can great bodhisattvas also learn the sight sphere, sound sphere, and so forth, and mental-image sphere if they learn the three liberation gates?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “Yes. When practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas should realize that the sight sphere and its self-nature, the sound sphere and its self-nature, and so forth, and the mental-image sphere and its self-nature are empty because the self-nature of the external spheres is unattainable. This is how the great bodhisattvas learn the sight sphere, sound sphere, and so forth, and mental-image sphere based on the learning of the three liberation gates.”

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, “Can great bodhisattvas also learn the eye realm, ear realm, and so forth, and conscious realm if they learn the three liberation gates?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “Yes. When the great bodhisattvas practice the fathomless prajna paramita, they should realize that the eye realm and its self-nature, the ear realm and its self-nature, and so forth, and conscious realm and its self-nature are empty. Well-Appearing One, this is how the great bodhisattvas learn the eye realm, ear realm, and so forth, and conscious realm based on the learning of the three liberation gates.”

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, “Can the great bodhisattvas also learn the sight realm, sound realm, and so forth, and mental-image realm if they learn the three liberation gates?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “Yes. When the great bodhisattvas practice the fathomless prajna paramita, they should realize that the sight realm and its self-nature, the sound realm and its self-nature, and so forth, and mental-image realm and its self-nature are empty. Well-Appearing One, this is how the great bodhisattvas learn the sight realm, sound realm, and so forth, and mental-image realm based on the learning of the three liberation gates.”

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, “Can the great bodhisattvas also learn the eye consciousness realm, ear consciousness realm, and so forth, and conscious consciousness realm if they learn the three liberation gates?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “Yes. When the great bodhisattvas practice the fathomless prajna paramita, they should realize that the eye consciousness realm and its self-nature, the ear consciousness realm and its self-nature, and so forth, and conscious consciousness realm and its self-nature are empty. Well-Appearing One, this is how the great bodhisattvas learn the eye consciousness realm, ear consciousness realm, and so forth, and conscious consciousness realm based on the learning of the three liberation gates.”

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, “Can the great bodhisattvas also learn the eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact if they learn the three liberation gates?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “Yes. When the great bodhisattvas practice the fathomless prajna paramita, they should realize that the eye contact and its self-nature, the ear contact and its self-nature, and so forth, and conscious contact and its self-nature of are empty.

Well-Appearing One, this is how the great bodhisattvas learn the eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact based on the learning of the three liberation gates."

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, "Can the great bodhisattvas also learn the feelings produced by eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact if they learn the three liberation gates?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "Yes. When the great bodhisattvas practice the fathomless prajna paramita, they should realize that the feelings produced by eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact and their self-nature are empty. Well-Appearing One, this is how the great bodhisattvas learn the feelings produced by eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact based on the learning of the three liberation gates."

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, "Can the great bodhisattvas also learn the earth realm, water realm, and so forth, and consciousness realm if they learn the three liberation gates?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "Yes. When the great bodhisattvas practice the fathomless prajna paramita, they should realize that the earth realm, water realm, and so forth, and consciousness realm and their self-nature are empty. Well-Appearing One, this is how the great bodhisattvas learn the earth realm, water realm, and so forth, and consciousness realm based on the learning of the three liberation gates."

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, "Can the great bodhisattvas also learn cause and condition, consecutive thoughts, conditions that stimulate the mind, and the conditions that reinforce main causes if they learn the three liberation gates?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "Yes. When practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas should realize that cause and condition have the form of the seeds; consecutive thoughts have the form of inspiration and initiation; conditions that stimulate the mind have the form of holding; and the conditions that reinforce main causes have the form of no hindrance. They also should realize that their self-nature is originally empty and apart from duality. Well-Appearing One, this is how the great bodhisattvas learn cause and

condition, consecutive thoughts, conditions that stimulate the mind, and the conditions that reinforce main causes based on the learning of the three liberation gates."

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, "Can the great bodhisattvas also learn various dharmas produced by conditions if they learn the three liberation gates?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "Yes. When practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas should realize that all dharmas produced by conditions are without arising or extinction, discontinuation or permanence, sameness or difference, and coming or going. They are apart from various nonsensical arguments; their original nature is tranquil; and they are indifferent to fame and wealth. Well-Appearing One, this is how the great bodhisattvas learn the dharmas produced by conditions based on the learning of the three liberation gates."

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, "Can the great bodhisattvas also learn ignorance, action, consciousness, and so forth, and old age and death if they learn the three liberation gates?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "Yes. When practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas should realize that ignorance, action, consciousness, and so forth, and old age and death are without arising or extinction, contamination or purification. Their self-nature is originally empty and apart from duality. Well-Appearing One, this is how the great bodhisattvas learn ignorance, action, consciousness, and so forth, and old age and death based on the learning of the three liberation gates."

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, "Can the great bodhisattvas also learn internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature if they learn the three liberation gates?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "Yes. When practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas should realize that internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature have no self-nature; they are unattainable, while in which the great bodhisattvas can peacefully dwell. Well-Appearing One, this is how the

great bodhisattvas learn internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature based on the learning of the three liberation gates."

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, "Can the great bodhisattvas also learn realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable if they learn the three liberation gates?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "Yes. When practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas should realize that realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable have no nonsensical arguments and differentiation, in which the great bodhisattvas can peacefully dwell. Well-Appearing One, this is how the great bodhisattvas learn realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable based on the learning of the three liberation gates."

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, "Can the great bodhisattvas also learn the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering if they learn the three liberation gates?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "Yes. When practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas should realize that suffering is the form of irresistible driving force; the cause of suffering is the form of arising; the cessation of suffering is the form of tranquility, and the path for the cessation of suffering is the form of getting out of suffering. Their original nature is inherently empty and apart from duality. They are the truths for the holy ones. Suffering and so forth are realness, and realness is suffering and so forth; they are neither different nor separate. This is the reality that only the real holy ones can accurately understand. Well-Appearing One, this is how the great bodhisattvas learn the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering based on the learning of the three liberation gates."

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, "Can the great bodhisattvas also learn giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita if they learn the three liberation gates?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “Yes. When practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas should realize that giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita are without increase or decrease, contamination or purification, and self-nature. They are unattainable yet they can be cultivated and learned. Well-Appearing One, this is how the great bodhisattvas learn giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita based on the learning of the three liberation gates.”

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, “Can the great bodhisattvas also learn the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations if they learn the three liberation gates?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “When practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas should realize that the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations are without increase or decrease, contamination or purification, and self-nature. They are unattainable yet they can be cultivated and learned. Well-Appearing One, this is how the great bodhisattvas learn the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations based on the learning of the three liberation gates.”

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, “Can the great bodhisattvas also learn the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path if they learn the three liberation gates?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “Yes. When practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas should realize that the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path are without increase or decrease, contamination or purification, and self-nature. They are unattainable and yet they can be cultivated and learned. Well-Appearing One, this is how the great bodhisattvas learn the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path based on the learning of the three liberation gates.”

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, “Can the great bodhisattvas also learn the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations, and ten universal contemplations if they learn the three liberation gates?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “Yes. When practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas should realize that the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations are without increase or decrease, contamination or purification, and self-nature. They are unattainable yet they can be cultivated and learned. Well-Appearing One, this is how the great bodhisattvas learn the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations based on the learning of the three liberation gates.”

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, “Can the great bodhisattvas also learn the stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilements, and so forth, and the stage of dharma cloud if they learn the three liberation gates?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “Yes. When practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas should realize that the stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilements, and so forth, and the stage of dharma cloud are without increase or decrease, contamination or purification, and self-nature. They are unattainable yet they can be cultivated and learned. Well-Appearing One, this is how the great bodhisattvas learn the stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilements, and so forth, and the stage of dharma cloud based on the learning of the three liberation gates.”

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, “Can the great bodhisattvas also learn all dharani gates and all samadhi gates if they learn the three liberation gates?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “Yes. When practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas should realize that all dharani gates and all samadhi gates are without increase or decrease, contamination or purification, and self-nature. They are unattainable yet they can be cultivated and learned. Well-Appearing One, this is how the great bodhisattvas learn all dharani gates and all samadhi gates based on the learning of the three liberation gates.”

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, “Can the great bodhisattvas also learn the five eyes and six supernatural powers if they learn the three liberation gates?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “Yes. When practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas should realize that the five eyes and the six supernatural powers are without increase or decrease, contamination or purification, and self-nature. They are unattainable yet they can be cultivated and learned. Well-Appearing One, this is how the great bodhisattvas learn the five eyes and six supernatural powers based on the learning of the three liberation gates.”

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, “Can the great bodhisattvas also learn the Buddha’s ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha’s wisdom and power if they learn the three liberation gates?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “Yes. When practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas should realzie that the Buddha’s ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha’s wisdom and power are without increase or decrease, contamination or purification, and self-nature. They are unattainable yet they can be cultivated and learned. Well-Appearing One, this is how the great bodhisattvas learn the Buddha’s ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha’s wisdom and power based on the learning of the three liberation gates.”

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, “Can the great bodhisattvas also learn staying in correct mindfulness and dwelling in equanimity at all times if they learn the three liberation gates?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “Yes. When practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas should realzie that staying in correct mindfulness and dwelling in equanimity at all times are without increase or decrease, contamination or purification, and self-nature. They are unattainable yet they can be cultivated and learned. Well-

Appearing One, this is how the great bodhisattvas learn staying in correct mindfulness and dwelling in equanimity at all times based on the learning of the three liberation gates."

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, "Can the great bodhisattvas also learn the perfect knowledge of everything, the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena if they learn the three liberation gates?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "Yes. When practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattva should realize that the perfect knowledge of everything, the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena are without increase or decrease, contamination or purification, and self-nature. They are unattainable yet they can be cultivated and learned. Well-Appearing One, this is how the great bodhisattvas learn the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena based on the learning of the three liberation gates."

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, "Can the great bodhisattvas also learn to assist sentient beings to mature and dignify and purify Buddha lands if they learn the three liberation gates?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "Yes. When practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas should realize that assisting sentient beings to mature and dignifying and purifying the Buddha lands are without increase or decrease, contamination or purification, and self-nature. They are unattainable yet they can be cultivated and learned. Well-Appearing One, this is how the great bodhisattvas learn to assist the sentient beings to mature and dignify and purify the Buddha lands based on the learning of the three liberation gates."

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, "Can the great bodhisattvas also learn the rest of immeasurable and boundless Buddha dharmas if they learn the three liberation gates?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "Yes. When practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas should realize that the rest of immeasurable and

boundless Buddha dharmas are without increase or decrease, contamination or purification, and self-nature. They are unattainable yet they can be cultivated and learned. Well-Appearing One, this is how the great bodhisattvas learn the rest of immeasurable and boundless Buddha dharmas based on the learning of the three liberation gates."

"World-Honored One, if the great bodhisattvas realize that the dharmas such as matter, feeling, and so forth are distinct and remain in order when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, will this not result in harm to the dharma realm through matter, feeling, and so forth, and consciousness? Will this not result in harm to the dharma realm through the eye sphere, ear sphere, and so forth, and conscious sphere; the sight sphere, sound realm, 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 realm, 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; the cause and condition, consecutive thoughts, conditions that stimulate the mind, and the conditions that reinforce main causes; the dharmas produced by conditions; ignorance, action, consciousness, and so forth, and old age and death; 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? Will this not result in harm to the dharma realm through 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 four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations; the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path; the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration; the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations; the stage of pure contemplation, stage of embryonic Buddha nature, and so forth, and stage of Thus-Comer; the stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilements, and so forth, and 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; the thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty

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; the stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi; all great bodhisattva actions; the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas; and the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge? Why? World-Honored One, it is because dharma realm is neither dualistic nor separate."

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "If the dharmas were attainable apart from dharma realm, you may say that these dharmas would do harm to the dharma realm. As the dharmas are unattainable apart from dharma realm, no dharma can do harm to the dharma realm. Why? The Buddhas, bodhisattvas, self-enlightened ones, and voice-hearers understand that no dharmas are attainable apart from the dharma realm and only teach this truth; thus, the dharma realm remain unharmed. When practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas should learn that the form of dharma realm is not dualistic, separate, and destructible."

(The Buddha taught that dharma realm could not be destroyed by all dharmas because it is indestructible.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, "If the great bodhisattvas would like to learn dharma realm, what should they learn?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "If the great bodhisattvas would like to learn dharma realm, they should learn all dharmas. Why? Well-Appearing One, all dharmas are contained in dharma realm."

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, "Why do you say that all dharmas are contained in dharma realm?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "Whether the Buddha appears in the world or not, all dharmas are inherently contained in dharma realm without different forms. It is not because the Buddha says so. Why? Well-Appearing One, all dharmas, such as the virtuous or the not virtuous dharmas, the morally related or the morally unrelated dharmas, the flawed or the flawless dharmas, the dharmas of or beyond the world, and the conditioned or the unconditioned dharmas, are contained in dharma realm, which is formless, without doing, and its nature is

empty. Therefore, Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas would like to learn dharma realm when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, they should learn all dharmas. If they learn all dharmas, they equally learn dharma realm."

(The Buddha said that if great bodhisattvas would like to learn dharma realm, they should learn all dharmas, which are contained in dharma realm.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, "If all dharmas are contained in dharma realm and are not dualistic or separate, why should the great bodhisattvas learn prajna paramita, meditation paramita, and so forth, and giving paramita? Why should they learn the first, second, third, and fourth meditations? Why should they learn immeasurable loving-kindness, compassion, joy, and equanimity? Why should they learn the concentration of boundless emptiness, boundless consciousness, nothingness, and nonthinking and not nonthinking? Why should they learn the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path? Why should they learn the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration? Why should they learn the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations? Why should they learn the stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilements, and so forth, and the stage of dharma cloud? Why should they learn all dharani gates and all samadhi gates? Why should they learn internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature? Why should they learn realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable? Why should they learn the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering? Why should they learn the five eyes and six supernatural powers? Why should they learn the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power? Why should they learn to stay in correct mindfulness and always dwell in equanimity? Why should they learn the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena? Why should they learn to fulfill the thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features? Why should they learn to be reborn in the noble family of Ksatriya, Brahman, elders, or lay believers? Why should they learn to be reborn in the Heaven of Four Great Kings, Heaven of Thirty-Three Smaller Heavens, and so forth, and Heaven of Enjoying Other-Made Changes? Why should they learn to be reborn in

the Heaven of Brahma Followers, Heaven of Brahma Associates, and so forth, and Heaven of Extensive Rewards? Why should they learn to fulfill the path of the Heaven of Nonthinking without being reborn there? Why should they learn to fulfill the path of the Heaven of Brahma Followers without being reborn there? Why should they learn the path of the Heaven of Boundless Emptiness, Heaven of Boundless Consciousness, Heaven of Nothingness, and Heaven of Nonthinking and Not Nonthinking without being reborn there? Why should they aspire to bodhi mind by learning the initial, second, and so forth, and the tenth stages? Why should they learn to realize and attain the correct bodhisattva nature of nonarising? Why should they learn all stages of voice-hearer and self-enlightened one without staying in them? Why should they learn to assist the sentient beings to mature and dignify and purify the Buddha lands? Why should they learn various kinds of dharani and the unhindered talent of debate? Why should they learn all great bodhisattva actions and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas to understand all dharmas and their phenomena, and further realize and attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge?

"World-Honored One, because there are no differentiations in dharma realm, the great bodhisattvas will not practice upside-down actions or raise nonsensical arguments. Why? In the genuine dharma realm, there are neither differentiations nor nonsensical arguments.

"World-Honored One, dharma realm is not matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness; dharma realm is not apart from matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness. Matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness are dharma realm; dharma realm is matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness.

"World-Honored One, dharma realm is not the eye sphere, ear sphere, and so forth, and conscious sphere; dharma realm is not apart from the eye sphere, ear sphere, and so forth, and conscious sphere. The eye sphere, ear sphere, and so forth, and conscious sphere are dharma realm; dharma realm is the eye sphere, ear sphere, and so forth, and conscious sphere.

"World-Honored One, dharma realm is not the sight sphere, sound sphere, and so forth, and mental-image sphere; dharma realm is not apart from the sight sphere, sound sphere, and so forth, and mental-image sphere. The sight sphere, sound sphere, and so forth, and mental-image

sphere are dharma realm; dharma realm is the sight sphere, sound sphere, and so forth, and mental-image sphere.

"World-Honored One, dharma realm is not the eye realm, ear realm, and so forth, and conscious realm; dharma realm is not apart from the eye realm, ear realm, and so forth, and conscious realm. The eye realm, ear realm, and so forth, and conscious realm are dharma realm; dharma realm is the eye realm, ear realm, and so forth, and conscious realm.

"World-Honored One, dharma realm is not the sight realm, sound realm, and so forth, and mental-image realm; dharma realm is not apart from the sight realm, sound realm, and so forth, and mental-image realm. The sight realm, sound realm, and so forth, and mental-image realm are dharma realm; dharma realm is the sight realm, sound realm, and so forth, and mental-image realm.

"World-Honored One, dharma realm is not the eye consciousness realm, ear consciousness realm, and so forth, and conscious consciousness realm; dharma realm is not apart from the eye consciousness realm, ear consciousness realm, and so forth, and conscious consciousness realm. The eye consciousness realm, ear consciousness realm, and so forth, and conscious consciousness realm are dharma realm; dharma realm is the eye consciousness realm, ear consciousness realm, and so forth, and conscious consciousness realm.

"World-Honored One, dharma realm is not the eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact; dharma realm is not apart from the eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact. The eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact are dharma realm; dharma realm is the eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact.

"World-Honored One, dharma realm is not the feelings produced by eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact; dharma realm is not apart from the feelings produced by eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact. The feelings produced by eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact are dharma realm; dharma realm is the feelings produced by eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact.

"World-Honored One, dharma realm is not the earth realm, water realm, and so forth, and consciousness realm; dharma realm is not apart from the earth realm, water realm, and so forth,

and consciousness realm. The earth realm, water realm, and so forth, and consciousness realm are dharma realm; dharma realm is the earth realm, water realm, and so forth, and consciousness realm.

"World-Honored One, dharma realm is not cause and condition, consecutive thoughts, conditions that stimulate the mind, and the conditions that reinforce main causes; dharma realm is not apart from cause and condition, consecutive thoughts, conditions that stimulate the mind, and the conditions that reinforce main causes. Cause and condition, consecutive thoughts, conditions that stimulate the mind, and the conditions that reinforce main causes are dharma realm; dharma realm is cause and condition, consecutive thoughts, conditions that stimulate the mind, and the conditions that reinforce main causes.

"World-Honored One, dharma realm is not the dharmas produced by conditions, while dharma realm is not apart from the dharmas produced by conditions. The dharmas produced by conditions are dharma realm, and dharma realm is the dharmas produced by conditions.

"World-Honored One, dharma realm is not ignorance, action, consciousness, and so forth, and old age and death; dharma realm is not apart from ignorance, action, consciousness, and so forth, and old age and death. Ignorance, action, consciousness, and so forth, and old age and death are dharma realm; dharma realm is ignorance, action, consciousness, and so forth, and old age and death.

"World-Honored One, dharma realm is not giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita; dharma realm is not apart from giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita. Giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita are dharma realm; dharma realm is giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita.

"World-Honored One, dharma realm is not the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations; dharma realm is not apart from the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations. The four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations are dharma realm; dharma realm is the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations.

"World-Honored One, dharma realm is not the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path; dharma realm is not apart from the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path. The four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path are dharma realm; dharma realm is the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path.

"World-Honored One, dharma realm is not the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration; dharma realm is not apart from the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration. The liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration are dharma realm; dharma realm is the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration.

"World-Honored One, dharma realm is not internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature; dharma realm is not apart from internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature. Internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature are dharma realm; dharma realm is internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature.

"World-Honored One, dharma realm is not the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering; dharma realm is not apart from the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering either. The noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering are dharma realm; dharma realm is the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering.

"World-Honored One, dharma realm is not the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations; dharma realm is not apart from the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations, and ten universal contemplations either. The eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal

contemplations are dharma realm; dharma realm is the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations.

"World-Honored One, dharma realm is not the stage of pure contemplation, stage of embryonic Buddha nature, and so forth, and the stage of Thus-Comer; dharma realm is not apart from the stage of pure contemplation, stage of embryonic Buddha nature, and so forth, and the stage of Thus-Comer. The stage of pure contemplations, stage of embryonic Buddha nature, and so forth, and the stage of Thus-Comer are dharma realm; dharma realm is the stage of pure contemplation, stage of embryonic Buddha nature, and so forth, and the stage of Thus-Comer.

"World-Honored One, dharma realm is not the stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilements, and so forth, and the stage of dharma cloud; dharma realm is not apart from the stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilements, and so forth, and the stage of dharma cloud. The stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilements, and so forth, and the stage of dharma cloud are dharma realm; dharma realm is the stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilements, and so forth, and the stage of dharma cloud.

"World-Honored One, dharma realm is not all dharani gates and all samadhi gates, while dharma realm is not apart from all dharani gates and all samadhi gates. All dharani gates and all samadhi gates are dharma realm, and dharma realm is all dharani gates and all samadhi gates.

"World-Honored One, dharma realm is not the five eyes and the six supernatural powers, while dharma realm is not apart from the five eyes and the six supernatural powers. The five eyes and the six supernatural powers are dharma realm, and dharma realm is the five eyes and the six supernatural powers.

"World-Honored One, dharma realm is not the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power; dharma realm is not apart from the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power. The Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power are dharma realm; dharma realm is the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power.

"World-Honored One, dharma realm is not staying in correct mindfulness and dwelling in equanimity at all times, while dharma realm is not apart from staying in correct mindfulness and dwelling in equanimity at all times. Staying in correct mindfulness and dwelling in equanimity at all times are dharma realm, and dharma realm is staying in correct mindfulness and dwelling in equanimity at all times.

"World-Honored One, dharma realm is the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena; dharma realm is not apart from the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena. The perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena are dharma realm; dharma realm is the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena.

"World-Honored One, dharma realm is not the thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features, while dharma realm is not apart from the thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features. The thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features are dharma realm, and dharma realm is the thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features.

"World-Honored One, dharma realm is not stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi; dharma realm is not apart from stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi. Stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi are dharma realm; dharma realm is stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi.

"World-Honored One, dharma realm is not all great bodhisattva actions and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas; dharma realm is not apart from all great bodhisattva actions and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas. All great bodhisattva actions and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas are dharma realm; dharma realm is all great bodhisattva actions and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas.

"World-Honored One, dharma realm is not the virtuous or not virtuous dharmas, while dharma realm is not apart from the virtuous or not virtuous dharmas. The virtuous or not virtuous dharmas are dharma realm, and dharma realm is the virtuous or not virtuous dharmas.

"World-Honored One, dharma realm is not the morally related or morally unrelated dharmas, while dharma realm is not apart from the morally related or morally unrelated dharmas. The morally related or morally unrelated dharmas are dharma realm, and dharma realm is the morally related or morally unrelated dharmas.

"World-Honored One, dharma realm is not the flawed or flawless dharmas, while dharma realm is not apart from the flawed or flawless dharmas. The flawed or flawless dharmas are dharma realm, and dharma realm is the flawed or flawless dharmas.

"World-Honored One, dharma realm is not the dharmas of or beyond the world, while dharma realm is not apart from the dharmas of or beyond the world. The dharmas of or beyond the world are dharma realm, and dharma realm is the dharmas of or beyond the world.

"World-Honored One, dharma realm is not the conditioned or unconditioned dharmas, while dharma realm is not apart from the conditioned or unconditioned dharmas. The conditioned or unconditioned dharmas are dharma realm, and dharma realm is the conditioned or unconditioned dharmas."

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, "Yes, it is as you say. In the real dharma realm, there are no differentiations and nonsensical arguments. Dharma realm is not matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness; dharma realm is not apart from matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness. Dharma realm is matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness; matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness are dharma realm. And so forth, dharma realm is not the conditioned and unconditioned dharmas, while dharma realm is not apart from the conditioned and unconditioned dharmas; dharma realm is the conditioned and unconditioned dharmas, and the conditioned and unconditioned dharmas are dharma realm.

(The Buddha affirmed Well-Appearing One' statements that dharma realm is not the dharmas, but is not apart from the dharmas; dharma realm is the dharmas, and the dharmas are dharma realm.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas practice the fathomless prajna paramita and see any dharma that is apart from dharma realm, they are not on the right path leading to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. Therefore, Well-Appearing One, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas should not see any dharma that is apart from the genuine dharma realm.

"You must know, Well-Appearing One, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas know that all dharmas are the real dharma realm. They will teach sentient beings the dharmas without names and forms expediently and skillfully through teaching names and forms to distinguish among matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness; the eye sphere, ear sphere, and so forth, and the conscious sphere; the sight sphere, sound sphere, and so forth, and the mental-image sphere; the eye realm, ear realm, and so forth, and the conscious realm; the sight realm, sound realm, and so forth, and the mental-image realm; the eye consciousness realm, ear consciousness realm, and so forth, and the conscious consciousness realm; the eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and the 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 the consciousness realm; cause and condition, consecutive thoughts, conditions that stimulate the mind, and the conditions that reinforce main causes; the dharmas produced by conditions; ignorance, action, consciousness, and so forth, and old age and death; the virtuous and not virtuous dharmas; the morally related and morally unrelated dharmas; the flawed and flawless dharmas; the dharmas of and beyond the world; the conditioned and unconditioned dharmas; giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita; the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations; the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path; 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; the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations; the stage of pure contemplation, stage of embryonic Buddha nature, and so forth, and the stage of Thus-Comer; the stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilements, and so forth, and the stage

of dharma cloud; 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 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; the thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features; 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.

"A master magician and disciples would change a small piece of material into various objects with different species and forms in front of the public. They made the transformed men and women, old and young; the transformed elephants, horses, cows, sheep, camels, donkeys, chickens, and so forth; the transformed towns, villages, gardens, and ponds, all were magnificent and lovable; the transformed clothes, food, drinks, houses, beds and bedding, fragrant flowers, jewel necklaces, treasures, money, cereals, and other goods in the storage; and the transformed music and comedians to entertain numberless people. They made transformed people to let them practice giving, observe precepts, practice forbearance and diligence, learn meditation, and cultivate wisdom. They made transformed people to let them be reborn in the noble families of Ksatriya, Brahman, elder, or lay believer. They made transformed mountains, oceans, Mount Sumeru, eight circles of mountains surrounding Mount Sumeru, and so forth. They made transformed sentient beings and let them be reborn in the Heaven of Four Great Kings, Heaven of Thirty-Three Smaller Heavens, and so forth, and Heaven of Enjoying Other-Made Changes; in the Heaven of Brahma Followers, Heaven of Brahma Associates, and so forth, and Heaven of Ultimate Form; in the Heaven of Boundless Emptiness, Heaven of Boundless Consciousness, and so forth, and Heaven of Nonthinking and Not Nonthinking. They made transformed stream-enters, once-returners, nonreturners, arhats, and self-enlightened ones. They also made transformed great bodhisattvas, who have since the time of aspiring to the great bodhi cultivated giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita; cultivated the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and formless concentrations; cultivated the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path; cultivated the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration; learned to dwell in internal

emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature; learned to dwell in realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable; learned to dwell in the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering; entered the bodhisattva nature of nonarising; cultivated the stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilements, and so forth, and the stage of dharma cloud; activated various superior supernatural powers and emitted bright lights to illuminate various worlds; assisted the sentient beings to mature, and dignifies and purified the Buddha lands. These transformed great bodhisattvas also practiced skillfully and freely all meditations, liberations, concentrations, samapatti, as well as various kinds of dharani and samadhi; and cultivated various merits and virtues of the Buddhas. In addition, the magician also made transformed images of Thus-Comer with the thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features, who had achieved the 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, staying in correct mindfulness and dwelling in equanimity at all times, the perfect knowledge of everything, the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, the perfect knowledge of all phenomena, and immeasurable and boundless unbelievable superior merits and virtues.

"Well-Appearing One, this magician and his followers bewildered the public with their transformations. The ignorant ones in the crowd, men and women, young and old, all acclaimed in surprise, 'It is so bizarre! These guys master all kinds of expertise and can do very rare and unique things. They can even make the magnificent body of the Thus-Comer with various merits and virtues to demonstrate their skills to entertain people.' The wise ones pondered, 'It is amazing! How can they do such things? Although nothing is real, the ignorant ones will be puzzled and enjoy them and mistake the unreal for real.' Only the wise ones can thoroughly understand that all these things are empty; they see and hear them, but they are not attached to them."

(The Buddha used the analogy of transformed things to demonstrate the unreal existents of the world.)

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Chapter 77

The Thorough Understanding

Section 3

(In the Second Assembly)

"Thus, Well-Appearing One, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, great bodhisattvas do not see dharma realm existent apart from dharmas, nor do they see dharmas existent apart from dharma realm. They do not see sentient beings and their establishment as attainable. Nevertheless, they still cultivate the six paramitas expediently and skillfully themselves and encourage others to do so; they praise and promulgate the correct way of cultivating the six paramitas and joyfully admire those who cultivate the six paramitas. The great bodhisattvas also observe the path of the ten virtuous karmas themselves and encourage others to do so; they praise and promulgate the correct path of the ten virtuous karmas and joyfully admire those who observe the path of the ten virtuous karmas. They observe the five precepts themselves and encourage others to do so; they praise and promulgate the correct way of observing the five precepts and joyfully admire and acclaim those who observe the five precepts. They observe the eight precepts themselves and encourage others to do so; they praise and promulgate the correct way of observing the eight precepts and joyfully admire and acclaim those who observe the eight precepts. They observe the monastic precepts themselves and encourage others to do so; they praise and promulgate the correct way of observing the monastic precepts and joyfully admire and acclaim those who observe the monastic precepts. They cultivate the four meditations themselves and encourage others to do so; they praise and promulgate the correct way of cultivating the four meditations and joyfully admire and acclaim those who cultivate the four meditations. They cultivate the four immeasurable minds themselves and encourage others to do so; they praise and promulgate the correct way of cultivating the four immeasurable minds and joyfully admire and acclaim those who cultivate the four immeasurable minds. They cultivate the four formless concentrations themselves and encourage others to do so;

they praise and promulgate the correct way of cultivating the four formless concentrations and joyfully admire and acclaim those who cultivate the four formless concentrations. They cultivate the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path themselves and encourage others to do so; they praise and promulgate the correct way of cultivating the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth and joyfully admire and acclaim those who cultivate the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth. They cultivate the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration themselves and encourage others to do so; they praise and promulgate the correct way of cultivating the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration and joyfully admire and acclaim those who cultivate the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration. They dwell peacefully in internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature themselves and encourage others to do so; they praise and promulgate the correct way of dwelling peacefully in internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and joyfully admire and acclaim those who dwell peacefully in internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth. They dwell peacefully in realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable themselves and encourage others to do so; they praise and promulgate the correct way of dwelling peacefully in realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and joyfully admire and acclaim those who dwell peacefully in realness, dharma realm, and so forth. They dwell peacefully in the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering themselves and encourage others to do so; they praise and promulgate the correct way of dwelling peacefully in the four noble truths and joyfully admire and acclaim those who dwell peacefully in the four noble truths. They cultivate the eight liberations themselves and encourage others to do so; they praise and promulgate the correct way of cultivating the eight liberations and joyfully admire and acclaim those who cultivate the eight liberations. They cultivate the eight vexation-overcoming meditations themselves and encourage others to do so; they praise and promulgate the correct way of cultivating the eight vexation-overcoming meditations and joyfully admire and acclaim those who cultivate the eight vexation-overcoming meditations. They cultivate the nine concentrations in sequence themselves and encourage others to do so; they praise and promulgate the correct way of cultivating the nine concentrations in sequence and joyfully admire and acclaim those who cultivate the nine concentrations in sequence. They cultivate the ten universal

contemplations themselves and encourage others to do so; they praise and promulgate the correct way of cultivating the ten universal contemplations and joyfully admire and acclaim those who cultivate the ten universal contemplations. They cultivate the ten stages of bodhisattva themselves and encourage others to do so; they praise and promulgate the correct way of cultivating the ten stages of bodhisattva and joyfully admire and acclaim those who cultivate the ten stages of bodhisattva. They cultivate all dharani gates themselves and encourage others to do so; they praise and promulgate the correct way of cultivating all dharani gates and joyfully admire and acclaim those who cultivate all dharani gates. They cultivate all samadhi gates themselves and encourage others to do so; they praise and promulgate the correct way of cultivating all samadhi gates and joyfully admire and acclaim those who cultivate all samadhi gates. They cultivate the five eyes themselves and encourage others to do so; they praise and promulgate the correct way of cultivating the five eyes and joyfully admire and acclaim those who cultivate the five eyes. They cultivate the six supernatural powers themselves and encourage others to do so; they praise and promulgate the correct way of cultivating the six supernatural powers and joyfully admire and acclaim those who cultivate the six supernatural powers. They cultivate the Buddha's ten abilities themselves and encourage others to do so; they praise and promulgate the correct way of cultivating the Buddha's ten abilities and joyfully admire and acclaim those who cultivate the Buddha's ten abilities. They cultivate the four kinds of fearlessness themselves and encourage others to do so; they praise and promulgate the correct way of cultivating the four kinds of fearlessness and joyfully admire and acclaim those who cultivate the four kinds of fearlessness. They cultivate the four unhindered understandings and encourage others to do so; they praise and promulgate the correct way of cultivating the four unhindered understandings and joyfully admire and acclaim those who cultivate the four unhindered understandings. They cultivate great loving-kindness, great compassion, great joy, and great equanimity themselves and encourage others to do so; they praise and promulgate the correct way of cultivating great loving-kindness, great compassion, great joy, and great equanimity and joyfully admire and acclaim those who cultivate great loving-kindness, great compassion, great joy, and great equanimity. They cultivate the eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power themselves and encourage others to do so; they praise and promulgate the correct way of cultivating the eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power and joyfully admire and acclaim those who cultivate the eighteen distinctive features

of Buddha's wisdom and power. They cultivate to stay in correct mindfulness themselves and encourage others to do so; they praise and promulgate the correct way of cultivating staying in correct mindfulness and joyfully admire and acclaim those who cultivate to stay in correct mindfulness. They cultivate to always dwell in equanimity themselves and encourage others to do so; they praise and promulgate the correct way of always dwelling in equanimity and joyfully admire and acclaim those who cultivate to always dwell in equanimity. They cultivate the perfect knowledge of everything themselves and encourage others to do so; they praise and promulgate the correct way of cultivating the perfect knowledge of everything and joyfully admire and acclaim those who cultivate the perfect knowledge of everything. They cultivate the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths themselves and encourage others to do so; they praise and promulgate the correct way of cultivating the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths and joyfully admire and acclaim those who cultivate the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths. They cultivate the perfect knowledge of all phenomena themselves and encourage others to do so; they praise and promulgate the correct way of cultivating the perfect knowledge of all phenomena and joyfully admire and acclaim those who cultivate the perfect knowledge of all phenomena. They cultivate the thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features themselves and encourage others to do so; they praise and promulgate the correct way of cultivating the thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features and joyfully admire and acclaim those who cultivate the thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features.

(The Buddha articulated the four steps involved in bodhisattva path of guiding sentient beings.)

"Well-Appearing One, if the genuine dharma realms in the past, present, and future were different, then the great bodhisattvas would not be able to expediently and skillfully teach sentient beings about the genuine dharma realm when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, nor could they dignify and purify the Buddha lands, assist the sentient beings to mature, cultivate all great bodhisattva actions, realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, and bring benefits and happiness to all sentient beings for the rest of their lives. Because the genuine dharma realms in the past, present, and future are not different, the great bodhisattvas are able to expediently and skillfully teach sentient beings about the genuine dharma realm when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita; they can further dignify and purify the Buddha lands, assist the

sentient beings to mature, cultivate all great bodhisattva actions, realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, and bring benefits and happiness to all sentient beings for the rest of their lives."

(The Buddha said that the dharma realms in the three phases of time are not different, so the great bodhisattvas can teach sentient beings this truth, and further practice and fulfill bodhisattva actions and achieve the unsurpassed bodhi to benefit all sentient beings.)

## Chapter 78

## Reality

### Section 1

### (In the Second Assembly)

At that time, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "World-Honored One, if the sentient beings and the establishments for the sentient beings are unattainable in the final analysis, then for whom do the great bodhisattvas practice the fathomless prajna paramita?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "The great bodhisattvas practice the fathomless prajna paramita merely by virtue of reality. You must know, Well-Appearing One, if the sentient beings differ from reality, then the great bodhisattvas should not practice the fathomless prajna paramita. Because the sentient beings are not different from reality, the great bodhisattvas should practice the fathomless prajna paramita for the sake of sentient beings. Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great

bodhisattvas should establish sentient being well to let them dwell peacefully in reality without doing harm to the reality of the dharmas."

(In response to Well-Appearing One's inquiry, the Buddha explained that although sentient beings and their establishments are unattainable, the great bodhisattvas still practice the fathomless prajna paramita to let sentient beings reside in reality. The sentient -beings are not different from reality.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, "If the sentient beings are reality, how do the great bodhisattvas establish sentient beings to let them dwell peacefully in reality without destroying the dharma of reality when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita? World-Honored One, if the great bodhisattvas establish sentient being well to let them dwell peacefully in reality when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, they equally establish reality well to let reality dwell peacefully in reality. World-Honored One, if the great bodhisattvas establish reality well to let reality dwell peacefully in reality when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, they equally establish self-nature well to let self-nature dwell peacefully in self-nature. But as it is unreasonable to establish self-nature well to let self-nature dwell peacefully in self-nature, how can we say that the great bodhisattvas will establish sentient beings well to let them dwell peacefully in reality without destroying the reality when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "We cannot establish reality to let reality dwell peacefully in reality, nor establish self-nature to let self-nature dwell peacefully in self-nature. But because the great bodhisattvas have expedient skillfulness when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, they can establish sentient beings to let them dwell peacefully in reality while sentient beings are not different from reality, and sentient beings and reality are not different or separate."

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, "What is expedient skillfulness of great bodhisattvas? How do great bodhisattvas apply expedient skillfulness to establish sentient beings enabling them to dwell peacefully in reality without destroying the forms of reality when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita?"

(Well-Appearing One was interested in knowing expedient skillfulness upon hearing that it could help sentient beings dwell in reality without doing harm to reality.)

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "When great bodhisattvas practice the fathomless prajna paramita, they should achieve expedient skillfulness to allow sentient beings to dwell peacefully in giving by teaching them the different forms of giving in the past, present, and future. They will say, 'The giving in the past, present, and future is empty. The givers, receivers, and the effects resulting from practicing giving are also empty. All these dharmas are nonexistent and unattainable. You should not differentiate between giving, givers, receivers, or the effects thus derived to enjoy sweet-dew effects caused by practicing giving until entering nirvana.'

"The great bodhisattvas further state, 'When cultivating giving in this way, you should not grasp matter, feeling, and so forth, and consciousness. You should not grasp 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 realm, and so forth, and conscious consciousness realm; the eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact; and the feelings produced by eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact. You should not grasp the earth realm, water realm, and so forth, and consciousness realm. You should not grasp cause and condition, consecutive thoughts, conditions that stimulate the mind, and the conditions that reinforce main causes. You should not grasp the dharmas produced by conditions. You should not grasp ignorance, action, consciousness, and so forth, and old age and death. You should not grasp giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita. You should not grasp the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations; the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path; 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; the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations; the stage of pure contemplation, stage of embryonic Buddha nature, and so forth, and the stage of Thus-Comer;

the stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilements, 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; the thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features; 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. You should not grasp the stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi. You should not grasp all great bodhisattva actions. You should not grasp the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas. You should not grasp the virtuous and not virtuous dharmas; the morally related and morally unrelated dharmas; the flawed and flawless dharmas; the dharmas of and beyond the world; and the conditioned and unconditioned dharmas. Why? All kinds of giving and the nature of giving are empty; all givers and the nature of givers are empty; all receivers and the nature of receivers are empty; and all effects of practicing giving and the nature of effects are empty. In emptiness, the giving, givers, receivers, and effects are all unattainable. Why? The self-nature of the differences among these dharmas is empty in the final analysis. In the emptiness in the final analysis, all these dharmas are unattainable. As they are unattainable, the rest of the dharmas that people grasp is also unattainable.'

(The Buddha explained the expedient skillfulness of practicing giving and cautioned that great bodhisattvas should not grasp various dharmas as they and their nature are empty. The givers, receivers, and the things given are empty and unattainable.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, as great bodhisattvas practice the fathomless prajna paramita and achieve expedient skillfulness, they can help sentient beings dwell peacefully in pure precept. They will teach them, 'You should show pity and loving-kindness toward sentient beings and stay away from killing, stealing, and so forth. You should hold correct views instead of incorrect ones. Why? All dharmas are without self-nature, so you should not be attached to or differentiate among them. Rather, you should contemplate and investigate them, understanding them accurately as they really are. For instance, you will get to know what killing is and why sentient beings kill; what incorrect views are and why sentient beings initiate incorrect views

when seeing desirable objects? Then you will understand that the self-nature of all these dharmas is empty.

"Well-Appearing One, through practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas have achieved such expedient skillfulness to assist the sentient beings to mature. They will teach with numberless gates that the effects of practicing giving and observing pure precept are unattainable, enabling them to understand that the self-nature of the effects caused by practicing giving and observing pure precept is empty. After understanding the emptiness of the effects, the sentient beings will not be attached to them. With a calm mind, they can activate exquisite wisdom that enables them to remove hidden roots of vexations and complexes. They are now ready to enter the nirvana without remainders.

(The Buddha taught how to avoid attachment through understanding the empty nature of dharmas in practicing giving and observing pure precept.)

"Well-Appearing One, all these are spoken in terms of the worldly language instead of the ultimate meaning. Why? It is because in emptiness not even a little bit of dharma can be attained. Those who have attained nirvana, will attain nirvana, and are attaining nirvana, as well as nirvana itself and the cause of attaining nirvana are all nonexistent and empty in the final analysis. Emptiness in the final analysis is nirvana. There is no dharma apart from nirvana.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita the great bodhisattvas have achieved such expedient skillfulness and thus develop loving-kindness and compassion toward sentient beings when seeing they are full of anger and hatred, so teaching them, 'You should cultivate and enjoy the dharma of forbearance. You should adjust your mind to empathetic endurance. The self-nature of the dharmas you are angry about is empty, why be angry? You must further reflect carefully: What causes me anger? Who is angry and at whom? You must know that the original nature of all such dharmas is empty as it has always been. This nature of emptiness is not created by Buddhas, great bodhisattvas, self-enlightened ones, or voice-hearers. It is not created by heavenly deities, dragons, gods, yaksas (flying spirits of the dead), gandharvas (perfume-eating spirits of music), asuras (demigods fond of fighting), garuda (golden-winged birds), kimnara (heavenly singers and dancers), mahoraga (snake spirits), humans, and nonhumans. It is not created by the heavenly beings in the Heaven of Four Great

Kings, Heaven of Thirty-Three Smaller Heavens, and so forth, and Heaven of Enjoying Other-Made Changes. It is not created by the heavenly beings in the Heaven of Brahma Followers, Heaven of Brahma Associates, and so forth, and Heaven of Ultimate Form. It is not created by the heavenly beings in the Heaven of Boundless Emptiness, Heaven of Boundless Consciousness, and so forth, and Heaven of Nonthinking and Not Nonthinking either. You should further reflect and observe accurately, getting to know how anger and hatred are caused; to whom they belong; who has caused them; what effects they bring about; and what benefits one will gain. The original nature of all these dharmas is empty. In empty nature, there is no anger or hatred. The sentient beings should stay in forbearance to benefit themselves.'

(The Buddha taught great bodhisattvas to reflect on the nature of anger and hatred.)

"Thus, Well-Appearing One, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas have achieved expedient skillfulness and established sentient beings in the truth of empty nature and the empty nature of cause and effect. They further demonstrate to, advise, encourage, admire, and celebrate sentient beings about the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, enabling them to dwell peacefully in and attain the bodhi. Well-Appearing One, this is taught not based on ultimate meanings but in terms of the worldly way of thinking. Why? In empty original nature, concepts such as attainment, the objects of attainment, and where and when the attainment occurs are all nonexistent. You must know, Well-Appearing One, this is named the truth of empty original nature. The great bodhisattvas have practiced the fathomless prajna paramita based on the genuine empty original nature to benefit sentient beings, but they attain neither sentient beings nor the establishments for sentient beings. Why? Well-Appearing One, all dharmas are separate from sentient beings and unattainable. The dharmas and the sentient beings are established concurrently as counterparts.

(The Buddha taught about the real empty nature of sentient beings and dharmas.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas have achieved expedient skillfulness. They found that sentient beings regressed from diligence and became lazy in body and mind. They thus persuaded and encouraged them expediently and skillfully to resume vitality in body and spirit to cultivate various virtuous dharmas, and said, 'Good gentlepersons, you should deeply believe that in

empty original nature, there is no dharma, no person, no location, no time, and no cause for laziness. The original nature is empty; none is contrary to this truth. You should activate diligence in your body and mind, stay away from tiredness and laziness, and cultivate all virtuous dharmas assiduously. You should cultivate giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita; the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations; the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path diligently; and the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration. You should learn diligently to dwell 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. You should cultivate diligently the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations diligently; the stage of pure contemplation, stage of embryonic Buddha nature, and so forth, and the stage of Thus-Comer; the stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilements, and so forth, and the stage of dharma cloud; all dharani gates and all samadhi gates; the five eyes and the 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; the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena; the stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi; all great bodhisattva actions; the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas; and the rest of numberless Buddha dharmas. You should work on these virtuous dharmas tirelessly. If you get tired of them, you will suffer endlessly. Good gentlepersons, the original nature of all dharmas is empty and without hindrance. You should contemplate the truth of this empty original nature. In the unhindered empty original nature, there is no dharma for laziness, no lazy person, no place where and no time when laziness happens, or the conditions of laziness. All these are unattainable.'

(The Buddha instructed why great bodhisattvas should not be lazy.)

"Well-Appearing One, after practicing the fathomless prajna paramita and achieving the superior expedient skillfulness, the great bodhisattvas should further help sentient beings dwell

in the empty original nature of all dharmas, but without dualistic thinking. Why? The empty original nature is not dualistic and is free from differentiation. Dualistic thinking has no place in nondualistic dharma.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas should give teachings and cautions to various sentient beings and guide them to cultivate and learn diligently. They will say, 'Good gentlepersons, you should work diligently to foster virtuous dharmas. When cultivating giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita, you should not reflect on their dual or nondual forms. When cultivating the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations, you should not reflect on their dual or nondual forms. When cultivating the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path, you should not reflect on their dual or nondual forms. When cultivating the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration, you should not reflect on their dual or nondual forms. When dwelling in internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature, you should not reflect on their dual or nondual forms. When dwelling in realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable, you should not reflect on their dual or nondual forms. When dwelling in the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering, you should not reflect on their dual or nondual forms. When cultivating the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations, you should not reflect on their dual or nondual forms. When cultivating the stage of pure contemplations, stage of embryonic Buddha nature, and so forth, and the stage of Thus-Comer, you should not reflect on their dual or nondual forms. When cultivating the stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilements, and so forth, and the stage of dharma cloud, you should not reflect on their dual or nondual forms. When cultivating all dharani gates and all samadhi gates, you should not reflect on their dual or nondual forms. When cultivating the five eyes and the six supernatural powers, you should not reflect on their dual or nondual forms. When cultivating the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power, you should not reflect on their dual or nondual forms. When cultivating the thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features, you should not reflect

on their dual or nondual forms. When cultivating to stay in correct mindfulness and always dwell in equanimity, you should not reflect on their dual or nondual forms. When cultivating the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena, you should not reflect on their dual or nondual forms. When cultivating the stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi, you should not reflect on their dual or nondual forms. When cultivating all great bodhisattva actions, you should not reflect on their dual or nondual forms. When cultivating the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas, you should not reflect on its dual or nondual forms. When cultivating the rest of numberless Buddha dharmas, you should not reflect on their dual or nondual. Why? Well-Appearing One, the original nature of these dharmas is empty, and the empty original nature should not be dual or nondual.'

(As dharmas are empty, no more dual or nondual forms exist.)

"Therefore, Well-Appearing One, when great bodhisattvas have practiced the fathomless prajna paramita, achieved superior expedient skillfulness, practiced bodhisattva actions, and assisted sentient beings to mature, they should further help sentient beings dwell in stream-entry effect, once-return effect, nonreturn effect, arhat effect, self-enlightenment bodhi, the superior stage of bodhisattva, and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, step by step, according to individual conditions.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas have achieved expedient skillfulness. They observe that the sentient beings display restless and distracted in their minds; they do not watch and protect their sense roots from desires and thus elicit various not tranquil karmas. After seeing such phenomena, the great bodhisattvas will expediently assist them to enter superior concentrations, and say to them, 'Come here, good gentlepersons, you should cultivate and learn superior samadhi without thinking of the distractive mind or superior concentration. Why? It is because the original nature of all dharmas is empty, and in empty original nature, no dharma can be attained or can be named distraction or concentration. If you dwell in superior concentration without thinking of it, all virtuous things that you are undertaking will be fulfilled quickly, and you will be able to dwell in the empty original nature freely as you wish. What are the virtuous things that you

should undertake? That means to activate your superior and pure karmas in body, speech, and mind, and initiate to cultivate giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita; 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; 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 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 stage of pure contemplation, stage of embryonic Buddha nature, and so forth, and the stage of Thus-Comer; enter the correct bodhisattva nature of nonarising; 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 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 the thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features; cultivate staying in correct mindfulness and dwelling 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; cultivate the path of voice-hearer, self-enlightened one, bodhisattva, or Thus-Comer; cultivate the stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi; cultivate great bodhisattva actions and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas; and assist sentient beings to mature and dignify and purify Buddha lands. All these superior and pure virtuous dharmas will be fulfilled quickly because of the powers of superior concentration. The great bodhisattvas will also be able to dwell in empty original nature freely as they wish.'

(The Buddha taught great bodhisattvas to dwell in superior concentration without thinking it so that they can undertake various virtuous dharmas effectively.)

"Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas thus have practiced expedient skillfulness of the fathomless prajna paramita and undertaken virtuous things to gain virtuous benefits uninterruptedly since the time of aspiring to the great bodhi until finally realizing it to bring

benefits and happiness to all sentient beings. They have traveled from one Buddha land to the other and stayed close and made offerings to the Buddhas, the World-Honored Ones. In each Buddha's place they listen to correct teachings given by the Buddhas. Experiencing rebirth over immeasurable kalpas, they never forget what they have heard from the Buddhas until realizing and attaining the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. These great bodhisattvas have achieved dharani to protect various roots from diminishing. Why? They have always cultivated the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge and reflected well on what they have done. They have cultivated and learned all paths: the paths of voice-hearer, self-enlightened one, bodhisattva, Buddha, superior heavenly beings, superior human beings, and superior supernatural powers of bodhisattva. Dwelling in the path of the superior supernatural powers, they can do various beneficial things for sentient beings. Although they have gone through the reincarnation of birth and death in many destinies, their supernatural powers remain undiminished. It is owing to their unreduced supernatural powers that they can do beneficial things for all sentient beings consistently. Well-Appearing One, this is how great bodhisattvas dwell in expedient skillfulness of empty original nature to benefit all sentient beings, and realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita.

(The Buddha summarized how great bodhisattvas developed expedient skillfulness of empty original nature to attain supernatural powers and practiced various paths to benefit sentient beings.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas have achieved expedient skillfulness and dwelled in empty original nature. They have seen that some sentient beings have poor knowledge and wisdom and make negative karmas with upside-down thoughts caused by ignorance. The great bodhisattvas thus expediently guide them to the fathomless prajna paramita, and say, 'Come here, good gentlepersons, you should cultivate prajna paramita and contemplate the tranquil original nature of all dharmas. If you can do this, you will gain sweet dew like effects when cultivating the karmas in body, speech, and mind until the moment of entering nirvana. Good gentlepersons, the original nature of all dharmas is empty. Although sentient beings and all dharmas are unattainable in the empty original nature, the virtuous dharmas that you have cultivated will never diminish. Why? Good gentlepersons, the empty original nature is without addition or subtraction, and the dharmas do

not increase or decrease within empty original nature. Why? The empty original nature has adopted nonnature as its nature; it is far away from differentiations and nonsensical arguments. Therefore, the dharmas do not increase or decrease in the empty original nature, and all what one does will not diminish or lose. You must cultivate prajna paramita and contemplate the empty original nature and do what you should do.' Well-Appearing One, this is how great bodhisattvas practice the fathomless prajna paramita and expediently and skillfully teach, caution, and guide various sentient beings to enter prajna paramita, dwell in empty original nature, and cultivate various virtuous karmas.

(The Buddha taught how to guide sentient beings to understand the empty original nature of all dharmas and dwell in it.)

"Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas thus teach and caution sentient beings tirelessly. The great bodhisattvas not only consistently practice the path of the ten virtuous karmas themselves but also encourage others to do so. They not only consistently observe the five precepts for lay believers themselves but also encourage others to do so. They not only consistently observe the eight precepts for lay believers themselves but also encourage others to do so. They not only consistently observe the precepts of monastics themselves but also encourage others to do so. They not only consistently cultivate the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations themselves but also encourage others to do so. They not only consistently cultivate the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path themselves but also encourage others to do so. They not only consistently cultivate the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration themselves but also encourage others to do so. They not only consistently cultivate giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita themselves but also encourage others to do so. They not only consistently dwell in internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature themselves but also encourage others to do so. They will not only consistently dwell in realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the unconceivable themselves but also encourage others to do so. They not only consistently dwell in the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering themselves but also encourage others to do so. They not only consistently cultivate the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine

concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations themselves but also encourage others to do so. They not only consistently cultivate various stages of bodhisattva themselves but also encourage others to do so. They not only consistently cultivate all dharani gates and all samadhi gates themselves but also encourage others to do so. They not only consistently cultivate five eyes and six supernatural powers themselves but also encourage others to do so. They will not only consistently cultivate the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power themselves but also encourage others to do so. They not only consistently cultivate the thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features themselves but also encourage others to do so. They not only consistently cultivate to stay in correct mindfulness and always dwell in equanimity themselves but also encourage others to do so. They not only consistently cultivate the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena themselves but also encourage others to do so. They not only consistently elicit stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi themselves without dwelling in these effects but also encourage others to do so. They not only consistently elicit all great bodhisattva actions themselves but also encourage others to do so. They not only consistently elicit the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas themselves but also encourage others to do so.

"Well-Appearing One, this is how great bodhisattvas, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, expediently and skillfully cultivate virtuous karmas themselves tirelessly and also teach and caution sentient beings to consistently cultivate virtuous dharmas tirelessly. Well-Appearing One, this is named the expedient skillfulness of great bodhisattvas when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita. Because of the powers of expedient skillfulness, the great bodhisattvas can establish sentient beings peacefully in reality without destroying the forms of reality."

(The Buddha urged great bodhisattvas not only to dwell in and cultivate various holy dharmas consistently themselves but also encourage others to do so. This is one way of practicing bodhisattva path. This is the expedient skillfulness of bodhisattva path.)

At that time, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, “World-Honored One, if the original nature of all dharmas is empty and in empty original nature, both sentient beings and dharmas are unattainable and nonexistent, then how do great bodhisattvas pursue to realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi to benefit sentient beings endlessly in the future?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “You are right when you say that the original nature of all dharmas is empty and in empty original nature, both sentient beings and the dharmas are unattainable and nonexistent. You must know, Well-Appearing One, if the original nature of all dharmas were not empty, then the great bodhisattvas would not dwell in the empty original nature to pursue, realize, and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, nor would they teach the dharma of empty original nature to benefit the sentient beings. Because the original nature of all dharmas is empty, the great bodhisattvas dwell in the empty original nature of all dharmas to pursue, realize, and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, and further teach sentient beings about the dharma of empty original nature to benefit all of them.

“Well-Appearing One, what are the dharmas with empty original nature that great bodhisattvas seek to understand accurately, in which they dwell and teach sentient beings? Well-Appearing One, the original nature of matter, feeling, and so forth, and consciousness is empty. The original nature of the eye sphere, ear sphere, and so forth, and conscious sphere is empty. The original nature of the sight sphere, sound sphere, and so forth, and mental-image sphere is empty. The original nature of the eye realm, ear realm, and so forth, and conscious realm is empty. The original nature of the sight realm, sound realm, and so forth, and mental-image realm is empty. The original nature of the eye consciousness realm, ear consciousness realm, and so forth, and conscious consciousness realm is empty. The original nature of the eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact is empty. The original nature of the feelings produced by eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact is empty. The original nature of the earth realm, water realm, and so forth, and consciousness realm is empty. The original nature of the cause and condition, consecutive thoughts, conditions that stimulate the mind, and the conditions that reinforce main causes is empty. The original nature of various

dharmas produced by conditions is empty. The original nature of ignorance, action, consciousness, and so forth, and old age and death is empty. The original nature of giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita is empty. The original nature of the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations is empty. The original nature of the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path is empty. The original nature of the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration is empty. The original nature of internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature is empty. The original nature of realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable is empty. The original nature of the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering is empty. The original nature of the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations is empty. The original nature of the stage of pure contemplation, stage of embryonic Buddha nature, and so forth, and stage of Thus-Comer is empty. The original nature of the stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilements, and so forth, and stage of dharma cloud is empty. The original nature of all dharani gates and all samadhi gates is empty. The original nature of five eyes and six supernatural powers is empty. The original nature of the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power is empty. The original nature of the thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features is empty. The original nature of staying in correct mindfulness and always dwelling in equanimity is empty. The original nature of the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena is empty. The original nature of the stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi is empty. The original nature of all great bodhisattva actions is empty. The original nature of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas is empty. And the original nature of the termination of enduring disposition of vexations is empty. When practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas should know accurately that the original nature of various aggregates such as matter, feeling, thinking, and so forth, and the termination of enduring disposition of vexations is empty. They should further dwell in the empty original nature and teach sentient beings about the dharma of the empty original nature.

(Responding to Well-Appearing One's question, the Buddha listed the dharmas with empty original nature and instructed how great bodhisattvas should teach sentient beings to realize empty original nature.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, if the original nature of internal emptiness, external emptiness, internal-external emptiness, emptiness of emptiness, emptiness of space, emptiness of ultimate truth, emptiness of the conditioned phenomena, emptiness of the 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 were not empty, then when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas would not teach sentient beings about the empty original nature of all dharmas. If this is the case, the great bodhisattvas would destroy the empty original nature. But the empty original nature is indestructible; it is neither permanent nor discontinued. Why? In the empty original nature, there is no direction and space; it comes from nowhere and goes nowhere. This emptiness is also named dharma dwelling, in which there is no gathering or separation, increase or decrease, arising or extinction, and contamination or purification. It is the essence where all dharmas inherently reside. The great bodhisattvas will dwell in it when they pursue the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, while they do not see any dharma that can be or cannot be pursued. It is named dharma dwelling because all dharmas dwell nowhere. The great bodhisattvas should dwell in it to practice the fathomless prajna paramita. Upon seeing and realizing that the original nature of all dharmas is empty, the great bodhisattvas will achieve the state of nonregression in the pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. Why? They do not see any dharma that can hinder or can be hindered. They thus are not skeptical about the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, and will not regress in its pursuit.

(The Buddha further explained the profound, implied meaning of original nature and how great bodhisattvas would achieve nonregression in their pursuit of the unsurpassed bodhi.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, when dwelling in the empty original nature of all dharmas, the great bodhisattvas will contemplate the empty original nature as unattainable.

Namely, 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 unattainable. Matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness are unattainable. The eye sphere, ear sphere, and so forth, and conscious sphere are unattainable. The sight sphere, sound sphere, and so forth, and mental-image sphere are unattainable. The eye realm, ear realm, and so forth, and conscious realm are unattainable. The sight realm, sound realm, and so forth, and mental-image realm are unattainable. The eye consciousness realm, ear consciousness realm, and so forth, and conscious consciousness realm are unattainable. The eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and the conscious contact are unattainable. The feelings produced by eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact are unattainable. The earth realm, water realm, and so forth, and consciousness realm are unattainable. The cause and condition, consecutive thoughts, conditions that stimulate the mind, and the conditions that reinforce main causes are unattainable. Various dharmas produced by conditions are unattainable. Ignorance, action, consciousness, and so forth, and old age and death are unattainable. Giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita are unattainable. Internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature are unattainable. Realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable are unattainable. The noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering are unattainable. The four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path are unattainable. The four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations are unattainable. The eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations are unattainable. The liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration are unattainable. The stage of pure contemplation, stage of embryonic Buddha nature, and so forth, and the stage of Thus-Comer are unattainable. The stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilements, and so forth, and the stage of dharma cloud are unattainable. All dharani gates and all samadhi gates are unattainable. The five eyes and six supernatural powers are unattainable. The Buddha’s ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha’s wisdom and power are unattainable. Staying in correct mindfulness and always dwelling in equanimity are unattainable. The perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect

knowledge of all phenomena are unattainable. The stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi are unattainable. All great bodhisattva actions are unattainable. The unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas is unattainable. The virtuous and not virtuous dharmas are unattainable. The morally related and morally unrelated dharmas are unattainable. The flawed and flawless dharmas are unattainable. The dharmas of the world and beyond the world are unattainable. The conditioned and unconditioned dharmas are unattainable. The thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features are unattainable."

(The Buddha emphasized that all dharmas are unattainable.)

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Chapter 78

Reality

Section 2

(In the Second Assembly)

"You must know, Well-Appearing One, if the Thus-Comer, One Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened One made four groups of transformed Buddhists: the transformed bhiksus (Buddhist monks), bhiksunīs (Buddhist nuns), upāsakas (Buddhist laymen), and upāsikās (Buddhist laywomen); and if a transformed Buddha has taught correct dharma to these four groups for one or more than one kalpa. What do you think about this? Can these transformed ones attain stream-entry effect, once-return effect, nonreturn effect, arhat effect, self-enlightenment bodhi, or the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi?"

Well-Appearing One replied, "No, World-Honored One. Why? These transformed ones are not real. No unreal ones can attain any of the effects or be conferred a prophecy by the Buddha of becoming a Buddha in the future."

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, "So are all dharmas as their original nature is empty. Can great bodhisattvas, in emptiness, teach sentient beings the dharmas to attain stream-entry effect, once-return effect, nonreturn effect, arhat effect, self-enlightenment bodhi, or the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi?

"You must know, Well-Appearing One, although the great bodhisattvas teach the dharma of emptiness to sentient beings, the sentient beings are unattainable. The great bodhisattvas teach the sentient beings out of pity and compassion over their upside-down thinking, trying to relieve them from ignorance. Staying from differentiation is to become free from upside-down thoughts. As nondifferentiation frees one from upside-down thoughts, differentiation confines them with upside-down thoughts. The upside-down thinking is equivalent to differentiation.

(The Buddha taught that nondifferentiation would free one from upside-down thoughts.)

"You must know, Well-Appearing Ones, being upside down is the dharma not upside down. In non-upside down, there are no 'I,' sentient being, and so forth, and knower and viewer; no matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness; no eye sphere, ear sphere, and so forth, and conscious sphere; no sight sphere, sound sphere, and so forth, and mental-image sphere; no eye realm, ear realm, and so forth, and conscious realm; no sight realm, sound realm, and so forth, and mental-image realm; no eye consciousness realm, ear consciousness realm, and so forth, and conscious consciousness realm; no eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact; no feelings produced by eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact; no earth realm, water realm, and so forth, and consciousness realm; no cause and condition, consecutive thoughts, conditions that stimulate the mind, and conditions that reinforce main causes; no dharmas produced by conditions; no ignorance, action, consciousness, and so forth, and old age and death; no giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita; no internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature; no realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable; no noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering; no four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path; no four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations; no eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations; no liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration; no stage of pure contemplation, stage of embryonic Buddha nature, and so forth, and stage of Thus-Comer; no stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilements, and so forth, and stage of dharma cloud; no dharani gates and samadhi gates; no five eyes and six supernatural powers; no Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power; no thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features; no staying in correct mindfulness and dwelling in equanimity at all times; no perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena; no stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi; no great bodhisattva actions; and no unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas.

"Well-Appearing One, nonexistence is empty original nature. When practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas dwelling in this emptiness see that the sentient beings have fallen in upside-down thinking, so adopt expedient skillfulness to liberate the sentient beings from the reflection on existence and nonexistence of the 'I,' the sentient being, and so forth, and the knower and the viewer. They will liberate sentient beings from the reflection on existence and nonexistence of impermanence and permanence, pleasure and pain, selfness and selflessness, and impurity and purity. They will also liberate sentient beings from the reflection on existence or nonexistence of 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 realm, 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; cause and condition, consecutive thoughts, conditions that stimulate the mind, and the conditions that reinforce main causes; various dharmas produced by conditions; 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 pure contemplation, stage of embryonic Buddha nature, and so forth, and the stage of Thus-Comer; the stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilements, and so forth, and the stage of dharma cloud; all dharani gates and all samadhi gates; 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 always dwelling in equanimity; the perfect knowledge of

everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena; the 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. These great bodhisattvas will also liberate the sentient beings from the reflection on existence or nonexistence of the flawed dharmas, such as the five aggregates, and the flawless dharmas, such as the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth. Why? The flawless dharmas, such as the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, are not without arising and extinction, form and action, nonsensical argument and differentiation as the ultimate meaning implies, therefore, sentient beings should also be liberated from the reflection on existence and nonexistence of these flawless dharmas. The genuine ultimate meaning is the emptiness of original nature. This emptiness of original nature is the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi that the Buddhas have realized.

"You must know, Well-Appearing One, in the empty original nature, the 'I,' the sentient being, and so forth, and the knower and the viewer are unattainable; matter, feeling, and so forth, and consciousness are unattainable; the eye sphere, ear sphere, and so forth, and conscious sphere are unattainable; the sight sphere, sound sphere, and so forth, and mental-image sphere are unattainable; the eye realm, ear realm, and so forth, and conscious realm are unattainable; the sight realm, sound realm, and so forth, and mental-image realm are unattainable; the eye consciousness realm, ear consciousness realm, and so forth, and conscious consciousness realm are unattainable; the eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and the conscious contact are unattainable; the feelings produced by eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact are unattainable; the earth realm, water realm, and so forth, and consciousness realm are unattainable; the cause and condition, consecutive thoughts, conditions that stimulate the mind, and the conditions that reinforce main causes are unattainable; the dharmas produced by conditions are unattainable; ignorance, action, consciousness, and so forth, and old age and death are unattainable; giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita are unattainable; internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature are unattainable; realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable are unattainable; the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering are unattainable; the four bases of mindfulness, four

correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path are unattainable; the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations are unattainable; the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations are unattainable; the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration are unattainable; the stage of pure contemplation, stage of embryonic Buddha nature, and so forth, and the stage of Thus-Comer are unattainable; the stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilements, and so forth, and the stage of dharma cloud are unattainable; all dharani gates and all samadhi gates are unattainable; the five eyes and six supernatural powers are unattainable; the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power are unattainable; the thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features are unattainable; staying in correct mindfulness and always dwelling in equanimity at all times are unattainable; the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena are unattainable; the stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi are unattainable; all great bodhisattva actions are unattainable; and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas is unattainable.

(The Buddha taught that in empty original nature, all dharmas are unattainable.)

"You must know, Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas aspire to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi not for the sake of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, but for the sake of the empty original nature of all dharmas. The original nature was empty, is empty, and will be empty in the past, present, and future. It is always empty. The great bodhisattvas have dwelled in the paramita of empty original nature. In order to liberate sentient beings from attachment to the thinking of sentient beings and dharmas, the great bodhisattvas have practiced the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, through which they are able to attain all paths, including the path of voice-hearer, the path of self-enlightened one, the path of bodhisattva, and the path of the Buddha.

"You must know, Well-Appearing One, after fulfilling all paths, the great bodhisattvas are able to assist the sentient beings that they are guiding to mature; they are also able to dignify and purify the Buddha lands that they are aspiring to. In the rest of their lives, they will work to

approach the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. Once realizing the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, they will keep Buddha eye from discontinuation and destruction. What is Buddha eye? It is the empty original nature. The Buddhas dwelling in the ten directions in the past, future, and present had taught, are teaching, and will teach sentient beings about the correct dharma by adopting the empty original nature as Buddha eye.

(The Buddha said that after realizing the unsurpassed bodhi the great bodhisattvas are capable to preserve the empty original nature, the Buddha eye, from discontinuation.)

(The Buddha taught that great bodhisattvas, upon attaining supreme enlightenment, can maintain the empty original nature, the Buddha eye, ensuring its continuity.)

"You must know, Well-Appearing One, the Buddha cannot appear in the world apart from the empty original nature. All Buddhas appearing in the world always teach the meanings of the empty original nature. The sentient beings cannot enter onto holy paths and achieve holy effects without hearing the truth of the empty original nature; no other expedient path can lead them to this goal.

"Therefore, Well-Appearing One, to realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, the great bodhisattvas should correctly and peacefully dwell in the truth of empty original nature to cultivate the six paramitas as well as the rest of bodhisattva actions. Those who cultivate in this way will never get lost or regress in the pursuit of the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge and thus will be able to bring benefits and happiness to all sentient beings."

(The Buddha again emphasized the value of empty original nature.)

At that time, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One said to the Buddha, "World-Honored One, the great bodhisattvas are very rare and unique. They can always practice various dharmas based on empty original nature without losing or doing harm to empty original nature. Namely, they assert that matter, feeling, and so forth, and consciousness are notdifferent from empty original nature; the eye sphere, ear sphere, and so forth, and conscious sphere are not different from empty original nature; the sight sphere, sound sphere, and so forth, and mental-image sphere are not different from empty original nature; the eye realm, ear realm, and so forth,

and conscious realm are not different from empty original nature; the sight realm, sound realm, and so forth, and mental-image realm are not different from empty original nature; the eye consciousness realm, ear consciousness realm, and so forth, and conscious consciousness realm are not different from empty original nature; the eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact are not different from empty original nature; the feelings produced by eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact are not different from empty original nature; the earth realm, water realm, and so forth, and consciousness realm are not different from empty original nature; cause and condition, consecutive thoughts, conditions that stimulate the mind, and the conditions that reinforce main cause are not different from empty original nature; the dharmas produced by conditions are not different from empty original nature; ignorance, action, consciousness, and so forth, and old age and death are not different from empty original nature; giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita are not different from empty original nature; internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature are not different from empty original nature; realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable are not different from empty original nature; the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering are not different from empty original nature; the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path are not different from empty original nature; the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations are not different from empty original nature; the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations are not different from empty original nature; the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration are not different from empty original nature; the stage of pure contemplation, stage of embryonic Buddha nature, and so forth, and the stage of Thus-Comer are not different from empty original nature; the stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilements, and so forth, and the stage of dharma cloud are not different from empty original nature; all dharani gates and all samadhi gates are not different from empty original nature; the five eyes and six supernatural powers are not different from empty original nature; the Buddha’s ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha’s wisdom and power are not different from empty original nature; the thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features are not different from empty original nature; staying in correct

mindfulness and dwelling in equanimity at all times are not different from empty original nature; the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena are not different from empty original nature; the stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi are not different from empty original nature; all great bodhisattva actions are not different from empty original nature; the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas is not different from empty original nature.

"World-Honored One, matter is empty original nature, and empty original nature is matter; feeling is empty original nature, and empty original nature is feeling; and so on, the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas is empty original nature, and empty original nature is the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas."

(Well-Appearing One elaborated that various dharmas are not different from empty original nature.)

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, "Yes, it is as you say. The great bodhisattvas are very rare and unique. Although they have practiced all dharmas and realized that the original nature of all dharmas is empty, they never lose or do harm to empty original nature.

"You must know, Well-Appearing One, matter is not different from empty original nature, and empty original nature is not different from matter. Matter is empty original nature, and empty original nature is matter. The unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas is not different from empty original nature; empty original nature is not different from the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas. The unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas is empty original nature; empty original nature is the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas.

(The Buddha affirmed what Well-Appearing One stated.)

"You must know, Well-Appearing One, if matter were different from empty original nature, and empty original nature were different from matter; matter were not empty original nature, and empty original nature were not matter; and so on, if the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas were different from empty original nature; empty original nature

were different from the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas; if the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas were not empty original nature, and empty original nature were not the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas, then when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas would not contemplate the original nature of all dharmas as empty, would not be able to realize and attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. Because matter is not different from empty original nature, and empty original nature is not different from matter; matter is empty original nature, and empty original nature is matter; and so on, because the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas is not different from empty original nature, and empty original nature is not different from the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas; the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas is empty original nature, and empty original nature is the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas, the great bodhisattvas are able to contemplate the original nature of all dharmas as empty when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, they thus are able to realize and attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. Why? Not a dharma is real, permanent, destructible, and terminable apart from empty original nature; not a dharma is real, permanent, destructible, and terminable in empty original nature. The ignorant ones have delusive and upside-down thinking and insist that matter is different from empty original nature, and feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness are different from empty original nature. They also insist that all great bodhisattva actions are different from empty original nature, and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas is different from empty original nature. Because the ignorant ones incorrectly believe that all dharmas are different from empty original nature, they cannot accurately know matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness as they really are. Because of the lack of correct knowledge, they are attached to matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness. Because of the attachment, they always take self and the associated things into account when dealing with matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness. Owing to the delusive consideration, they grasp all internal and external matters, being attached to matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness even in the lives to come. They thus cannot get rid of birth, old age, illness, death, worry, sorrow, misery, anxiety, and upset in the cycle of rebirth, and continuously drift endlessly in the realms of desire, form, and formlessness.

(The Buddha further taught that because all dharmas are not different empty original nature, the great bodhisattvas are able to realize and attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. The ignorant ones reincarnate endlessly because they lack such right understanding.)

"Because of this cause and condition, when the great bodhisattvas reside in the paramita of empty original nature to practice the fathomless prajna paramita, they neither attach to nor destroy matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness by asserting that matter, feeling, and so forth are empty or not empty. And so on, they neither attach to nor destroy all great bodhisattva actions and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas by asserting that all great bodhisattva actions and the unsurpassed bodhi are empty or not empty. Why? Matter will not destroy emptiness, and emptiness will not destroy matter by asserting that this is matter or emptiness. Feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness will not destroy emptiness, and emptiness will not destroy feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness by asserting that these are feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness or emptiness. And so on, all great bodhisattva actions will not destroy emptiness, and emptiness will not destroy all great bodhisattva actions by asserting that these are great bodhisattva actions or emptiness. The unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas will not destroy emptiness, and emptiness will not destroy the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas by asserting that this is the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas or emptiness. It is like empty space that does not destroy empty space; internal empty space does not destroy external emptiness, and external emptiness does not destroy internal emptiness. Well-Appearing One, matter does not destroy emptiness, and emptiness does not destroy matter; feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness do not destroy emptiness, and emptiness does not destroy feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness. Why? All these dharmas have no self-nature, so you should not differentiate and say that this is emptiness or not emptiness. And so on, all great bodhisattva actions do not destroy emptiness, and emptiness does not destroy all great bodhisattva actions; the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas does not destroy emptiness, and emptiness does not destroy the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas. Why? As all dharmas have no self-nature, you should not differentiate and say that this is emptiness or not emptiness."

(The Buddha taught that great bodhisattvas should not differentiate various dharmas by insisting that they are empty or not empty based on the truth that all dharmas are not different from empty original nature.)

At that time, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One said to the Buddha, "World-Honored One, if the original nature of all dharmas is empty, then where will the great bodhisattvas dwell to initiate the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi? As the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas is without dualistic mental images, those with dualistic mental images will not realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. I am begging you to teach us more about this issue."

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "As you say, the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas is without dualistic mental images, and those with dualistic mental images cannot realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. Why? The bodhi is without duality and differentiation. Those who practice the bodhi with duality and differentiation cannot realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.

"You must know, Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas do not practice in dualistic way, nor do they differentiate. They dwell nowhere to initiate the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. If the great bodhisattvas practice all dharmas without dualistic mental images and differentiation, they thus will not act at all, then they are able to realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.

"You must know, Well-Appearing One, the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi that the great bodhisattvas pursue cannot be attained through dualistic mental images. All bodhi actions that great bodhisattvas are practicing do not have practice. They do not practice matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness, and so forth, and all great bodhisattva actions and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. Why? All kinds of bodhi that great bodhisattvas possess are not attached to the 'I' and the associated images by virtue of names and voices. Namely, these great bodhisattvas do not think that they are practicing matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness; nor do they think that they are practicing all great bodhisattva actions and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.

(The Buddha explained why the great bodhisattvas without duality and differentiation could realize the unsurpassed bodhi.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas do not practice all kinds of bodhi because of grasping or renunciation."

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "World-Honored One, if the great bodhisattvas do not practice all kinds of bodhi because of grasping or renunciation, then where will great bodhisattvas practice the bodhi?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One by asking, "What do you think about this? Where will transformed Thus-Comers practice the bodhi? Do they practice the bodhi because of grasping or renunciation?"

Well-Appearing One replied, "World-Honored One, the transformed Thus-Comers are actually unreal, so how can they practice all kinds of bodhi because of grasping or renunciation, or there is a place in which they can practice the bodhi?"

The Buddha asked Well-Appearing One, "What do you think about this? Where do arhats in dreams practice the bodhi? Do they practice the bodhi because of grasping or renunciation?"

Well-Appearing One replied, "World-Honored One, the arhats have eliminated all flaws permanently. They have no more dizziness, sinking, sleepiness, concealment, and complexes; and they have no more dreams. So how can they practice the bodhi in dreams because of grasping or renunciation?"

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, "Yes, it is as you say. The arhats have no more dreams, and have no more dizziness, sinking, sleepiness, and differentiation. So do all great bodhisattvas when they practice the bodhi. They do not practice bodhi because of grasping or renunciation; they practice the bodhi nowhere. It is because they have thoroughly understood that the original nature of all dharmas is empty."

(The Buddha concluded that the great bodhisattvas practice the bodhi nowhere and without grasping or renunciation, just like the transformed ones or arhats in dreams.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, “If the great bodhisattvas do not practice all kinds of bodhi of the fathomless prajna paramita because of grasping or renunciation, and they practice the bodhi nowhere, such as through practicing matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness, and so forth, and all great bodhisattva actions and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas, then do the great bodhisattvas, in order to benefit all sentient beings, not practice 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 the stage of dharma cloud; all dharani gates and all samadhi gates; 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; 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? Do they not dwell in superior supernatural powers of bodhisattva, assist the sentient beings to mature, dignify and purify the Buddha lands, and realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “Although the great bodhisattvas practice all kinds of bodhi nowhere, they still should practice giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, 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; dwell in the superior supernatural powers of bodhisattva; assist the sentient beings to mature; dignify and purify the Buddha lands; and finally realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi in order to benefit all sentient beings.”

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, “As the great bodhisattvas practice all kinds of bodhi nowhere, will they not dwell in and cultivate giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita long enough to fulfill them, realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi to benefit all sentient beings? Will they not dwell in and cultivate the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, perfect knowledge of all phenomena, as well as the superior supernatural powers of bodhisattva long enough to fulfill them, realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi to benefit all sentient beings?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “Although the great bodhisattvas practice all kinds of bodhi nowhere, they still need to dwell in and 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 long enough to fulfill them. They should dwell in superior supernatural powers of bodhisattva to assist the sentient beings to mature and dignify and purify the Buddha lands long enough until attaining the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. You must know, Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas cannot cultivate and fulfill various virtuous roots, they will not be able to attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi that they pursue.

“You must know, Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas would like to attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, they should dwell in the empty original nature of matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness, and so forth, and all great bodhisattva actions and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. They should dwell in the empty original nature of all dharmas and all sentient beings, and cultivate and fulfill giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita. They should also cultivate and fulfill the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena, as well as the superior supernatural powers of bodhisattva to assist the sentient beings to mature and dignify and purify the Buddha lands. After fulfilling all these cultivations, they will attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.

(The Buddha said that although great bodhisattvas practice bodhi nowhere, they still should cultivate and fulfill the six paramitas, the perfect knowledge, and supernatural powers.)

"You must know, Well-Appearing One, the empty original nature of all dharmas and the empty original nature of all sentient beings are extremely tranquil, in which not a single dharma increases or decreases, arises or extinguishes, discontinues or perseveres, becomes contaminated or purified, and acquires effects; nor can it be contemplated intuitively.

(The Buddha described the characteristics of empty original nature.)

"You must know, Well-Appearing One, it is in terms of the worldly way rather than the ultimate meaning to say that the great bodhisattvas should cultivate prajna paramita and know accurately the empty original nature to attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. Why? In genuine ultimate meaning, matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness are unattainable. In genuine ultimate meaning, all great bodhisattva actions; the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas; the practitioners of all great bodhisattva actions; and the practitioners of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi are unattainable. Well-Appearing One, all these dharmas are established in terms of the worldly way instead of the ultimate meaning.

"Well-Appearing One, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas have practiced the bodhi diligently and bravely for the sake of sentient beings since the moment aspiring to the bodhi. But their minds have never been involved in the attainment of sentient beings, the great bodhi, the Buddha, and the bodhisattvas. It is because all dharmas and all sentient beings are unattainable."

(Great bodhisattvas should not be concerned with attainment.)

At that time, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "World-Honored One, if all dharmas are nonexistent and unattainable, how do great bodhisattvas practice the bodhi actions? How do they attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi that they are pursuing? Who will practice the bodhi actions? Who will be able to realize and attain the bodhi?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One by asking him, "What do you think about this? When you relied on termination to eliminate various vexations and attain flawless roots, dwelled in uninterrupted concentrations to attain stream-entry effect, once-return effect,

nonreturn effect, and finally arhat effect, did you see that the minds of the sentient beings, the paths, and the effects of the paths are attainable?"

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

The Buddha asked Well-Appearing One, "If you did not see the minds of the sentient beings, the paths, and the effects of the paths when you relied on termination to remove all vexations and attain flawless roots, then how can you say that you have attained arhat effect?"

Well-Appearing One replied, "We say that based on the worldly point of view rather than the ultimate meaning."

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, "Yes, you are right. As we say that the great bodhisattvas practice the bodhi path and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, it is from a worldly perspective instead of the superior ultimate meaning.

"You must know, Well-Appearing One, it is from the worldly point of view to discuss the provisional establishment of matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness, and so forth, and all great bodhisattva actions and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas. It is also in terms of the worldly way of speech rather than the ultimate meaning to talk about the provisional establishment of the sentient beings, bodhisattvas, and the Buddhas.

"You must know, Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas do not see any dharma can make the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi increase or decrease, gain or lose. It is because the original nature of all dharmas is empty.

"You must know, Well-Appearing One, as great bodhisattvas contemplate original nature of all dharmas and do not see that it is attainable, how can we say that the initial aspiration to the bodhi is attainable? If the initial aspiration to the bodhi is unattainable, how can we say that the cultivation of giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita is attainable? How can we say that the dwelling 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 cessation of suffering is attainable? How can we say that the

cultivation of 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 is attainable? How can we say that the cultivation of the stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilements, and so forth, and the stage of dharma cloud; all dharani gates and all samadhi gates; 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; thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty 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; all great bodhisattva actions; and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas is attainable?

"Well-Appearing One, it does not make sense to say that all Buddha dharmas that the great bodhisattvas cultivate and reside in are attainable. Well-Appearing One, this is how great bodhisattvas should practice the fathomless prajna paramita, cultivate great bodhi actions expediently, and realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi to incessantly bring benefits and happiness to all sentient beings."

(The Buddha taught that as the original nature of all dharmas is unattainable, how can we say that all dharmas, including the superior holy ones, are attainable? It is based on nonattainment that great bodhisattvas perform very difficult bodhisattva actions.)

## Chapter 79

## No Faults and Deficiencies

### Section 1

### (In the Second Assembly)

At that time, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, “World-Honored One, when the great bodhisattvas diligently and assiduously 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 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 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 the thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features; 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; cultivate all great bodhisattva actions; and cultivate the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas without fulfilling the various bodhi paths, they will not be able to realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi that they are pursuing. World-Honored One, how should the great bodhisattvas cultivate and fulfill the bodhi paths to realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “When practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas should be well equipped with the superior expedient skillfulness. With the support of expedient skillfulness, they can cultivate giving paramita without attaining giving, givers, and receivers, although they do not stay far away from these dharmas. If they practice giving in this way, they will be able to illuminate and achieve the three bodhi paths quickly. Well-Appearing One, through expedient and skillful cultivation to fulfill the bodhi

paths, they will be able to realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. Therefore, Well-Appearing One, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas should be well equipped with superior expedient skillfulness. With the support of expedient skillfulness, they can cultivate pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna paramitas, and so forth, and all great bodhisattva actions to realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas. They should also cultivate the rest of virtuous dharmas in this way."

(In response to Well-Appearing One's question on how great bodhisattvas should cultivate and fulfill the bodhi paths to achieve the unsurpassed bodhi, the Buddha said that they must first possess superior expedient skillfulness to dwell in or cultivate various holy dharmas.)

At that time, the long-lived sage Sariputra asked the Buddha, "World-Honored One, how do great bodhisattvas diligently and bravely cultivate the bodhi paths when they practice the fathomless prajna paramita?"

The Buddha replied to Sariputra, "When great bodhisattvas practice the expedient skillfulness of the fathomless prajna paramita, they should not combine or disintegrate matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness. They should not combine or disintegrate 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 realm, 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; cause and condition, consecutive thoughts, conditions that stimulate the mind, and the conditions that reinforce main causes; the dharmas produced by conditions; and ignorance, action, consciousness, and so forth, and old age and death. Why? All these dharmas have no self-nature that can combine or disintegrate.

"Sariputra, when great bodhisattvas practice the expedient skillfulness of the fathomless prajna paramita, they should not combine or disintegrate 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 pure contemplation, stage of embryonic Buddha nature, and so forth, and the stage of Thus-Comer; the stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilements, and so forth, and the stage of dharma cloud; all dharani gates and all samadhi gates; 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; the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena; the 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. Why? It is because all these dharmas have no self-nature that can combine or disintegrate.

(The Buddha explained to Sariputra how great bodhisattvas should practice expedient skillfulness to achieve bodhi paths.)

"Sariputra, this is how great bodhisattvas cultivate the bodhi paths diligently and assiduously when they practice the fathomless prajna paramita."

In the meantime, Sariputra said to the Buddha, "If all dharmas have no self-nature that can combine or disintegrate, how can great bodhisattvas initiate the cultivation of prajna paramita? World-Honored One, if the great bodhisattvas cannot learn prajna paramita, they will never be able to attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi that they pursue."

The Buddha replied to Sariputra, "As you say, if great bodhisattvas do not learn prajna paramita, they will never be able to attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi that they pursue. Sariputra, the great bodhisattva should learn prajna paramita if they would like to attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. Sariputra, the great bodhisattvas should have

expedient skillfulness, otherwise they will not be able to realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi that they pursue.

"Sariputra, the great bodhisattvas will be able to grasp self-nature if they see that the self-nature of all dharmas is attainable when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita. But if they see that the self-nature is unattainable, how can they grasp the dharmas? Namely, they will not grasp and differentiate among prajna paramita, meditation paramita, and so forth, and giving paramita; matter, feeling, and so forth, 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 realm, 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; cause and condition, consecutive thoughts, conditions that stimulate the mind, and the conditions that reinforce main causes; the dharmas produced by conditions; ignorance, action, consciousness, and so forth, and old age and death; 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 pure contemplation, stage of embryonic Buddha nature, and so forth, and the stage of Thus-Comer; the stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilements, and so forth, and the stage of dharma cloud; all dharani gates and all samadhi gates; 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; the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena; the stream-entry effect, once-

return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi; all great bodhisattva actions; the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas; the ordinary sentient beings; the self-enlightened ones; the bodhisattvas; and the Thus-Comers."

(The Buddha taught Sariputra how great bodhisattvas initiate the cultivation of prajna paramita as all dharmas have no self-nature.)

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Chapter 79

No Faults and Deficiencies

Section 2

(In the Second Assembly)

"Sariputra, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas know accurately that dharma nature cannot be grasped. Namely, prajna paramita, meditation paramita, and so forth, and giving paramita cannot be grasped. Matter, feeling, and so forth, and consciousness cannot be grasped. The eye sphere, ear sphere, and so forth, and conscious sphere cannot be grasped. The sight sphere, sound sphere, and so forth, and mental-image sphere cannot be grasped. The eye realm, ear realm, and so forth, and conscious realm cannot be grasped. The sight realm, sound realm, and so forth, and mental-image realm cannot be grasped. The eye consciousness realm, ear consciousness realm, and so forth, and conscious consciousness realm cannot be grasped. The eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact cannot be grasped. The feelings produced by eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact cannot be grasped. The earth realm, water realm, and so forth, and consciousness realm cannot be grasped. Cause and condition, consecutive thoughts, conditions that stimulate the mind, and the conditions that reinforce main causes cannot be grasped. The dharmas produced by conditions cannot be grasped. Ignorance, action, consciousness, and so forth, and old age and death cannot be grasped. Internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature cannot be grasped. Realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable cannot be grasped. The noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering cannot be grasped. The four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path cannot be grasped. The four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations cannot be grasped. The liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration cannot be grasped. The stage of pure contemplation, stage of embryonic Buddha nature, and so forth, and

the stage of Thus-Comer cannot be grasped. The stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilements, and so forth, and the stage of dharma cloud cannot be grasped. All dharani gates and all samadhi gates cannot be grasped. The five eyes and six supernatural powers cannot be grasped. The Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power cannot be grasped. The thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features cannot be grasped. Staying in correct mindfulness and dwelling in equanimity at all times cannot be grasped. The perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena cannot be grasped. The stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi cannot be grasped. All great bodhisattva actions cannot be grasped. The unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas cannot be grasped. The ordinary sentient beings, voice-hearers, self-enlightened ones, bodhisattvas, and Thus-Comers cannot be grasped.

(The Buddha further taught Sariputra that as dharma nature cannot be grasped, all dharmas cannot be grasped.)

"Sariputra, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas accurately know that dharma nature is ungraspable, so they can understand all dharmas without hindrance. Sariputra, the ungraspable paramita is unhindered paramita; and the unhindered paramita is prajna paramita. This is what great bodhisattvas should learn. Sariputra, if they bodhisattvas learn this, they will not attain or learn all dharmas, not to mention they will attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi; prajna paramita; or ordinary sentient being, voice-hearer, self-enlightened one, bodhisattva, and Thus-Comer. Why? Sariputra, not a little dharma has self-nature. Given the truth that all dharmas have no self-nature, what is the dharma for ordinary sentient being? What is the dharma for stream-enterer? What is the dharma for once-returner? What is the dharma for nonreturner? What is the dharma for arhat? What is the dharma for self-enlightened one? What is the dharma for bodhisattva? What is the dharma for Thus-Comer? Sariputra, as such various dharmas are unattainable, how can we establish the individuals in reincarnation? If the individuals in reincarnation are unattainable, how can we differentiate among ordinary sentient being, stream-enterer, once-returner, nonreturner, arhat, self-enlightened one, bodhisattva, and Thus-Comer?"

(The Buddha explained to Sariputra why great bodhisattvas should not attain various dharmas and differentiate among different learning effects as no dharma has self-nature.)

Meanwhile, Sariputra asked the Buddha, “World-Honored One, if all dharmas have no self-nature and are unreal, how can one distinguish, for instance, these are ordinary sentient being and the dharma of ordinary sentient being, or these are Thus-Comer and the dharma of Thus-Comer?”

The Buddha replied to Sariputra by asking him, “What do you think about this? Is there matter to which various ignorant sentient beings were attached or will become attached? Are there feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness to which various ignorant sentient beings were attached or will become attached? And so on, are there all great bodhisattva actions to which various ignorant sentient beings were attached or will become attached? Is there the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi to which various ignorant sentient beings were attached or will become attached? Are there ordinary sentient beings, stream-enterers, once-returners, nonreturners, arhats, bodhisattvas, and Thus-Comers to whom various ignorant sentient beings were attached or will become attached?”

Sariputra replied, “World-Honored One. Only ordinary sentient beings have such attachment due to their upside-down understanding.”

The Buddha said to Sariputra, “When practicing the expedient skillfulness of the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas have contemplated and become aware that all dharmas are unreal and have no self-nature. It is in terms of the worldly point of view to say that they pursue the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi and teach sentient beings expediently to help them get rid of the upside-down understanding.”

In the meantime, Sariputra asked the Buddha again, “How do great bodhisattvas pursue the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi in terms of the worldly point of view and teach sentient beings expediently to help them get rid of the upside-down understanding?”

The Buddha replied to Sariputra, “Great bodhisattvas should achieve expedient skillfulness when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita; namely, they will not see any real

dharma in which one can stay. Those who stay in dharmas will be hindered; their minds will regress and become inferior. Those with inferior minds easily get tired and become lazy.

(The Buddha explained to Sariputra in this and the following paragraphs how great bodhisattvas could teach sentient beings expediently to help them get rid of upside-down understanding.)

"Sariputra, all dharmas are not real; they are without 'I' and the associated images. Their self-nature is selflessness. Their original nature and particular characteristics are empty and tranquil. Only ignorant sentient beings with delusive and upside-down knowledge are attached to the aggregates of matter, feeling, and so forth, 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 realm, 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; cause and condition, consecutive thoughts, conditions that stimulate the mind, and the conditions that reinforce main causes; the dharmas produced by conditions; 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 pure contemplation, stage of embryonic Buddha nature, and so forth, and the stage of Thus-Comer; the stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilements, 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; the thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty 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; the stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi; all great bodhisattva actions; the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas; and the ordinary sentient beings, stream-enterers, once-returners, nonreturners, arhats, self-enlightened ones, bodhisattvas, and Thus-Comers.

"Because of this cause and condition, all great bodhisattvas contemplate all dharmas as unreal, without the 'I' and the associated images, and without self-nature. The original nature and particular characteristics of all dharmas as empty and tranquil. They practice the fathomless prajna paramita and teach the dharma for all sentient beings as a master magician does. They teach generous giving for greedy and stingy ones. They teach pure precept for precept violators, forbearance for angry ones, diligence for lazy ones, meditation for restless ones, and prajna for ignorant ones. The great bodhisattvas will establish all sentient beings in peace and let them dwell in giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita. The great bodhisattvas further teach these sentient beings the superior holy dharma for getting out of birth and death, lead them to cultivate and attain stream-entry effect, once-return effect, nonreturn effect, arhat effect, or self-enlightenment bodhi; or enter the correct bodhisattva nature of nonarising; or dwell in the stages of bodhisattva; or realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi."

In the meantime, Sariputra asked the Buddha again, "Why are great bodhisattvas named 'without attainment' when they practice the fathomless prajna paramita? I ask this question because sentient beings are actually nonexistent; nevertheless, the great bodhisattvas still work hard to help them dwell peacefully in giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita; and further teach them about the superior holy dharma to get out of birth and death and attain the stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi."

The Buddha said to Sariputra, "When practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas do not attain anything from sentient beings. Why? As great bodhisattvas practice the fathomless prajna paramita, they do not see any sentient being attainable. It is in terms of the worldly way to provisionally say that sentient beings are attainable. Sariputra, when practicing

the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas teach various sentient beings about correct dharma through two aspects of the truth. What are the two aspects of the truth? One is the truth based on worldly point of view, while the other is the superior ultimate meaning of the truth. Sariputra, in both aspects the sentient beings and the establishment for them are unattainable, but the great bodhisattvas, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, teach sentient beings correct dharma expediently and skillfully, so that they will not attain the 'I,' not to mention they will attain the effects of cultivation and ones who can achieve. Sariputra, this is how great bodhisattvas, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, expediently and skillfully teach sentient beings the correct dharma, help them cultivate correct actions and realize the effects of what they are pursuing without having a thought of attainment, as they thoroughly understand that all dharmas are unattainable."

(The Buddha emphasized that great bodhisattvas should cultivate various dharmas and perform the tasks of helping sentient beings when themselves and sentient beings are detached from attainment.)

At that time, the long-lived sage Sariputra asked the Buddha, "World-Honored One, these great bodhisattvas do not attain one nature, different nature, general nature, or specific nature in all dharmas, while they do wear a great armor of merits and virtues. Because of wearing the great armor of merits and virtues, they do not make the realm of desire, realm of form, realm of formlessness, conditioned realm, or unconditioned realm manifest. Although they have guided sentient beings to get out of the three realms, they do not attain sentient beings or the establishments for them. As the establishments are unattainable, they are free from bondages or liberation. Because they are free from bondages or liberation, they are neither contaminated nor purified. As contamination and purification are nonexistent, the differences of various destinies are unknown. Because the differences are unknown, there are neither karma nor vexations. Because karma and vexations are nonexistent, there will be no effects that mature at different times and in different ways. Given the nonexistence of the effects, how can there be differences among various destinies in the three realms in which the 'I' and sentient beings reincarnate?"

The Buddha said to Sariputra, "Yes, it is as you say. Sariputra, if sentient beings did exist previously but became nonexistent later, then bodhisattvas and Buddhas were wrong. If the birth

and death in various destinies did exist previously but became nonexistent later, bodhisattvas and Buddhas were wrong too. Sariputra, whether the Buddha appears in the world or not, the dharma forms have always existed, and realness, dharma realm, and the nature of nonillusion have never changed. Dharma nature, dharma realm, dharma concentration, realness, reality, the nature of nonillusion, and the nature of changelessness of all dharmas are like empty space, in which the 'I,' the sentient being, and so forth are unattainable, let alone matter, feeling, and so forth are attainable. As matter, feeling, and so forth are unattainable, how can we say that birth and death in various destinies are existent? As birth and death in various destinies are unattainable, how can we say that assisting the sentient beings to mature and become liberated is existent? These dharmas are established as existent only in terms of the worldly point of view.

(The Buddha taught that all dharmas are unattainable. They are established as existent only for the convenience of teaching sentient beings.)

"Sariputra, the great bodhisattvas learned from Buddhas that all dharmas are inherently empty. Ordinary sentient beings heard this too, but they became attached to the concept. The great bodhisattvas thus aspire to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi in order to liberate sentient beings from such attachment. When pursuing the bodhi, they do not think, 'I have attained or will attain this dharma. I have liberated or will liberate sentient beings from the suffering of birth and death caused by attachment.'

"Sariputra, the great bodhisattvas have made great vow and solemnly put on the armor of merits and virtues, working attentively and diligently to liberate sentient beings from upside-down attachment without caring for other things or themselves. They do not regress in the pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, or become hesitant about the bodhi. They do not ask, 'Will I or will I not realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi?' Rather, they say, 'I absolutely will attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi that I am pursuing. I can really help sentient beings, relieve them from the incorrect, delusive, and upside-down views, so that they will become liberated from the suffering caused by the reincarnation in the birth and death through various destinies.' Sariputra, although the great bodhisattvas have liberated the sentient beings from the incorrect, delusive, and upside-down

views, and from the suffering caused by the birth and death in various destinies, they attain nothing. It is in terms of the worldly point of view to say that these dharmas are existent.

"Sariputra, a magician and disciples created countless numbers of transformed sentient beings by replicating Heavenly Emperor Indra's net of gems. They also produced different types of transformed food and drinks to provide for these transformed sentient beings. After doing all these things, they rejoiced and said, 'I have accumulated a lot of merits and blessings.' What do you think about this? Did the magician and his or her disciples really feed all transformed sentient beings?"

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

The Buddha said to Sariputra, "So do the great bodhisattvas. Since the moment vowing to benefit all sentient beings, the great bodhisattvas have cultivated 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; dwelled peacefully in the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering; cultivated the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path; cultivated the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations; cultivated the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations; cultivated the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration; cultivated the stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilements, and so forth, and the stage of dharma cloud: cultivated all dharani gates and all samadhi gates; cultivated the five eyes and six supernatural powers; cultivated the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power; cultivated the thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features; cultivated to stay in correct mindfulness and dwell in equanimity at all times; cultivated the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena; and fulfilled the great bodhi path of bodhisattva, assisted the sentient beings to mature, and dignified and purified the Buddha lands.

"Sariputra, although the great bodhisattvas have performed all these things, they do not intend to attain the sentient beings and all dharmas. Because all sentient beings and all dharmas are unattainable. The great bodhisattvas do not think, 'I have applied such and such methods to tame various sentient beings, let them stay far away from upside-down attachment, so they will not reincarnate any more in the birth and death of various destinies.'"

At that time, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "World-Honored One, what is the great bodhi path of bodhisattva through which the great bodhisattvas cultivate to expediently and skillfully assist the sentient beings to mature, dignify and purify the Buddha lands, and realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "The great bodhi path of bodhisattva consists of all virtuous dharmas that the great bodhisattvas should cultivate and practice since the time of vowing to aspire to the bodhi. The great bodhi path for the great bodhisattvas contains the practices of 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 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 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 immeasurable and boundless Buddha dharmas. If the great bodhisattvas cultivate this path, they will be able to expediently and skillfully assist sentient beings to mature, dignify and purify Buddha lands, and realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi before long, while they will not have a thought of the sentient beings or the Buddha lands."

(The Buddha explained to Well-Appearing One what were contained in the great bodhi path of bodhisattva.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, “How do the great bodhisattvas expediently and skillfully assist the sentient beings to mature when cultivating giving paramita?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “When cultivating the expedient skillfulness of giving paramita, the great bodhisattvas not only practice giving themselves but also encourages others to do so. They will say, ‘Good gentlepersons, you should not be attached to giving, as it may result in more rebirths and suffer from numberless severe and extremely piercing pains. Good gentlepersons, giving itself, givers, receivers, the things given, and the effects of practicing giving are all nonexistent in ultimate meanings. The original nature of all dharmas is empty. In the empty original nature not dharma can be grasped, and the empty nature of all dharmas cannot be grasped either.’ Therefore, Well-Appearing One, when cultivating giving paramita, the great bodhisattvas should not only practice giving themselves but also encourage others to doing so. Nevertheless, they will not attain giving, givers, receivers, the things given, and the effects of practicing giving because all these dharmas are unattainable. Giving paramita thus is also named unattainable paramita. Well-Appearing One, as the great bodhisattvas stay in nonattainment of all dharmas, they can expediently and skillfully teach the sentient beings and guide them to dwell in stream-entry effect, once-return effect, nonreturn effect, arhat effect, self-enlightenment bodhi, or approach the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. Well-Appearing One, this is how great bodhisattvas assist sentient beings to mature and let them gain superior benefits when cultivating giving paramita.

“Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas have not only practiced giving themselves but also encouraged others to do so. They have publicly praised and promulgated the correct way of practicing giving and joyfully admired and acclaimed giving practitioners. Well-Appearing One, after practicing giving in this way, the great bodhisattvas will be reborn in the noble family of Ksatriya, Brahman, elder, or lay believer. They will be reborn as the king of a small kingdom and live a wealthy and happy life; as the great king of a large kingdom and live a wealthy and

happy life; or as the wheel-turning king of the four continents and enjoy a wealthy and happy life.

"After being reborn in such noble places, these great bodhisattvas will continue to absorb sentient beings with four approaches. They teach sentient beings to dwell peacefully in giving and enrich their minds through practicing giving. They guide them to dwell in precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna and further lead them to dwell peacefully in the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations; the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path; and the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration. After allowing the sentient beings to dwell peacefully in virtuous dharmas, the great bodhisattvas will further help them enter the correct nature of nonarising to attain stream-entry effect, once-return effect, nonreturn effect, or arhat effect; attain the self-enlightenment bodhi; or cultivate various stages of bodhisattva step by step to approach the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. The great bodhisattvas will say, 'Good gentlepersons, you should make great vow to aspire to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, so you are able to undertake many superior things to benefit sentient beings. The self-nature of all dharmas is nonexistent, but ignorant sentient beings cling to upside-down thought, believing that all dharmas are existent and have self-nature. This is because of their delusion and differentiation. Therefore, you should work diligently not only to remove your own wrong belief but also encourage others to do so. Thus, you will be liberated from birth and death and bring others freedom to greatly benefit both you and others.'

"Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas should consistently cultivate giving paramita in this way. Because of giving paramita the great bodhisattvas will not be reborn in inferior destinies, living in low social class and poverty, or in underprivileged remote border since the time aspiring to the great bodhi. To benefit sentient beings, they are most of time reborn as a wheel-turning king and enjoy a life of wealth, nobility, ease, and freedom. Why? It is because of the effects caused by the powers of the karma. There was a great bodhisattva who was reborn as a wheel-turning king. One day, he saw a beggar coming to ask for alms, and thought, 'Why am I reborn as a wheel-turning king and drifting in birth and death? Isn't it for the sake of the sentient beings who are drifting in birth and death? How can I enjoy superior effects without doing some things to benefit them?' after having this thought, the king told the beggar, "Take

whatever you want as if they were yours; I have collected these things for you. Enjoy them or share them as you wish; there is no need to hesitate." When showing such pity on sentient beings, his unconditional great compassion is fulfilled quickly. He does things beneficial for others consistently without attaining anything in return, nor gain superior effects. He knows accurately that it is in terms of the worldly perspective to provisionally establish various beneficial things for sentient beings. He also knows accurately that the things established provisionally are like echoes that are not real. They do not grasp them.

(The Buddha taught in these paragraphs how great bodhisattvas help sentient beings to cultivate giving paramita.)

"Well-Appearing One, great bodhisattvas should cultivate giving paramita by staying detached from aspirations toward sentient beings. They are willing to give away their own bodies, including bones and flesh, let alone external nourishment to help relieve sentient beings from birth, old age, illness, and death quickly."

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "World-Honored One, what nourishment helps ease sentient beings' suffering from birth, old age, illness, and death?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "The so-called nourishment contains 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 pure contemplation, stage of embryonic Buddha nature, and so forth, and the stage of Thus-Comer; the stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilements, and so forth, and the stage of dharma cloud; all dharani gates and all samadhi gates; five eyes and six supernatural powers; the Buddha's ten abilities, four correct endeavors, 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; 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. Well-Appearing One, all such virtuous dharmas can be used as nourishment to absorb and relieve sentient beings from birth, old age, illness, and death quickly. Many great bodhisattvas have done in this way often.

(The Buddha listed the dharmas contained in nourishment.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas have dwelled peacefully in giving paramita. They not only practice giving themselves but also encourage others to do so. Upon seeing sentient beings violate pure precept, they felt pitiful and said, 'Please observe pure precept. I will give you what you need so that you need not to violate pure precept and make bad karma because of a lack of living supplies. You should follow rules to do good conducts to gradually end suffering, adhere to the dharma of the three vehicles to get out of birth and death and attain the ultimate happiness.'

"Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas have dwelled peacefully in giving paramita. They not only observe pure precept themselves but also encourage others to do so. They publicly praise and promulgate the correct way of observing pure precept and joyfully admire and acclaim the pure-precept practitioners. Well-Appearing One, this is how great bodhisattvas should cultivate giving paramita and encourage sentient beings to dwell peacefully in pure precept to get rid of birth, old age, illness, and death and attain the ultimate benefits, peace, and happiness.

(The Buddha instructed how great bodhisattvas dwelled in giving paramita to guide and encourage sentient beings to observe pure precept.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas have dwelled peacefully in giving paramita. Seeing sentient beings hate each other in anger, they pitied them and said, 'Why do you hate others? I can provide living supplies to satisfy your needs. Do not get angry and hate others anymore; rather, you should cultivate forbearance and treat others with loving-kindness.' Well-Appearing One, these great bodhisattvas have dwelled peacefully in giving paramita to advise and encourage sentient beings to cultivate forbearance. They further persuade them: 'The

causes and conditions for anger and hatred are not fixed and real; they are caused by delusion and differentiation because the original nature of all dharmas is empty. Why hate, slander, and harm each other only because of the unreal causes and conditions? You should not fall into a negative karmic cycle of anger and hatred and create more negative karmas because of your delusive differentiation. That only leads you to hells, animals, ghosts, or other inferior destinies, in which you will experience extremely unendurable piercing pains. You should avoid being attached to illusory images and create negative karmas. Otherwise, you will not be entitled to be reborn as an inferior human being, let alone being reborn in heavens or in the places where you can meet the Buddha and hear correct dharma, and perform the cultivation in accord with the dharma. You must know, being reborn as a human body is a rare privilege. If one can be reborn during the time of the Buddha, it is even rarer. But the rarest of all is to initiate a belief. You have already been privileged to be reborn here as a human being, how can you waste such a rare opportunity only because of your anger and hatred? Do not hate other sentient beings; instead, you should cultivate forbearance.'

"Well-Appearing One, these great bodhisattvas have dwelled peacefully in giving paramita. They not only practice forbearance themselves but also encourage others to do so. They publicly praise and promulgate the correct way of practicing forbearance and joyfully admire and acclaim the forbearance practitioners. Well-Appearing One, this is how great bodhisattvas dwell peacefully in giving paramita and encourage sentient beings to cultivate forbearance, so the sentient beings will gradually attain liberation through the three vehicles step by step.

(The Buddha instructed how great bodhisattvas dwelled in giving paramita to guide and encourage sentient beings to cultivate forbearance.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, when dwelling peacefully in giving paramita, the great bodhisattvas saw that various sentient beings were lazy and tired in body and mind, so felt pitiful and said, 'Why so tired and lazy and do not cultivate virtuous dharmas diligently?' These sentient beings replied, 'We don't have living supplies; we are unable to cultivate virtuous dharmas.' The great bodhisattvas said, 'I can give you all supplies you need. You should rise and diligently cultivate the dharmas, such as giving, pure precept, forbearance, and so forth.' At that

time, the sentient beings received the supplies and initiated diligence in body and mind to cultivate and fulfill virtuous dharmas. Because of the fulfillment of various virtuous dharmas, the sentient beings were able to elicit flawless dharmas and thus attained stream-entry effect, once-return effect, nonreturn effect, arhat effect, or self-enlightenment bodhi; or entered various stages of bodhisattva, even attained the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi step by step.

"Well-Appearing One, when dwelling peacefully in giving paramita, these great bodhisattvas not only work diligently but also encourage others to do so. They publicly praise and promulgate the correct way of diligence and joyfully admire and acclaim the diligence practitioners. Well-Appearing One, this is how great bodhisattvas dwell peacefully in giving paramita to guide various sentient beings to stay far away from laziness and tiredness, let them diligently cultivate virtuous dharmas, quickly realize liberation, and further bring benefits and happiness to other sentient beings.

(The Buddha instructed how great bodhisattvas dwelled in giving paramita to guide and encourage sentient beings to cultivate diligence.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, when dwelling peacefully in giving paramita, the great bodhisattvas saw that various sentient beings were restless in mind and lost correct mindfulness, so felt pitiful and said, 'Why do not cultivate meditation but get lost in restless mind and suffer from birth and death?' They replied, 'We don't have enough living supplies, so we cannot cultivate meditation diligently and attentively.' The bodhisattvas said, 'I can give you the properties and supplies that you need. But from now on, you should stay away from delusive thinking so that you will not be disturbed by those illusory images occurring inside and outside.' These sentient beings received the supplies, terminated all delusions, and entered the first meditation. They further entered the second, third, and fourth meditations, and elicited the four immeasurable minds: loving-kindness, compassion, joy, and equanimity. Based on meditation and the immeasurable minds they elicited the four formless concentrations. Their minds thus were tamed and became flexible, so they could continue to cultivate the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and the noble eightfold path. They then initiated the superior virtuous dharmas of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration, and so forth, and attained the effects of three vehicles according to individual conditions.

"Well-Appearing One, these great bodhisattvas not only dwell peacefully in giving paramita and cultivate meditations themselves but also encourage others to do so. They publicly praise and promulgate the correct way of meditation and joyfully admire and acclaim the meditation practitioners. Well-Appearing One, this is how great bodhisattvas dwell peacefully in giving paramita, guide various sentient beings to stay far away from restlessness, and let them cultivate various meditations and gain great benefits and happiness.

(The Buddha instructed how great bodhisattvas dwelled in giving paramita to guide and encourage sentient beings to cultivate meditation.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, when dwelling peacefully in giving paramita, the great bodhisattvas saw that various sentient beings were ignorant and owned upside-down thoughts, so felt pitiful and said, 'Why do not cultivate wonderful wisdom but suffer endlessly in ignorance and upside-down knowledge?' They replied, 'We don't have enough living supplies so we cannot cultivate wonderful wisdom diligently and attentively.' The bodhisattvas said to them, 'We can give you what you need. Please accept them. Then you will first cultivate giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, and meditation. After fulfilling these, you will carefully contemplate and investigate the real forms of all dharmas and cultivate prajna paramita. Namely, carefully contemplating if there is any dharma attainable? Can the 'I,' the sentient being, and so forth, and the knower and viewer be attained? Can matter, feeling, and so forth, and consciousness be attained? Can the eye sphere, ear sphere, and so forth, and conscious sphere be attained? Can the sight sphere, sound sphere, and so forth, and mental-image sphere be attained? Can the eye realm, ear realm, and so forth, and conscious realm be attained? Can the sight realm, sound realm, and so forth, and mental-image realm be attained? Can the eye consciousness realm, ear consciousness realm, and so forth, and conscious consciousness realm be attained? Can the eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact be attained? Can the feelings produced by eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact be attained? Can the earth realm, water realm, and so forth, and consciousness be attained? Can cause and condition, consecutive thoughts, conditions that stimulate the mind, and the conditions that reinforce main causes be attained? Can the dharmas produced by conditions be attained? Can ignorance, action, consciousness, and so forth, and old age and death be attained? Can the realms of desire, form, and formlessness be attained? Can giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and

so forth, and prajna paramita be attained? Can internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature be attained? Can realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable be attained? Can the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering be attained? Can the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and the noble eightfold path be attained? Can the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations be attained? Can the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations be attained? Can the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration be attained? Can the stages of pure contemplation, stage of embryonic Buddha nature, and so forth, and the stage of Thus-Comer be attained? Can the stages of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilements, and so forth, and the stage of dharma cloud be attained? Can all dharani gates and all samadhi gates be attained? Can the five eyes and six supernatural powers be attained? Can the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power be attained? Can the thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features be attained? Can staying in correct mindfulness and dwelling in equanimity be attained? Can perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena be attained? Can stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi be attained? Can all great bodhisattva actions be attained? Can the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas be attained?'

"Now the sentient beings do not lack living supplies, so they can do as the bodhisattvas instruct to first cultivate giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, and meditation. After that they will contemplate the real forms of all dharmas carefully and cultivated prajna paramita. Upon undertaking contemplations, they will see that the real nature of all dharmas is unattainable. Because of the nonattainment of the dharmas, they are not attached to dharmas. They understand that all dharmas are without arising or extinction, contamination or purification, and are unattainable, and thus no longer differentiate among hells, animals, and ghosts. They do not differentiate among asuras, human beings, and heavenly beings; among ordinary sentient beings, holy ones, stream-enterers, once-returners, nonreturners, arhats, and self-enlightened ones; between observing and violating pure precept; between bodhisattvas and Buddhas; or

between conditioned dharmas and unconditioned dharmas. Because they do not differentiate, they are able to realize and attain the ultimate peace and happiness in nirvana of three vehicles, step by step, according to individual conditions.

"Well-Appearing One, these great bodhisattvas not only dwell peacefully in giving paramita and cultivate prajna themselves but also encourage others to do so. They praise and promulgate the correct way of cultivating prajna and rejoice and acclaim the prajna practitioners. Well-Appearing One, this is how great bodhisattvas dwell peacefully in giving paramita, encourage sentient beings to diligently cultivate prajna, and let them attain the ultimate benefits and happiness.

(The Buddha instructed how great bodhisattvas dwelled in giving paramita to guide and encourage sentient beings to cultivate prajna.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas have dwelled peacefully in giving paramita. They not only cultivate giving paramita pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita themselves but also encourage others to do so. Observing that the sentient beings are drifting through various destinies and suffer severely and endlessly, unable to liberate themselves. The great bodhisattvas feel pity and decide to relieve sentient beings from the suffering of birth and death. Therefore, they first provide necessary supplies to the sentient beings, then absorb them expediently and skillfully with flawless dharmas beyond the world. After receiving the living supplies that they need, the sentient beings have no more worries. They become confident and brave in body and mind, and are able to dwell 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 are also able 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 stage of pure contemplation, stage of embryonic Buddha nature, and so forth, and the stage of Thus-Comer; the stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilements, 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 dwelling in equanimity; the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena; and the rest of immeasurable and boundless Buddha dharmas. Being absorbed by the flawless dharmas, these sentient beings are liberated from birth and death and further realize and attain the ultimate peace and happiness of nirvana.

"Well-Appearing One, these great bodhisattvas have dwelled peacefully in giving paramita. They not only practice various superior flawless dharmas themselves but also encourage others to do so. They publicly praise and promulgate the superior flawless dharmas and joyfully admire and acclaim the practitioners of the superior flawless dharmas. Well-Appearing One, this is how great bodhisattvas dwell peacefully in giving paramita and absorb sentient beings with flawless dharmas to liberate them from various kinds of suffering in birth and death. These sentient beings thus will realize and attain the ultimate and permanent happiness of nirvana, and further greatly benefit others.

(The Buddha instructed how great bodhisattvas dwelled in giving paramita to guide and encourage sentient beings to practice various superior flawless dharmas.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, when dwelling peacefully in giving paramita, the great bodhisattvas saw that the sentient beings did not have anyone to rely on; they were short of living supplies and worried. The great bodhisattvas deeply pitied them and tried to soothe them, so said, 'You can rely on us. We can relieve you from suffering, giving you food, drinks, clothes, beds and bedding, vehicles, houses, fragrant flowers, music and entertainment, lamps, treasures and money, servants, and other supplies that you need. Please receive them as you wish and don't hesitate. Whatever you need we will give to you, so you will be happy and feel secure day and night. Please regard these things as yours. Why? We have collected and accumulated treasures and properties for a very long time solely to bring you benefits and happiness. You may accept them as you wish without hesitation. After receiving them, you may first use them to cultivate virtuous actions, then share them with other sentient beings so that they are able to cultivate the virtuous dharmas too. Namely, you will help them 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 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 pure contemplation, stage of embryonic Buddha nature, and so forth, and the stage of Thus-Comer; 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 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; cultivate the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena; and cultivate the rest of immeasurable and boundless Buddha dharmas.'

"Well-Appearing One, after teaching and guiding sentient beings in this way, the great bodhisattvas will let the sentient beings cultivate and learn various flawless dharmas according to individual differences. They will either dwell in stream-entry effect, once-return effect, nonreturn effect, arhat effect, or self-enlightenment bodhi, or pursue the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.

"Well-Appearing One, this is how great bodhisattvas cultivate giving paramita and expediently and skillfully assist sentient beings to mature, liberate them from the birth and death in inferior destinies, and let them realize and attain the nirvana in the three vehicles in accord with individual conditions, so they will bring ultimate peace and happiness to themselves and to others."

(The Buddha instructed how great bodhisattvas assisted sentient beings based on giving paramita to mature and grow through cultivating virtuous dharmas to benefit themselves and others.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, “How do great bodhisattvas cultivate pure-precept paramita and the rest of great bodhi paths of bodhisattva to expediently and skillfully assist the sentient beings to mature?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “When cultivating the expedient skillfulness of pure-precept paramita, the great bodhisattvas saw that the sentient beings were worried and could not cultivate the virtuous dharmas because they lacked living supplies. The great bodhisattvas deeply felt pitiful and said, ‘If you cannot cultivate the virtuous dharmas only because you have not enough properties and supplies, then we will give you what you need so you can correctly cultivate and learn giving and other virtuous dharmas without worries.’ These great bodhisattvas thus help sentient beings according to individual differences. They guide the stingy and greedy ones to cultivate giving without caring for their own bodies, lives, and properties. They teach the precept violators to cultivate pure precept, correctly practice the path of the ten virtuous karmas, and dwell in rules and good demeanors without breaking and defiling them or becoming attached to them. They let the angry ones cultivate forbearance, the lazy and tired ones cultivate diligence, the restless ones cultivate meditation, the ignorant ones cultivate wonderful wisdom, and ones with attachment cultivate emptiness. They guide sentient beings to cultivate other superior merits and virtues that they lack. Well-Appearing One, this is how great bodhisattvas dwell peacefully in pure-precept paramita and assist sentient beings to achieve expedience and skillfulness, so they can be relieved from the birth and death in inferior destinies, will realize and attain the nirvana of three vehicles according to individual conditions, and bring ultimate peace and happiness to themselves and to others.

(The Buddha instructed how great bodhisattvas guided and encouraged sentient beings based on pure-precept paramita to achieve expedient skillfulness, relieve themselves from birth and death, and benefit themselves and others.)

“You must know, Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas thus can also expediently and skillfully cultivate the other four paramitas and the rest of great bodhi paths of bodhisattva. They will assist the sentient beings to mature and get rid of the birth and death in inferior destinies with all kinds of virtuous dharmas, let sentient beings realize and attain the nirvana of

three vehicles in accord with individual conditions so that they can bring ultimate peace and happiness to themselves and to others, as what I have said about giving paramita."

(The Buddha suggested great bodhisattvas to apply similar approach for other four paramitas to guide sentient beings to cultivate various holy dharmas and benefit themselves and others.)

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Chapter 80

Bodhisattva-Path Practitioners

(In the Second Assembly)

At that time, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One thought to himself, “What is the great-bodhisattva path? Do great bodhisattvas dwelling peacefully in this path wear the armor of various superior merits and virtues to benefit all sentient beings as they should do?”

The World-Honored One could read Well-Appearing One’s mind, so said to him, “You must know, Well-Appearing One, giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita are contained in the path for great bodhisattvas. The four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path; 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 are contained in the path for great bodhisattvas. 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 the stage of dharma cloud; 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 the 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 are contained in the path for great bodhisattvas. The rest of immeasurable and boundless Buddha dharmas is also contained in the path for great bodhisattvas. Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, all dharmas belong to the great-bodhisattva path.

"Well-Appearing One, what do you think about this? Are there dharmas that great bodhisattvas should not learn? Can great bodhisattvas attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi if they do not learn these dharmas?"

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

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, "It is as you say. Great bodhisattvas should learn all dharmas. Great bodhisattvas must learn all dharmas to attain the perfect, unsurpassed, and universal bodhi they seek. Why? If the great bodhisattvas do not learn all dharmas, they will not attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge."

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, "If the self-nature of all dharmas is empty, where will great bodhisattvas learn? If they do learn, will they not mistake nonsensical arguments cautioned by the World-Honored One for reasonable ones, and differentiate between various dharmas, such as cause and purpose, worldly and otherworldly, flawed and flawless, conditioned and unconditioned? Will they not differentiate among the dharmas of ordinary sentient being, stream-enterer, once-returner, nonreturner, arhat, self-enlightened one, dharma of bodhisattva, and Thus-Comer?'

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "It is as you say. The self-nature of the dharmas is empty. If the self-nature of the dharmas were not empty, the great bodhisattvas would not be able to realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. Because the self-nature of the dharmas is empty, the great bodhisattvas are able to realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. Well-Appearing One, as you said, 'If the self-nature of all dharmas is empty, where will the great bodhisattvas learn? If they do learn, won't they mistake the nonsensical arguments cautioned by the World-Honored One for reasonable ones, and thus differentiate between the dharmas, such as cause and purpose of the dharma; worldly and otherworldly, flawed and flawless, conditioned and unconditioned. Won't they differentiate among the dharmas of ordinary sentient being, stream-enterer, once-returner, nonreturner, arhat, self-enlightened one, bodhisattva, and Thus-Comer?' Well-Appearing One, if the sentient beings were aware that the self-nature of all dharmas is empty, then the great bodhisattvas would not learn all dharmas, nor attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge and establish appropriate way to teach sentient beings. Because the sentient beings are not aware that the self-

nature of all dharmas is empty, the great bodhisattvas must learn all dharmas, realize and attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, and create the most appropriate way to teach sentient beings.

(The Buddha taught why great bodhisattvas must learn all dharmas.)

"You must know, Well-Appearing One, when beginning to cultivate and learn the bodhisattva path, the great bodhisattvas should carefully contemplate and investigate, 'The self-nature of all dharmas is unattainable; all dharmas are caused by attachment and combination. I should contemplate the self-nature of all dharmas as empty in the final analysis, so I should not be attached to them. Namely, I should not be attached to matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness. I should not be attached to 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 realm, 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; cause and condition, consecutive thought, conditions that stimulate the mind, and the conditions that reinforce main causes; the dharmas produced by conditions; 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 pure contemplation, stage of embryonic Buddha nature, and so forth, and the stage of Thus-Comer; the stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilements, 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; the thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty 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; stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi; all great bodhisattvas actions; and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas. Why? The self-nature of the dharmas is empty. Empty nature should not be attached to empty nature. As empty nature is unattainable in emptiness, not to mention empty nature can be attached to emptiness."

(The Buddha explained that because sentient beings do not understand the empty self-nature of all dharmas, great bodhisattvas should contemplate the self-nature of all dharmas as empty and avoid attachment when learning and cultivating them.)

"Well-Appearing One, as great bodhisattvas contemplate and investigate all dharmas in this way, they are not attached to dharma nature, but they are not tired of learning all dharmas. As staying in this learning, the great bodhisattvas should contemplate different minds and actions of all sentient beings. After careful contemplation, they found that the sentient beings' minds and actions were misled by delusions. The bodhisattvas thus think, 'Their minds are seized by illusions, but it will not be difficult to liberate them.' The great bodhisattvas thus dwell in prajna paramita and caution and teach sentient beings expediently and skillfully, 'You should stay far away from delusions and enter correct dharma to cultivate various virtuous actions.' They further say, 'You should practice giving so you will not lack properties and supplies but should not be arrogant. Why? All these dharmas are not real and solid. You should practice pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna to gain sufficient merits and virtues but should not be arrogant. Why? No dharma is real and solid. You should 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; 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 pure contemplation,

stage of embryonic Buddha nature, and so forth, and the stage of Thus-Comer; the stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilements, 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 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; stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi; all great bodhisattva actions; the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas; and the rest of immeasurable Buddha dharmas. But you should not be arrogant. Why? It is because in these dharmas, no dharma is real and solid.

(The Buddha taught how great bodhisattvas guided sentient beings to cultivate various virtuous dharmas without being arrogant.)

"Well-Appearing One, as great bodhisattvas dwell peacefully in prajna paramita and caution and teach various sentient beings expediently and skillfully, they practice bodhisattva path without attachment. Why? One should not be attached to the nature of all dharmas; one should not be attached to those who become attached, the things to which one can be attached, the time of attachment, and the place of attachment, as these dharmas are without self-nature. The self-nature of the dharmas is empty.

(The Buddha emphasized that the great bodhisattvas should avoid attachment when teaching sentient beings.)

"Therefore, Well-Appearing One, when great bodhisattvas cultivate bodhisattva path, they should not dwell in any dharma. They should adopt nondwelling as skillful means to practice giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita. They will practice internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature without dwelling in them. They will practice realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable without dwelling in them. They will practice the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering without dwelling in them. They will practice 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 without dwelling in them. They will practice the stage of pure contemplation, stage of embryonic Buddha nature, and so forth, and the stage of Thus-Comer; the stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilements, and so forth, and the stage of dharma cloud without dwelling in them. They will practice 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; and staying in correct mindfulness and dwelling in equanimity without dwelling in them. They will practice the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena; stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi; all great bodhisattva actions; the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas; and the rest of immeasurable and boundless Buddha dharmas without dwelling in them. Why? The self-nature, the practitioners, and the forms of action are empty; in them no dwelling is existent.

(The Buddha taught that various great bodhisattvas should cultivate bodhisattva path without dwelling in all dharmas.)

"You must know, Well-Appearing One, although great bodhisattvas can realize and attain stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi, they do not dwell in them. Why? There are two reasons. One reason is that the effects have no self-nature, and both the ones who dwell and the place in which they dwell are unattainable. The other reason is great bodhisattvas understand that these effects are not perfect, not the ultimate ones. They always think that they definitely can attain the stream-entry effect, once-return effect, nonreturn effect, arhat effect, or self-enlightenment bodhi, but they choose not to dwell in them. Why? Since aspiring to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, they have dedicated themselves to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. They think, 'I am confident that I can realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, so why dwell in other effects before arriving at the destination?'

“Well-Appearing One, since the time aspiring to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi until entering the bodhisattva nature of nonarising, the great bodhisattvas have not held intentions other than pursuing the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. Well-Appearing One, from the first stage through the tenth stage, they have no thoughts other than pursuing the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. Well-Appearing One, because they have so attentively and solely focused on the pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, their minds are never restless, and their karmas of body, speech, and mind are always correspondent with the bodhi mind. Well-Appearing One, these great bodhisattvas have dwelled in the bodhi mind and elicited the bodhi path; they have never been distracted by anything else.”

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, “World-Honored One, if all dharmas are without arising in the final analysis, why do great bodhisattvas elicit the bodhi path?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “It is as you say. As all dharmas are without arising in the final analysis, why do we further say that they are without actions and aspirations? It is because all dharmas do not arise at all.”

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, “Isn’t it that whether the Buddhas appear in the world or not, the dharma realm of all dharmas is always as it has been?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “Yes, it is. But the sentient beings do not understand that the dharma realm of all dharmas is always as it has been, so they reincarnate in birth and death and are exposed to various kinds of suffering and worries. The great bodhisattvas have elicited the bodhi path to benefit them. It is through the bodhi path that the sentient beings can be liberated from the suffering of birth and death and attain the permanent happiness and refreshment in nirvana.”

(The Buddha taught that the bodhi path is the only route to liberate sentient beings from birth and death.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, “Will great bodhisattvas attain the bodhi through the path of arising?”

The Buddha replied, “No.”

“World-Honored One, will they attain the bodhi through the path of nonarising?”

The Buddha replied, “No.”

“World-Honored One, will they attain the bodhi through the path of arising and nonarising?”

The Buddha replied, “No.”

“World-Honored One, will they attain the bodhi through the path of nonarising and not nonarising?”

The Buddha replied, “No.”

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, “Then, how will they attain the bodhi?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “The bodhi will be attained neither through path nor through nonpath. Why? The bodhi is the path, and the path is the bodhi. Therefore, the bodhi is attained neither through path nor nonpath.”

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, “If the bodhi is the path, and the path is the bodhi, then isn’t it that the great bodhisattvas will attain the bodhi once they attain the bodhi path? If this is the case, why do Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones teach various great bodhisattvas about 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, thirty-two perfect major marks, eighty distinguishing minor features, and the rest of immeasurable and boundless Buddha dharmas and suggest that great bodhisattvas should cultivate and attain them? ”

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, “What do you think about this? Do you think the Buddha has attained the bodhi?”

Well-Appearing One replied, “No, World-Honored One. Why? The Buddha is the bodhi, and the bodhi is the Buddha. We should not say that the Buddha has attained the bodhi.”

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, “Yes, it is. As to the question you raised, ‘isn’t it that the great bodhisattvas will attain the bodhi once they attain the bodhi path?’ Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas have not yet fulfilled the bodhi path, how can we say that they have attained the bodhi?

“You must know, Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas have fulfilled 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 the 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 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; the thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty 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 the rest of immeasurable and boundless Buddha dharma, then they will terminate permanently the enduring disposition of two heavy kinds of vexations by exquisite wisdom corresponding instantaneously with the uninterrupted diamond-like concentration, and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. At that moment, the great bodhisattvas are named the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones, who have attained great freedom in all dharmas and will benefit all sentient beings in endless future.”

(The Buddha described how Thus-Comer fulfilled the bodhi path to attain the bodhi.)

At that time, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, “World-Honored One, how do the great bodhisattvas dignify and purify the Buddha lands?”

爾時，具壽善現白佛言：「世尊！云何菩薩摩訶薩嚴淨佛土？」

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “Since aspiring to the bodhi, the great bodhisattvas not only always purify the three heavy bondages in body, speech, and mind themselves in the rest of their lives but also purify others’ body, speech, and mind. This is how they dignify and purify the Buddha lands in which they live.”

(The Buddha taught the way to dignify and purify the Buddha lands.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, “What are the three heavy bondages of body, speech, and mind for great bodhisattvas?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “Killing, stealing, and adultery are the heavy bondages of body; lying, divisive words, rude and vicious words, and filthy words are the heavy bondages of speech; while greed, anger, and incorrect views are the heavy bondages of the mind.

(The Buddha interpreted the concept of heavy bondages in the following paragraphs.)

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, if the aggregate of precept, aggregate of concentration, aggregate of wisdom, aggregate of liberation, and the aggregate of the knowledge and views of liberation are not pure, they are also named heavy bondages.

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas have the mind of greed, the mind of violating precept, the mind of laziness and tiredness, the mind of restlessness, and the mind of abusing wisdom, they are also named having the heavy bondages.

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas stay far away from the mind in accord with the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and the noble eightfold path, they are also named having the heavy bondages.

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas stay far away from the mind in accord with internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature, they are also named having the heavy bondages.

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas stay far away from the mind in accord with realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable, they are also named having the heavy bondages.

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas stay far away from the mind in accord with the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering, they are also named having the heavy bondages.

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas stay far away from the mind in accord with the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations, they are also named having the heavy bondages.

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas stay far away from the mind in accord with the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations, they are also named having the heavy bondages.

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas stay far away from the mind in accord with the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration, they are also named having the heavy bondages.

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas stay far away from the mind in accord with the stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilements, and so forth, and the stage of dharma cloud, they are also named having the heavy bondages.

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas stay far away from the mind in accord with all dharani gates and all samadhi gates, they are also named having the heavy bondages.

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas stay far away from the mind in accord with the five eyes and six supernatural powers, they are also named having the heavy bondages.

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas stay far away from the mind in accord with the Buddha’s ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and ten universal contemplations, they are also named having the heavy bondages.

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas stay far away from the mind in accord with staying in correct mindfulness and dwelling in equanimity always, they are also named having the heavy bondages.

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas stay far away from the mind in accord with the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena, they are also named having the heavy bondages.

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas stay far away from the mind in accord with all great bodhisattva actions, they are also named having the heavy bondages.

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas stay far away from the mind in accord with the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas, they are also named having the heavy bondages.

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas crave for stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi, they are also named having the heavy bondages.

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas initiate the thoughts of matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness, they are having the heavy bondages. If they initiate the thoughts of the eye sphere, ear sphere, and so forth, and conscious sphere, they are having the heavy bondages. If they initiate the thoughts of the sight sphere, sound sphere, and so forth, and mental-image sphere, they are having the heavy bondages. If they initiate the thoughts of the eye realm, ear realm, and so forth, and conscious realm, they are having the heavy bondages. If they initiate the thoughts of the eye consciousness realm, ear consciousness realm, and so forth, and conscious consciousness realm, they are having the heavy bondages. If they initiate the thoughts of the feelings produced by eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact, they are having the heavy bondages. If they initiate the thoughts of the earth realm, water realm, and so forth, and consciousness realm, they are having the heavy bondages.

If they initiate the thoughts of cause and condition, consecutive thoughts, conditions that stimulate the mind, and the conditions that reinforce main causes, they are having the heavy bondages. If they initiate the thoughts of the dharmas caused by conditions, they are having the heavy bondages. If they initiate the thoughts of ignorance, action, consciousness, and so forth, and old age and death, they are having the heavy bondages. If they initiate the thoughts of giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita, they are having the heavy bondages. If they initiate the thoughts of internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature, they are having the heavy bondages. If they initiate the thoughts of realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable, they are having the heavy bondages. If they initiate the thoughts of the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering, they are having the heavy bondages. If they initiate the thoughts of the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path, they are having the heavy bondages. If they initiate the thoughts of the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations, they are having the heavy bondages. If they initiate the thoughts of the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations, they are having the heavy bondages. If they initiate the thoughts of the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonarising, they are having the heavy bondages. If they initiate the thoughts of the stage of pure contemplation, stage of embryonic Buddha nature, and so forth, and stage of Thus-Comer, they are having the heavy bondages. If they initiate the thoughts of the stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilements, and so forth, and stage of dharma cloud, they are having the heavy bondages. If they initiate the thoughts of all dharani gates and all samadhi gates, they are having the heavy bondages. If they initiate the thoughts of the five eyes and six supernatural powers, they are having the heavy bondages. If they initiate the thoughts of the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power, they are having the heavy bondages. If they initiate the thoughts of the thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features, they are having the heavy bondages. If they initiate the thoughts of staying in correct mindfulness and dwelling in equanimity at all times, they are having the heavy bondages. If they initiate the thoughts of the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena, they are having the heavy

bondages. If they initiate the thoughts of stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi, they are having the heavy bondages. If they initiate the thoughts of all great bodhisattva actions, they are having the heavy bondages. If they initiate the thoughts of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas, they are having the heavy bondages. If they initiate the thoughts of ordinary sentient being, voice-hearer, self-enlightened one, bodhisattva, and Thus-Comer, they are having the heavy bondages. If they initiate the thoughts of hells, animals, ghosts, human world, heavens, men, and women, they are having the heavy bondages. If they initiate the thoughts of the realm of desire, the realm of form, and the realm of formlessness, they are having the heavy bondages. If they initiate the thoughts of the virtuous dharmas and not virtuous dharmas, they are having the heavy bondages. If they initiate the thoughts of the morally related and morally unrelated dharmas, they are having the heavy bondages. If they initiate the thoughts of the flawed dharmas and flawless dharmas, they are having the heavy bondages. If they initiate the thoughts of the dharmas of the world and dharmas beyond the world, they are having the heavy bondages. If they initiate the thoughts of the conditioned dharmas and unconditioned dharmas, they are also having the heavy bondages.

"Well-Appearing One, such immeasurable and boundless attachments to dharmas caused by delusive differentiations of various sentient beings, and the not liberated karmas in body, speech, and mind thus derived are all named heavy bondages. Great bodhisattvas should stay far away from all these heavy bondages.

(The Buddha succinctly defined the meaning of heavy bondages that great bodhisattvas should avoid.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas should stay far away such heavy bondages. They will practice giving paramita themselves and encourage others to do so. They will give food, drinks, vehicles, clothes, and the rest of living supplies to the sentient beings in need. The great bodhisattvas should provide for sentient beings whenever and wherever they need. They should practice in this way themselves and teach others to do so. After practicing giving, they will transfer the virtuous roots thus derived along with sentient beings equally toward dignifying and purifying the Buddha lands in which they live. These great bodhisattvas should also practice pure precept, forbearance,

diligence, meditation, and prajna paramitas themselves and encourage others to do so. After that they will transfer the virtuous roots thus derived along with sentient beings equally toward dignifying and purifying the Buddha lands in which they live, so that all sentient beings will greatly benefit.

(The Buddha further taught how great bodhisattvas dignify and purify the Buddha lands through various gates and approaches in this and the following paragraphs.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas will use supernatural powers of aspiration to fill entire large threefold thousand world with best seven treasures, making them as offerings to the Buddha, the dharma, and the sangha. After making the offerings they will rejoice and make great vows, 'We will transfer the virtuous roots thus planted along with sentient beings equally toward dignifying and purifying the Buddha lands in which we live, wishing that the lands will be decorated magnificently with seven treasures, and all sentient beings will enjoy them without greedy attachment.'

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas will use their supernatural powers of aspiration to play numberless wonderful heavenly and human music, making it as offering to the Buddha, dharma, sangha, and monasteries. After making the offering they will rejoice and make great vows, 'We will transfer such virtuous roots thus planted along with sentient beings equally toward dignifying and purifying the Buddha lands in which we live, wishing that in the lands such beautiful music will be played at all times, so that all sentient beings will enjoy them without greedy attachment.'

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas will use their supernatural powers of aspiration to fill entire large threefold thousand world with various human and heavenly wonderful and fragrant flowers, making them as offerings to the Buddha, dharma, sangha, and monasteries. After making the offerings they will rejoice and make great vows, 'We will transfer the virtuous roots thus planted along with sentient beings equally toward dignifying and purifying the Buddha lands in which we live, wishing that the lands will be full of such wonderful and fragrant flowers, so that all sentient beings will enjoy them without greedy attachment.'

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas will use their supernatural powers of aspiration to prepare hundreds of delicious food and drinks, making them as offerings to various Buddhas, self-enlightened ones, voice-hearers, and great bodhisattvas. After making the offerings they will rejoice and make great vows, 'We will transfer the virtuous roots thus planted along with sentient beings equally toward dignifying and purifying the Buddha lands in which we live, wishing that when we attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, all sentient beings in the lands will enjoy such delicious food and drinks without greedy attachment.'

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas will use their supernatural powers of aspiration to prepare various most wonderful human and heavenly powdered incenses and fragrances, soft and fine clothes, and make them as offerings to various Buddhas, self-enlightened ones, voice-hearers, great bodhisattvas, the dharma, and monasteries. After making the offerings, they will rejoice and make great vows, 'We will transfer such virtuous roots thus planted along with sentient beings equally toward dignifying and purifying the Buddha lands in which we live, wishing that when we attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, all sentient beings in the lands will enjoy such clothing and the powdered fragrances and incenses without greedy attachment.'

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas will use their supernatural powers of aspiration to prepare various human and heavenly wonderful phenomena produced by five senses, making them as offerings to various Buddhas, monasteries, self-enlightened ones, voice-hearers, great bodhisattvas, and the rest of sentient beings. After making the offerings, they will rejoice and make great vows, 'We will transfer the virtuous roots thus planted along with sentient beings equally toward dignifying and purifying the Buddha lands in which we live, wishing that when we attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, the sentient beings in the lands will enjoy the most wonderful sights, sound, smells, tastes, and touches as they wish without greedy attachment.'

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas will make great vows to practice right diligence bravely and rigorously. They will not only dwell in internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of

selfless self-nature themselves but also encourage others to do so. After accomplishing this, they will make a wish, ‘When we attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, we will assist the sentient beings in our land to stay in internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature.’

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas will make great vows to practice right diligence bravely and rigorously. They will not only dwell in realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable themselves but also encourage others to do so. After accomplishing this, they further make a wish, ‘When we attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, we will help the sentient beings in this land stay in realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable.’

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas will make great vows to practice right diligence bravely and rigorously. They will not only dwell in the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering themselves but also encourage others to do so. After accomplishing this, they will further make a wish, ‘When we attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, we will let the sentient beings in this land never be apart from the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering.’

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas will make great vows to practice right diligence bravely and rigorously. They will not only cultivate the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and the noble eightfold path themselves but also encourage others to do so. After accomplishing this, they will further make a wish, ‘When we attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, we will let the sentient beings in this land never be apart from the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and the noble eightfold path.’

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas will make great vows to practice right diligence bravely and rigorously. They will not only cultivate the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless

concentrations themselves but also encourage others to do so. After accomplishing this, they will further make a wish, ‘When we attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, we will let the sentient beings in this land never be apart from the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations.’

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas will make great vows to practice right diligence bravely and rigorously. They will not only cultivate the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations themselves but also encourage others to do so. After accomplishing this, they will further make a wish, ‘When we attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, we will let the sentient beings in this land never be apart from the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations.’

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas will make great vows to practice right diligence bravely and rigorously. They will not only cultivate the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration themselves but also encourage others to do so. After accomplishing this, they will further make a wish, ‘When we attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, we will let the sentient beings in this land never be apart from the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration.’

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas will make great vows to practice right diligence bravely and rigorously. They will not only cultivate the stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilements, and so forth, and the stage of dharma cloud themselves but also encourage others to do so. After accomplishing this, they will further make a wish, ‘When we attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, we will let the sentient beings in this land never be apart from the stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilements, and so forth, and the stage of dharma cloud.’

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas will make great vows to practice right diligence bravely and rigorously. They will not only cultivate all dharani gates and all samadhi gates themselves but also encourage

others to do so. After accomplishing this, they will further make a wish, ‘When we attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, we will let the sentient beings in this land never be apart from all dharani gates and all samadhi gates.’

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas will make great vows to practice right diligence bravely and rigorously. They will not only cultivate the five eyes and the six supernatural powers themselves but also encourage others to do so. After accomplishing this, they will further make a wish, ‘When we attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, we will let the sentient beings in this land never be apart from the five eyes and the six supernatural powers.’

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas will make great vows to practice right diligence bravely and rigorously. They will not only cultivate the Buddha’s ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and the eighteen distinctive features of Buddha’s wisdom and power themselves but also encourage others to do so. After accomplishing this, they will further make such a wish, ‘When we attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, we will let the sentient beings in this land never be 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.’

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas will make great vows to practice right diligence bravely and rigorously. They will not only cultivate the thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features themselves but also encourage others to do so. After accomplishing this, they will further make a wish, ‘When we attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, we will let the sentient beings in this land never be apart from the thirty-two perfect major marks and the eighty distinguishing minor features.’

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas will make great vows to practice right diligence bravely and rigorously. They will not only cultivate to stay in correct mindfulness and dwell in equanimity at all times themselves but also encourage others to do so. After accomplishing this, they will further make a wish, ‘When we attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, we will let the sentient

beings in this land never be apart from staying in correct mindfulness and dwelling in equanimity at all times.'

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas will make great vows to practice right diligence bravely and rigorously. They will not only cultivate the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena themselves but also encourage others to do so. After accomplishing this, they will further make a wish, 'When we attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, we will let the sentient beings in this land never be apart from the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena.'

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas will make great vows to practice right diligence bravely and rigorously. They will not only cultivate all great bodhisattva actions themselves but also encourage others to do so. After accomplishing this, they will further make a wish, 'When we attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, we will let the sentient beings in this land never be apart from all great bodhisattva actions.'

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas will make great vows to practice right diligence bravely and rigorously. They will not only cultivate the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas themselves but also encourage others to do so. After accomplishing this, they will further make a wish, 'When we attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, we will let the sentient beings in this land never be apart from the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas.'

"Well-Appearing One, this is how great bodhisattvas, when they practice the fathomless prajna paramita, dignify and purify the Buddha lands in which they live because of their actions of great aspirations.

"You must know, Well-Appearing One, no matter when and where great bodhisattvas practice the bodhi path, they should cultivate and learn diligently and attentively to fulfill the dharmas to which they have aspired, so that they will not only achieve all virtuous dharmas

themselves but also assist others to achieve all virtuous dharmas step by step. They will not only cultivate and attain the superior, magnificent, and perfect bodies themselves but also assist others to cultivate and attain the superior, magnificent, and perfect bodies step by step. It is because they have been much blessed.

(The Buddha indicated the spirit of bodhisattva path: great bodhisattvas not only cultivate, fulfill, and benefit themselves but also assist others to cultivate, fulfill, and benefit.)

"You must know, Well-Appearing One, as these great bodhisattvas have cultivated and fulfilled the dharmas to which they have aspired, and attained the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi in the dignified and purified Buddha lands in which they live, the sentient beings who are living with them will also receive the dharma joy of great vehicle.

"Well-Appearing One, you must know, these great bodhisattvas should cultivate to dignify and purify the Buddha lands, so that in that land the three inferior destinies will not be heard. Various incorrect views and poisonous greed, anger, and ignorance will not be heard. The forms of man and woman will not be heard. Voice-hearers and self-enlightened ones will not be heard. The undesirable things such as suffering and impermanence will not be heard. The properties and supplies provided for sentient beings will not be heard. The attachment to the 'I' and the associated images, hidden roots of vexations, complexes and bonds, and upside-down attachment will not be heard. The establishment of the different effects of cultivation achieved by sentient beings will not be heard. In that land only the sounds of emptiness, formlessness, nonaspiration, nonarising, nonextinction, nonnature, and so forth can be heard. Depending on individual preferences, in forests or other quiet places, the exquisite voices like breezes are heard, 'All dharmas are without self-nature, so they are empty and formless. Because they are formless, they are without aspiration. Because they are without aspiration, they do not arise. Because they do not arise, they do not extinguish. Therefore, all dharmas are inherently tranquil, and their self-nature is in nirvana. Whether the Thus-Comer appears in the world or not, the dharma realm of all dharmas is as it has always been. That is, all dharmas are without nature, and they are empty.' In that Buddha lands the sentient beings can always hear such wonderful dharma voices day and night when they walk, stand, sit, and lie.

"You must know, Well-Appearing One, when the great bodhisattvas realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi in the dignified and purified Buddha lands in which they live, the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones in the ten directions will admire and acclaim the names of various Buddhas. The sentient beings who hear these Buddhas' names will achieve nonregression in the pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.

"You must know, Well-Appearing One, when the great bodhisattvas realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi in the dignified and purified Buddha lands in which they live, they will teach correct dharma to sentient beings. These sentient beings are not skeptical upon hearing the correct dharma. They do not differentiate between dharma and nondharma. Why? They are aware that all dharmas are equivalent to realness, dharma realm, and dharma nature; they are all dharma, and none is not dharma. Well-Appearing One, this is how great bodhisattvas dignify and purify the Buddha lands.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, some sentient beings transformed by great bodhisattvas are born without virtuous roots, they do not plant virtuous roots either. Having stayed away from Buddhas, bodhisattvas, self-enlightened ones, voice-hearers, and virtuous friends, they are absorbed by evil friends. They have not heard correct dharma and fall into the trap of incorrect views, insisting that self-nature and sentient beings are existent. They also grasp the two extremes, asserting that human life is permanent or impermanent. They not only are attached to the incorrect views themselves but also teach others to do so. They mistake the faked triple gem for real and the real for faked. They slander correct dharma and admire incorrect dharma, and consequently, they are reborn in inferior destinies and suffer severely. The great bodhisattvas now have realized and attained the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi in the lands they live. Upon seeing that these sentient beings are suffering in birth and death, the great bodhisattvas are pitiful and use supernatural powers to expediently teach and guide them to relieve them from incorrect knowledge and views to dwell in correct views. These sentient beings thus get rid of inferior destinies and are reborn as human beings. The great bodhisattvas further use supernatural powers to help them dwell in correct concentrations, so that they do not fall into inferior destinies anymore. They are further encouraged to continuously and diligently

cultivate the superior actions of aspiration, and thus dignify and purify the Buddha lands, and enjoy the dharma joy of the great vehicle in the pure lands after passing away from present life.

"Well-Appearing One, this is how great bodhisattvas dignify and purify Buddha lands. Because the Buddha lands in which they live are extremely pure, the sentient beings reborn there are not confused about the dharmas. They will not wonder and differentiate between the dharmas of the world and the dharmas beyond the world, the flawed dharmas and the flawless dharmas, and the conditioned dharmas and the unconditioned dharmas. Such puzzlement and differentiation are without arising in the final analysis. Because of this cause and condition, these sentient beings will certainly attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.

"Well-Appearing One, these are the merits and virtues gained by the great bodhisattvas when they dignify and purify Buddha lands."

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Chapter 81

Right Concentration

(In the Second Assembly)

At that time, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, “World-Honored One, do great bodhisattvas dwell in definite correct nature or in indefinite correct nature?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “Great bodhisattvas dwell in definite correct nature.”

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, “In what definite correct nature do great bodhisattvas dwell? Do they dwell in voice-hearer vehicle, self-enlightened one vehicle, or bodhisattva vehicle?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “Great bodhisattvas dwell in definite correct nature of bodhisattva vehicle instead of other two vehicles.”

The long-lived Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, “When do the great bodhisattvas dwell in the definite correct nature? Do they dwell in the definite correct nature when they start to aspire to the bodhi, reach the stage of nonregression, or in the last phase of attaining the bodhi?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “The great bodhisattvas have always dwelled in the definite correct nature either when they start to aspire to the bodhi, reach the stage of nonregression, or in the last phase before attaining the bodhi.”

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, “Will the great bodhisattvas dwelling in the definite correct nature fall into inferior destinies?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “The great bodhisattvas dwelling in the definite correct nature absolutely will not fall into the inferior destinies.”

The Buddha continued, “What do you think about this? Do stream-entry aspirants, stream-enterers, once-returners, nonreturners, arhats, and self-enlightened ones fall into the inferior destinies?”

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

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, “So do the great bodhisattvas. Since the time of beginning aspiration to the cultivation of giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita and the rest of immeasurable and boundless Buddha dharmas, they have eliminated all negative dharmas. Because of this cause and condition, they absolutely will not fall into inferior destinies, nor the heavens of longevity, in which various superior virtuous dharmas are not available. They definitely will not be reborn in the low class in borderlands where superior virtuous dharmas are not available; correct views and the truth of cause and effect are ignored or rejected; various filthy and evil karmas are popular; the names of the Buddha, dharma, and sangha are not heard; and the four groups of believers, namely, monks, nuns, laymen, and laywomen do not exist. These great bodhisattvas will not be reborn in a family where its members hold incorrect views; deny the principle that virtuous actions will cause pleasant effects, while evil actions will cause painful effects; and incline to do evils actions rather than virtuous actions. Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, it does not make sense to say that these great bodhisattvas enjoy the path of the ten not virtuous karmas when they initiate the pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.”

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, “If the great bodhisattvas, from the moment initiating to seek the bodhi, have accrued such merits and virtuous roots and never been reborn in inferior destinies, why does the Thus-Comer teach about hundreds of thousands of his own stories in past lives, in which he experienced rebirth in inferior destinies? Where were his virtuous roots when he was in those destinies?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “Various great bodhisattvas are reborn in inferior destinies not because of filthy karmas but because of their willingness to assist sentient beings. That should not be regarded as difficulties encountered in life.”

(The Buddha said that the great bodhisattvas with definite correct nature are willing to be reborn in inferior destinies to assist sentient beings.)

The Buddha asked Well-Appearing One again, “What do you think about this? Do self-enlightened ones or arhats achieve the superior expedient skillfulness as various bodhisattvas do? When they are reborn as white elephants or other animals and encounter adversaries or robbers who attempt to kill them, will they sacrifice their own lives due to the unsurpassed forbearance and compassion initiated by them to avoid harming but rather benefiting attackers?”

Well-Appearing One replied, “They will not do such things.”

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One: “Because of this cause and condition, you must know that although the bodhisattvas are reborn as animals, they are not affected by the weaknesses of animals. They are reborn as animals merely because they want to benefit sentient beings and fulfill great loving-kindness and compassion quickly.”

(The Buddha explained how bodhisattvas were different from self-enlightened ones and arhats.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, “In what virtuous roots do great bodhisattvas dwell as they want to be reborn as animals to benefit sentient beings?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “Are there any virtuous roots that great bodhisattvas should not fulfill? They should fulfill all virtuous roots if they want to seek the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. Since the moment they aspire to the bodhi until finally sitting peacefully on the throne of wonderful bodhi, the great bodhisattvas are supposed to fulfill all virtuous roots. They are well equipped with all virtuous dharmas and are ready to attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. Even only with one virtuous dharma unfulfilled, they are unable to attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. Therefore, since the first moment they aspire to the bodhi until sitting peacefully on the throne of wonderful bodhi, the

bodhisattvas should learn to fulfill all virtuous dharmas. After completing the learning, they will attain the perfect knowledge of all phenomena, terminate enduring negative dispositions of vexations, and realize the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge."

(The Buddha said great bodhisattvas should fulfill all virtuous roots to achieve the perfect knowledge.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, "Why are the great bodhisattvas reborn in the realm of animals when they have achieved virtuous dharmas and attained the genuine holy perfect knowledge?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One by asking him, "What do you think about this? Do Thus-Comers achieve all virtuous dharmas and attain the genuine holy perfect knowledge?"

Well-Appearing One replied, "Yes, they do."

The Buddha asked Well-Appearing One, "What do you think about this? Do Thus-Comers transform themselves into animals to do Buddhist services to benefit the sentient beings?"

Well-Appearing One, "Yes, they do."

The Buddha asked Well-Appearing One, "What do you think about this? When Thus-Comers transform themselves into animals, do they really suffer as the animals do?"

Well-Appearing One replied, "No, they don't."

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, "So do the great bodhisattvas. As they have achieved the virtuous dharmas and attained the genuine holy perfect knowledge, they are reborn expediently and skillfully as animals to assist sentient beings to mature.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, what do you think about this? Do arhats eliminating all flaws permanently transform themselves into different bodies to do services and bring joys to others?"

Well-Appearing One replied, “Yes, they do.”

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, “So do the great bodhisattvas. Although they have achieved virtuous dharmas and attained the genuine holy perfect knowledge, they are reborn expediently and skillfully in inferior destinies to assist sentient beings to mature according to individual needs. Although they appear in different bodies, they do not suffer as the sentient beings in those destinies do, nor are they contaminated by the faults of those destinies.

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, what do you think about this? Some magicians and their disciples made transformed elephants, horses, and so forth to entertain others. Were the elephants and horses real?”

Well-Appearing One replied, “No, they were not real.”

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, “So do various great bodhisattvas. Although they have achieved virtuous dharmas and attained the genuine holy perfect knowledge, they are reborn as animals to benefit sentient beings. They appear as animals, but they are not animal and not contaminated by the faults of animals.”

(The Buddha taught that the bodhisattvas fulfilling virtuous roots and perfect knowledge are reborn in the realm of animals to benefit sentient beings, but they are not contaminated and experiencing suffering.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, “The great bodhisattvas have achieved virtuous dharmas and the genuine holy perfect knowledge. They hold powerful and wide spreading powers of expedient skillfulness, but they choose to be reborn in different bodies to benefit all sentient beings according to individual needs. World-Honored One, in what dharmas do these great bodhisattvas have dwelled so they are able to be reborn with expedient skillfulness into various forms without being contaminated in the inferior destinies?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “These great bodhisattvas will dwell in the fathomless prajna paramita and are well equipped with expedient skillfulness. Because of the powers of the expedient skillfulness, they can go to as many Buddha worlds as the sands of the Ganges, being reborn into various forms to bring benefits, peace, and happiness to sentient

beings, while they are not contaminated by the faults of those destinies. Why? These great bodhisattvas have not attained anything in all dharmas; namely, they have not attained the factors to cause contamination, the objects to be contaminated, and the cause and condition of contamination. Why? It is because the self-nature of all dharmas is empty. Well-Appearing One, you must know that emptiness cannot contaminate emptiness, emptiness cannot contaminate dharmas, and dharmas cannot contaminate emptiness either. Why? The empty nature of emptiness is unattainable, so are the dharmas. This is named the emptiness of nonattainment. If the great bodhisattvas dwell peacefully in such emptiness, they can realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi and always benefit sentient beings."

(The Buddha explained that great bodhisattvas always dwelled in empty nature of all dharmas, namely, the emptiness of nonattainment, so they were not contaminated in inferior realms.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "Do the great bodhisattvas act expediently and skillfully only because they have dwelled peacefully in the fathomless prajna paramita? Can they do the same when dwelling peacefully in the rest of dharmas?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "Are there any dharmas not absorbed by the fathomless prajna paramita so that you are asking this question?"

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One said to the Buddha, "As the self-nature of the fathomless prajna paramita is empty, how can we say that the fathomless prajna paramita has absorbed all dharmas? Is it that in emptiness there are the dharmas absorbed and the dharmas not absorbed?"

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, "Are the dharmas and their nature empty?"

Well-Appearing One replied, "Yes."

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, "If all dharmas and their nature are empty, are dharmas absorbed in emptiness?"

Well-Appearing One replied, "Yes."

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, “Owing to this cause and condition, the fathomless prajna paramita can absorb all dharmas. You must know that when dwelling in the fathomless prajna paramita, the bodhisattvas can act expediently and skillfully.”

(The Buddha explained why prajna paramita can absorb all dharmas and great bodhisattvas can act expediently and skillfully.)

At that time, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One said to the Buddha, “World-Honored One, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, how do great bodhisattvas dwell peacefully in the empty self-nature of all dharmas and initiate supernatural powers paramita? How do they dwell peacefully in supernatural powers paramita to visit as many Buddha worlds in the ten directions as the sands of the Ganges, make offerings respectfully to various Buddhas, listen to the teachings of correct dharma given by the Buddhas, and plant immeasurable superior virtuous roots?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “When practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas have universally contemplated the self-nature of as many Buddha worlds in the ten directions as the sands of the Ganges, the self-nature of the Buddhas, and the self-nature of dharma teachings as empty; they are merely the names provisionally established in terms of the worldly perspective.

“Well-Appearing One, you must know, if the self-nature of the Buddhas in the ten directions and the dharma teachings given by them, as well as the provisionally established names were not empty, then the emptiness that we are talking about should be an object. But because the emptiness that we are talking about is not an object, it is reasonable to say that the self-nature of all dharmas is empty. This reasoning is perfect and is neither dualistic nor separate. Because the great bodhisattvas have universally contemplated the expedient skillfulness of emptiness, they can initiate and dwell in supernatural powers when they practice the fathomless prajna paramita. They can initiate supernatural powers of heavenly eye, heavenly ear, transformation, reading others’ minds, knowing previous lives, and the subtle, exquisite, and thoroughly flawless wisdom.

(The Buddha explained how great bodhisattvas adopted expedient skillfulness of emptiness to initiate supernatural powers paramita.)

"You must know, Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas stay away from the supernatural powers paramita, they would not be able to freely and easily assist the sentient beings to mature, dignify and purify the Buddha lands, and realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. The supernatural powers paramita is the path to the bodhi. The great bodhisattvas should follow this path to pursue the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. When pursuing the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, they will not only fulfill all virtuous dharmas themselves but also encourage others to do so. Nevertheless, they will not be attached to virtuous dharmas. Why? It is because the great bodhisattvas have realized that the self-nature of all virtuous dharmas are empty. Without knowing the emptiness of self-nature, one will become attached to dharmas. Where there is attachment, there is craving. Without attachment, there is no craving. Because there is no craving in the emptiness of self-nature, the ones who crave, the things to be craved, and the cause and condition of craving are all unattainable.

(The Buddha taught that knowing the emptiness of self-nature will prevent one from attachment and carving.)

"You must know, Well-Appearing One, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas have dwelled in supernatural powers paramita to initiate the incomparable pure and clear heavenly eye. By using the heavenly eye, they contemplate the self-nature of all dharmas as empty, so they do not make karmas by following the forms of dharmas. They teach this dharma to all sentient beings without attaining the forms of sentient beings and the establishments set up for them. These great bodhisattvas thus adopt nonattainment as skillful means to initiate superior supernatural powers to accomplish all services that they should do.

(The great bodhisattvas understand the empty self-nature of all dharmas through supernatural power of heavenly eye.)

"These great bodhisattvas also use their incomparably pure and clear heavenly eye to universally look at as many Buddha worlds in the ten directions as the sands of the Ganges and

initiate supernatural power of transformation to benefit sentient beings through teaching them giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita; 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 rest of various superior virtuous dharmas; and the dharma of voice-hearer, dharma of self-enlightened ones, bodhisattvas dharma, or Buddha dharma.

(The Buddha taught how great bodhisattvas teach and guide sentient beings various superior holy dharmas with supernatural powers of heavenly eye and transformation.)

"As seeing the greedy and stingy sentient beings in the worlds of the ten directions, the great bodhisattvas feel pity for them and say, 'You should practice giving. The greedy and stingy ones suffer from poverty; they lose dignity, power, and virtues, so cannot benefit themselves or others. Practicing giving diligently will bring peace and happiness to yourself and others. Do not harm others because of your own poverty, otherwise, you may not be relieved from the suffering in various inferior destinies.'

(The Buddha instructed great bodhisattvas to help sentient beings by teaching them the practice of generous giving to avoid poverty.)

"As seeing sentient beings who are violating pure precept, the great bodhisattvas feel pity for them and say, 'You should observe pure precept. Precept violators will suffer from inferior destinies. They have no dignity, power, and virtues, and are unable to benefit themselves or others. Consequently, they will be reborn in the three inferior destinies where suffering and torture are unbearable. You cannot rescue yourselves, let alone rescue others. Please observe pure precept; do not let a minor idea of violation arise in your mind even briefly. Do not let your mind go astray and regret and worry about what you have done.'

(The Buddha instructed great bodhisattvas to use heavenly eye and pure precept to guide precept violators.)

"As seeing sentient beings who are angry and hate each other and thus provoke more vexations and damages, the great bodhisattvas feel pity for them and say, 'You should cultivate forbearance. Do not get angry and hate and harm others. The mind of hatred is not virtuous, which will cause more evils and result in decay and loss. Because of anger and hatred, one will be reborn in inferior destinies and suffer endlessly. Therefore, you must not allow a mind of hatred to arise even briefly. From now on you should treat others with loving-kindness and do beneficial things for others.'

(The Buddha instructed great bodhisattvas to use heavenly eye and forbearance to teach angry ones.)

"As seeing sentient beings are lazy and tired, the great bodhisattvas feel pity for them and say, 'You should work diligently. Don't be lazy or get tired of doing virtuous things. The lazy and tired ones will fail to do virtuous and superior things, thus fall into inferior destinies and suffer boundlessly. Therefore, you should not allow a thought of laziness or tiredness to arise in your mind even briefly, not to mention for a long time.'

(The Buddha instructed great bodhisattvas to use heavenly eye and diligence to teach the lazy and tired ones.)

"As seeing sentient beings lose mindfulness and tranquility and stay in restlessness, the great bodhisattvas feel pity for them and say, 'You should cultivate meditation, so that your mind will not get lost in restlessness. Restless mind is not in accord with virtuous dharmas; rather, it will invite evil things and cause decay and damage. Because of the restless mind, one will fall into inferior destinies and suffer endlessly. Therefore, you should not let any idea correspondent with restlessness arise in your mind even briefly, not to mention for a long time.'

(The Buddha instructed great bodhisattvas to use heavenly eye and meditation to teach restless ones.)

"As seeing sentient beings are ignorant and abuse knowledge, the great bodhisattvas feel pity for them and say, 'You should cultivate superior wisdom and prevent its abuse from arising. Those abusing knowledge cannot enter onto the path of virtuous dharmas and are far away from liberation. Because of abusing knowledge, one will fall into inferior destinies and suffer

endlessly. Therefore, you should not allow any idea of abusing knowledge to arise even briefly, not to mention let it last for a long time.'

(The Buddha instructed great bodhisattvas to use heavenly eye and prajna to teach wisdom abusers.)

"As seeing sentient beings are greedy, the great bodhisattvas feel pity for them and guide them to contemplate impurity. As seeing sentient beings get angry easily, the great bodhisattvas feel pity for them and guide them to contemplate loving-kindness and compassion. As seeing sentient beings are ignorant, the great bodhisattvas feel pity for them and guide them to contemplate dependent origination. As seeing sentient beings are arrogant, the great bodhisattvas feel pity for them and guide them to contemplate different realms. As seeing sentient beings do general contemplation and specific investigation too much, the great bodhisattvas feel pity for them and guide them to cultivate cessation of mindfulness. As seeing sentient beings go astray, the great bodhisattvas feel pity for them and guide them to go back on right path: the path of voice-hearer, self-enlightened one, or Thus-Comer. They further teach that the self-nature of the dharmas to which they are attached is empty; in empty dharmas, nothing can be grasped. nonattachment is the form of emptiness.

(The Buddha instructed great bodhisattvas to guide sentient beings properly according to their specific weaknesses.)

"Therefore, Well-Appearing One, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas should dwell in supernatural powers paramita to teach the correct dharma freely and easily, and bring benefits, peace, and happiness to sentient beings. You must know, Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas stay far away from supernatural powers paramita, they will not be able to teach and disseminate the correct dharma freely and easily to help sentient beings. You must know, Well-Appearing One, the birds without wings cannot fly freely and easily in the sky, so do great bodhisattvas. Without supernatural powers paramita, the great bodhisattvas cannot lecture on the correct dharma to benefit sentient beings. Therefore, Well-Appearing One, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas should initiate supernatural powers paramita. If they can initiate supernatural powers paramita, they will

be able to teach correct dharma freely and easily and bring benefits and happiness to sentient beings as they intend.

(The Buddha emphasized the value of supernatural powers for guiding sentient beings. The Buddha elaborated this meaning in the following paragraphs.)

"Well-Appearing One, you must know that the great bodhisattvas have used their extremely pure and clear heavenly eyes to contemplate as many Buddha worlds in the ten directions as the sands of the Ganges and sentient beings in these worlds. After that they initiate supernatural power of transformation to go to these worlds instantaneously. With the supernatural power of reading others' minds, the great bodhisattvas get to know what the sentient beings have in their minds and teach them the essential meanings of the dharma depending on individual needs. They will teach giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita; 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; all dharani gates and all samadhi gates; 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; cause and condition, consecutive thoughts, conditions that stimulate the mind, and the conditions that reinforce main causes; the dharmas produced by the conditions; ignorance, action, consciousness, and so forth, and old age and death; various aggregates, spheres, and realms; the path of voice-hearer, self-enlightened one, bodhisattva, or Thus-Comer, and nirvana, so that all sentient beings can attain superior benefits, peace, and happiness after hearing dharma teaching.

"The great bodhisattvas can hear all humans and nonhumans with their extremely pure and clear heavenly ears. The heavenly ear can hear the correct dharma teachings given by all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones in as many Buddha worlds of the ten directions as the sands of the Ganges. After hearing the teachings, the great bodhisattvas will accept and embrace the essential meanings of the dharma

and further accurately convey what they heard to sentient beings, such as the dharma of giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita, the bodhi, and nirvana, so the sentient beings will gain superior benefits, peace, and happiness from these teachings.

"The great bodhisattvas can accurately know sentient beings' minds and the associated images with their extremely pure and clear supernatural power of reading others' minds and teach them the essential meanings of the dharma suited to individual sentient beings. They will teach them giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita, the bodhi, and nirvana, so that the sentient beings gain great benefits, peace, and happiness from hearing the teachings.

"The great bodhisattvas can recall the things happening in their own or others' past lives with the pure supernatural power of knowing previous lives. They accurately know the names and the events of various Buddhas and their disciples in the past. They will tell sentient beings about their previous lives if they like to hear and can thus gain benefits. With this expedient method, the great bodhisattvas teach sentient beings correct dharma, namely, giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita, bodhi, and nirvana, so that the sentient beings will gain superior benefits, peace, and happiness from hearing the teachings.

"These great bodhisattvas can travel to as many Buddha worlds in the ten directions as the sands of the Ganges with their extremely swift supernatural power of transformation to stay close and make offerings respectfully to the Buddhas, the World-Honored Ones. They will plant various virtuous roots in the Buddhas' places, then return home to share their experiences with others. They will thus expediently teach sentient beings the correct dharma, such as giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita, the bodhi and nirvana, so that the sentient beings will gain superior benefits, peace, and happiness from hearing the teachings.

"With their supernatural powers of flawless knowledge and wisdom, the great bodhisattvas can know accurately the sentient beings whose flaws are not yet eliminated. The great bodhisattvas also know well about the way of achieving flawlessness to teach sentient beings about the essential meanings of the dharma, namely, giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita, the bodhi and nirvana, so that the sentient beings will gain superior benefits, peace, and happiness from hearing the teachings.

“Well-Appearing One, this is how the great bodhisattvas initiate supernatural powers paramita when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita. Because they have cultivated, learned, and fulfilled supernatural powers paramita, they are able to be reborn into different bodies as they wish without being contaminated by the pleasures, pains, and faults of various destinies. It is like the transformed Buddhas, who can do all kinds of services to benefit sentient beings but are not contaminated by the pleasures, pains, and faults of the circumstances.

“Therefore, Well-Appearing One, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas should play their supernatural powers freely and at ease to assist sentient beings to mature and dignify and purify Buddha lands, and realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi before long. You must know, Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas do not assist sentient beings to mature and do not dignify and purify Buddha lands, they will not be able to realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. Why? If great bodhisattvas do not prepare sufficient nutrition for the bodhi, they cannot realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.”

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, “World-Honored One, what are the nutrients that great bodhisattvas should well prepare so that they can realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “All virtuous dharmas are nutrients for the bodhi.”

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, “What are these virtuous dharmas?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “Since the time of beginning to cultivate giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas have no differentiation or attachment in their minds, so they do not think, ‘These are giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita. We cultivate these paramitas because of this reason. This is the objective we intend to achieve.’ They have no such triple differentiation and attachment because they realize that the self-nature of all dharmas is empty. Because of this emptiness, the six paramita that they cultivate will really benefit themselves and

others, let them get rid of the birth and death and realize and attain nirvana. So, these are the virtuous dharmas and the nutrients for bodhi. They are also the paths for bodhisattvas. Because of these paths, the great bodhisattvas in the past, present, and future have attained, are attaining, and will attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. These paths also allow sentient beings to cross the ocean of birth and death to approach the happiness of nirvana.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, since the time of beginning to cultivate the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path; 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 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 stages of great bodhisattva; cultivate all dharani gates and samadhi gates; cultivate the Thus-Comer'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, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena, the great bodhisattvas have not had any differentiation or attachment. They do not think, 'These are the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and the noble eightfold path. We cultivate these virtuous dharmas because of this reason. This is the objective we intend to achieve.' They have no such triple differentiation and attachment because they realize that the self-nature of all dharmas is empty. Because of this emptiness, the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge that they cultivate can really benefit themselves and others, let them get rid of the birth and death and realize and attain nirvana. These are the virtuous dharmas and the nutrients for bodhi. They are also the paths for bodhisattvas. Because of these paths, the great bodhisattvas in the past, present, and future have attained, are attaining, and will attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. These paths also allow sentient beings to cross the ocean of birth and death to approach the happiness of nirvana.

"You must know, Well-Appearing One, there are other immeasurable merits and virtues that great bodhisattvas cultivate are also named virtuous dharmas. They are also named the nutrient for the bodhi and the paths for great bodhisattvas. Great bodhisattvas should cultivate and fulfill such superior virtuous dharmas before they can realize and attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. They should realize and attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge before they can turn the correct dharma wheel and bring ultimate peace and happiness to all sentient beings."

(The Buddha explained the nutrients that great bodhisattvas should prepare for helping sentient beings.)

## Chapter 82

## The Buddha Dharma

(In the Second Assembly)

At that time, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "World-Honored One, are there virtuous dharmas for the Buddha in addition to the virtuous dharmas for great bodhisattvas mentioned above?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "The dharmas for great bodhisattvas are also the dharmas for the Buddha, the Buddha dharma. As bodhisattvas are awakened to the forms of all dharmas, they attain the perfect knowledge of all phenomena and permanently terminate the enduring dispositions of vexations. As the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones are awakened to all dharmas instantaneously correspondent with the exquisite wisdom, they realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. Well-Appearing One, although both bodhisattvas and Thus-Comers are holy ones, their distinctions mainly lie in the stage of cultivation and the effects in which they dwell.

However, the dharmas to which they aspire remain identical. Bodhisattvas have not yet completely removed dark obstacles, reached the other shore, and attained freedom and perfect effects. Buddhas, on the other hand, have completely removed dark obstacles, reached the other shore, and attained freedom and perfect effects. The difference between bodhisattvas and Buddhas is their status, not the dharma nature, which is the same for both."

(The Buddha made a distinction between bodhisattvas and Buddhas.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One said to the Buddha, "If the self-nature of all dharmas is empty, how can there be differences in empty self-nature to distinguish among the hells, animal realm, ghost realm, human world, and heaven; the stage of embryonic Buddha nature, stream-entry aspirants, stream-enterers, once-returners, nonreturners, arhats, self-enlightened ones, bodhisattvas, and Thus-Comers? World-Honored One, as the individuals in reincarnation are unattainable, then their karmas are also unattainable. Thus, the effects caused by their karmas at different times and in different types should also be unattainable."

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, "Yes, it is as you say. The characteristics of all dharmas are empty. In empty characteristics, the individuals in reincarnation and the karmic results are nonexistent. In nonexistence, the forms of differences are also nonexistent. But the sentient beings do not realize the characteristics of all dharmas as empty and continue to make both virtuous and not virtuous karmas. If their virtuous karma grows and increases, they will be reborn as human beings or heavenly beings. If their negative karma grows and increases, they will be reborn in three inferior destinies. If they make virtuous karma through practicing concentrations, they will be reborn in the realm of form or formlessness. With through understanding of this truth, the great bodhisattvas 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 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, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena.

"Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas will incessantly cultivate and fulfill all these dharmas leading to the bodhi. After fulfilling all these factors for enlightenment, they will be able to initiate diamond-like concentration to foster the realization and attainment of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi to benefit sentient beings without loss and destruction. They thus can assist sentient beings to get rid of the suffering and worries caused by birth and death."

(The Buddha explained how great bodhisattvas deal with the differences between various rebirth destinies and between various stages of cultivation as the self-nature of all dharmas is empty.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, "Do the Buddhas attain the dharma of birth and death in various destinies after attaining the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal enlightenment?"

The Buddha replied, "No."

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, "Do the Buddhas attain the bad karmas, good karmas, bad and good karmas, and not bad and not good karmas after attaining the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal enlightenment?"

The Buddha replied, "No."

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, "If the Buddhas are not born in various destinies and do not possess different karmas, how do they set up distinction among hells, animal realm, ghost realm, human world, and heaven and among the stage of

embryonic Buddha nature, stream-entry aspirant, stream-enterer, once-returner, nonreturner, arhat, self-enlightened one, bodhisattva, and Thus-Comer?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One by asking, "Do sentient beings know that the characteristics of all dharmas are empty?"

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

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, "If sentient beings understand the characteristics of all dharmas are empty, the great bodhisattvas do not need to realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi to expediently and skillfully liberate sentient beings from birth and death in various inferior destinies. Because sentient beings do not know the characteristics of all dharmas are empty, they reincarnate in various destinies and suffer endlessly. The great bodhisattvas feel pity for them; they learn from Buddhas that the characteristics of all dharmas are empty to realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, so that they can relieve sentient beings expediently and skillfully from the birth and death in various inferior destinies.

"You must know, Well-Appearing One, these great bodhisattvas have always thought, 'The ignorant ordinary sentient beings insist that all dharmas have real characteristics. Because of their delusive upside-down differentiation, they mistake the unreal for real; namely, they mistake nonexistent 'I,' sentient being, and so forth, and the viewer for existent. They also mistake nonexistent matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness, and so forth, and the conditioned dharmas, as well as all dharmas for existent. Owing to delusive differentiation, they create karmas in body, speech, and mind, unable to get rid of birth and death in inferior destinies. I should go to their rescue to liberate them.' After having this thought, the great bodhisattvas practice the fathomless prajna paramita and absorb various virtuous dharmas. They correctly cultivate all great bodhisattva actions and enrich nutrients for the bodhi step by step. Now they can realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. After that, they lecture on, explain, and establish the meanings of the four noble truths for sentient beings: suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering. They further merge a thorough understanding of all factors for enlightenment into the four noble truths, and establish the triple gem--the Buddha, dharma, and sangha--with exquisite knowledge

based on the factors for enlightenment. As the triple gem appears in the world, the sentient beings have good access to liberation. If sentient beings do not take refuge in the Buddha, dharma, and sangha, they will continue to create karmas, reincarnate in various destinies, and suffer severely. Therefore, the sentient beings should take refuge in the Buddha, dharma, and sangha, the triple gem."

(The Buddha explained how great bodhisattvas, knowing that characteristics of all dharmas are empty, cultivate to attain the unsurpassed bodhi and expediently teach sentient beings four noble truths and triple gem.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, "Do sentient beings attain nirvana through the four noble truths? Do they attain nirvana through the knowledge of four noble truths?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "The sentient beings attain nirvana neither through the four noble truths nor through the knowledge of four noble truths. Well-Appearing One, I have said that the nature of equality of the four noble truths is nirvana. Nirvana is attained not through the four noble truths or through the knowledge of four noble truths, but through prajna paramita. To realize and attain the nature of equality through prajna paramita is named attaining nirvana."

(The Buddha taught the way of attaining nirvana; that is prajna paramita.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, "What is the nature of equality of the four noble truths?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "The nature of equality of the four noble truths means there are neither the four noble truths nor the knowledge of the four noble truths. The nature of equality is the four noble truths. The nature and 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 that persevere as they always do without loss, destruction, and change, whether the Buddhas appear in the world or not. This is the nature of equality of the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the

cessation of suffering. The great bodhisattvas practice the fathomless prajna paramita to become awakened to the nature of equality of the four noble truths anytime as they wish. If they do, they can be really awakened to various noble truths anytime. They will attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly."

(The Buddha explained the nature of equality of four noble truths.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, "Why will great bodhisattvas enter the bodhisattva nature of nonarising without falling into the stage of voice-hearer or self-enlightened one if they really become awakened to various noble truths?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "When great bodhisattvas practice the fathomless prajna paramita, they can see all dharmas clearly and accurately, understanding that all dharmas are unattainable. They thus become aware that all dharmas are empty whether they are absorbed or not absorbed by the four noble truths and enter the bodhisattva nature of nonarising. Because of entering the bodhisattva nature of nonarising, they will dwell in the stage of embryonic Buddha nature; they certainly will not fall from the top of the bodhisattva status into the stage of voice-hearer or self-enlightened one. Because they can dwell in the stage of embryonic Buddha nature, they are able to initiate the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations. Upon reaching a state of samatha, they can make wise judgement regarding dharma nature and realize the four noble truths at any time. The bodhisattvas know suffering comprehensively without being attached to suffering. They decide to permanently terminate the cause of suffering without being attached to the cause of suffering. They realize the cessation of suffering without being attached to the cessation. They cultivate the path for the cessation of suffering without being attached to the path. They will follow the flow of the mind to approach the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi and contemplate and investigate the real forms of all dharmas as they really are."

(The Buddha explained what awakening to noble truths is, and how great bodhisattvas do not fall into two vehicles but entering the bodhisattva nature of nonarising.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, "How do great bodhisattvas contemplate and investigate the real forms of all dharmas as they really are?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “The great bodhisattvas will contemplate all dharmas as empty. This is how they contemplate and investigate the real forms of all dharmas.”

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, “How do great bodhisattvas contemplate and investigate all dharmas as empty?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “As great bodhisattvas contemplate and investigate all dharmas, they see that their characteristics are empty, so understand that all dharmas as empty. As they look at the forms with vipasyana, they see that all dharmas are empty, there is no self-nature in which one can dwell to realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. Why? The self-nature of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas and the self-nature of all dharmas are without nature. The self-nature of matter, feeling, and so forth, and consciousness is without nature. The self-nature of the eye sphere, ear sphere, and so forth, and conscious sphere is without nature. The self-nature of the sight sphere, sound sphere, and so forth, and mental-image sphere is without nature. The self-nature of the eye realm, ear realm, and so forth, and conscious realm is without nature. The self-nature of the sight realm, sound realm, and so forth, and mental-image realm is without nature. The self-nature of the eye consciousness realm, ear consciousness realm, and so forth, and conscious consciousness realm is without nature. The self-nature of the eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact is without nature. The self-nature of the feelings produced by eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact is without nature. The self-nature of the earth realm, water realm, and so forth, and consciousness realm is without nature. The self-nature of cause and condition, consecutive thoughts, conditions that stimulate the mind, and the conditions that reinforce main causes is without nature. The self-nature of the dharmas produced by conditions is without nature. The self-nature of ignorance, action, consciousness, and so forth, and old age and death is without nature. The self-nature of giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita is without nature. The self-nature of internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature is without nature. The self-nature of realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable is without nature. The self-nature of the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering is without nature. The self-nature of the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path is without nature. The

self-nature of the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations is without nature. The self-nature of the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations is without nature. The self-nature of the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration is without nature. The self-nature of the stage of pure contemplation, stage of embryonic Buddha nature, and so forth, and the stage of Thus-Comer is without nature. The self-nature of the stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilements, and so forth, and the stage of dharma cloud is without nature. The self-nature of all dharani gates and all samadhi gates is without nature. The self-nature of the five eyes and six supernatural powers is without nature. The self-nature of the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power is without nature. The self-nature of the thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features is without nature. The self-nature of staying in correct mindfulness and dwelling in equanimity at all times is without nature. The self-nature of the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena is without nature. The self-nature of stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi is without nature. The self-nature of all great bodhisattva actions is without nature. The self-nature of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas is without nature. Such nonnature is not created by Buddha, self-enlightened one, bodhisattva, or voice-hearer, nor by those progressing through various stages. Sentient beings do not know that all dharmas are actually unreal and empty, so the great bodhisattvas feel pity for them and determine to practice the fathomless prajna paramita, expediently and skillfully passing their own experience and knowledge of awakening to sentient beings, so that the sentient beings are able to get rid of attachment and become free from birth, old age, illness, and death and finally attain ultimate peace and happiness in nirvana."

(The Buddha concluded why and how great bodhisattvas practice the fathomless prajna paramita and comprehend that all dharmas are empty to expediently and skillfully teach sentient beings to relieve them from attachment and birth and death.)

Fascicle 478

Chapter 83

Nothing Is Real

(In the Second Assembly)

At that time, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One said to the Buddha, “World-Honored One, if the self-nature of all dharmas is without nature and this nonnature is not created by Buddhas, self-enlightened ones, bodhisattvas, voice-hearers, or those progressing through various stages, why are there distinctions between hells, animal realm, ghost realm, human world, and heaven? Why are there distinctions between the Heaven of Four Great Kings, Heaven of Thirty-Three Smaller Heavens, and so forth, and the Heaven of Enjoying Other-Made Changes; the Heaven of Brahma Followers, Heaven of Brahma Associates, and so forth, and the Heaven of Ultimate Form; the Heaven of Boundless Emptiness, Heaven of Boundless Consciousness, and so forth, and the Heaven of Nonthinking and Not Nonthinking? Why are there distinctions between stream-enterers, once-returners, nonreturners, arhats, self-enlightened ones, bodhisattvas, and Thus-Comers? Why are there distinctions between different results caused by individual correspondent karmas, such as human beings, Heaven of Four Great Kings, Heaven of Enjoying Other-Made Changes, Heaven of Brahma Followers, Heaven of Ultimate Form, Heaven of Boundless Emptiness, and the Heaven of Nonthinking and Not Nonthinking? Why are there distinctions between different effects caused by cultivating various dharma gates, such as stream-enterers, once-returners, nonreturners, arhats, self-enlightened ones, bodhisattvas, and Thus-Comers?

“World-Honored One, if the dharmas without nature definitely do not have functions, how can sentient beings be reborn in hells, or as animals, ghosts, and human beings because of different karmas? How can heavenly beings be reborn in the Heaven of Four Great Kings, Heaven of Thirty-Three Smaller Heavens, and so forth, and the Heaven of Enjoying Other-Made Changes; in the Heaven of Brahma Followers, Heaven of Brahma Associates, and so forth, and the Heaven of Ultimate Form; and in the Heaven of Boundless Emptiness, Heaven of Boundless

Consciousness, and so forth, and the Heaven of Nonthinking and Not Nonthinking because of different karmas? How can dharma practitioners achieve stream-entry effect, once-return effect, nonreturn effect, arhat effect, or self-enlightenment bodhi through the cultivation of different correspondent dharma gates? How can great bodhisattvas enter onto the path of bodhisattva, practice the path of bodhisattva, and finally attain the perfect knowledge of all phenomena and thus are named the Buddhas, the World-Honored Ones, to relieve sentient beings from birth and death?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "As you say, all dharmas are without nature, so their differences cannot be established; they are without karmas, effects, and functions. The ignorant ones fail to understand the holy precepts and the nonnature of all dharmas, foolishly initiate various karmas in body, speech, and mind, and thus are reborn in different bodies caused by karmas. It is based on such different bodies that the hells, animal realm, ghost realm, human world, the Heaven of Four Great Kings, Heaven of Thirty-Three Smaller Heavens, and so forth, and the Heaven of Nonthinking and Not Nonthinking are established. The holy ones have built up stages of holy vinaya to guide ignorant sentient beings out of the suffering associated with birth and death. These stages include different levels, such as stream-enterer, once-returner, nonreturner, arhat, self-enlightened one, bodhisattva, and Thus-Comer. Nevertheless, all dharmas adopt nonnature as self-nature; in dharmas without nature, there are no distinct dharmas, or karmas, nor are there effects. The dharmas are always without nature.

(The Buddha responded to Well-Appearing One's inquiry why different effects caused by different karmas or by different dharma practices are distinguished as the nature of all dharmas is nonnature.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, as to you question: 'If all dharmas without nature definitely do not have functions, how can the dharma practitioners attain stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and finally achieve the perfect knowledge of all phenomena and thus are named the Buddhas, the World-Honored Ones, to guide sentient beings out of birth and death?' What do you think about this? Are the paths that they have cultivated without nature? Are stream-entry effect, once-return effect, nonreturn effect, arhat effect, self-enlightenment bodhi, the path of bodhisattva, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena without nature?"

Well-Appearing One replied, “They paths that they have cultivated, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena are without nature.”

The Buddha asked Well-Appearing One again, “What do you think about this? Can the dharmas without nature attain the dharmas without nature?”

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

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, “As all dharmas are without nature and paths, they thus are neither correspondent nor not correspondent. They are immaterial, invisible, and unsubstantial. They have only one form, and that is formlessness. But ignorant sentient beings with upside-down thinking have mistaken formless dharmas for existent beings and thus are attached to the five aggregates. They have mistaken impermanence for permanence, pains for pleasures, selflessness for selfness, and impurity for purity. They are attached to the dharmas without nature and regard them as with nature. In order to rescue these ignorant sentient beings, the great bodhisattvas feel obliged to practice expedient skillfulness of the fathomless prajna paramita, assist the ignorant sentient beings to get rid of incorrect and illusory differentiation, expediently place them in formless dharmas, and guide them to cultivate and learn diligently to get rid of birth and death and realize and attain the permanent happiness in nirvana.”

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, “Are all the things to which the ignorant sentient beings are attached real rather than illusory so that after being attached to them, they continue to make karmas, and owing to this cause and condition, they fall into various destinies and cannot get out of the bondage of suffering caused by birth and death?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “What the foolish sentient beings grasp are not real at all. Nothing as thin as the tip of a hair is real. Ignorant sentient beings are attached to them and make karmas, and because of this cause and condition, they fall into inferior destinies and cannot get out of the suffering in birth and death due to their delusive and upside-down attachment. I am going to elaborate to make its meanings precise and understandable; with the help of similes, the wise ones will know the meanings correctly.

"Well-Appearing One, what do you think about this? If a person experiences the pleasures of the five desires in a dream, is what happens in the dream real? Can a dreamer feel the same pleasures as the one experienced in the dream?"

Well-Appearing One replied, "No, as the person that the dreamer saw in the dream is not real, not to mention the dreamer could feel the same pleasures as the one experienced in the dream."

The Buddha asked Well-Appearing One, "What do you think about this? Aren't all dharmas, the virtuous or not virtuous, morally related or morally unrelated, flawed or flawless, of the world or beyond the world, and the conditioned or the unconditioned, like the things seen in the dream?"

Well-Appearing One replied, "Definitely no dharmas, the virtuous or the virtuous, morally related or morally unrelated, flawed or flawless, of the world or beyond the world, and the conditioned or the unconditioned, are not like the things seen in the dream."

The Buddha asked Well-Appearing One again, "What do you think about this? Are there real births and deaths experienced in different destinies within a dream?"

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

The Buddha asked Well-Appearing One, "What do you think about this? Is there real cultivation path in a dream to let one stay away from contamination and attain purification?"

Well-Appearing One replied, "No, World-Honored One. Why? All the things seen in the dream are not real; they can neither establish, nor can be established. As cultivation path is nonexistent, let alone one can get rid of contamination and attain purification through cultivation path."

The Buddha asked Well-Appearing One, "What do you think about this? Are the images in mirrors real? Can one create karmas out of the images and thus be reborn in hells, animal realm, ghost realm, human world, or heavens to experience pleasures and pains?"

Well-Appearing One replied, “The images reflected in mirrors are not real, only the foolish children will believe they are real. How can one make karmas out of images and be reborn in inferior destinies or in human world and heavens to experience pleasures and pains?”

The Buddha asked Well-Appearing One, “What do you think about this? Can the images serve as a cultivate path for one to get rid of contamination and attain purification?”

Well-Appearing One replied, “The images are not real; they can neither establish, nor can be established. As the cultivation path is nonexistent, let alone one can follow this cultivate path to get rid of contamination and attain purification.”

The Buddha asked Well-Appearing One, “What do you think about this? Are echoes in valleys real? Can one make karmas out of them and thus be reborn in hell, animal realm, ghost realm, human world, or heavens to experience pains and pleasures?”

Well-Appearing One replied, “The echoes in valleys or elsewhere are not real; only the foolish children will believe they are real. How can one make karmas out of echoes and thus fall into inferior destinies or in human world and heavens to experience pains and pleasures?”

The Buddha asked Well-Appearing One, “What do you think about this? Can echoes really serve as a cultivate path to let one get rid of contamination and attain purification?”

Well-Appearing One replied, “No, World-Honored One. Why? The echoes in valleys or elsewhere are not real; they can neither establish, nor can be established. As the cultivation path is nonexistent, how can one follow this path to get rid of contamination and attain purification?”

The Buddha asked Well-Appearing One, “What do you think about this? Are illusory images of water under sunlight real? Can one make karmas out of them and thus be reborn in hells, animal realm, ghost realm, human world, or heavens to experience pains and pleasures?”

Well-Appearing One replied, “The illusory images of water under sunlight are not real, only the foolish children will believe they are real. How can one make karmas out of them and thus fall into inferior destinies, or in human world and heavens to experience pains and pleasures?”

The Buddha asked Well-Appearing One, “What do you think about this? Can the illusory images under sunlight serve as a cultivate path to let one stay away from contamination and attain purification?”

Well-Appearing One replied, “No, World-Honored One. Why? The illusory images under sunlight are not real; they can neither establish, nor can be established. As the cultivation path is nonexistent, let alone one can follow this path to get rid of contamination and become purified.”

The Buddha asked Well-Appearing One, “What do you think about this? Are the phenomena of shadows real? Can one make karmas out of them and thus be reborn in hells, animal realm, ghost realm, human world, or heavens to experience pains and pleasures?”

Well-Appearing One replied, “The phenomena of shadows are not real, only the foolish children will believe they are real. How can one make karmas out of them and thus fall into inferior destinies or are reborn as human beings or heavenly beings to experience pains and pleasures?”

The Buddha asked Well-Appearing One again, “What do you think about this? Can the phenomena of shadows serve as a cultivate path to let one get rid of contamination and attain purification?”

Well-Appearing One replied, “No, World-Honored One. Why? The phenomena of the shadows are not real; they can neither establish, nor can be established. As the cultivation path is nonexistent, how can one follow the path to get rid of contamination and attain purification?”

The Buddha asked Well-Appearing One, “What do you think about this? A magician made four transformed brave armies: elephants, horses, vehicles, and infantry as well as the transformed cows, sheep, men, women and other rare things. Are these transformed things real? Can a transformed being make karmas and thus fall into hells, animal realm, ghost realm, human world, or heavens to experience pains and pleasures?”

Well-Appearing One replied, “All these transformed elephants, horses, and so forth are not real; only the foolish children will believe they are real. How can one make karmas out of

them and thus fall into inferior destinies, or will be reborn as human beings and heavenly beings to experience pains and pleasures?"

The Buddha asked Well-Appearing One again, "What do you think about this? Can the transformed things serve as a cultivate path let one get rid of contamination and attain purification?"

Well-Appearing One replied, "No, World-Honored One. Why? The transformed elephants or horses are not real; they cannot establish or be established. As the cultivation path is nonexistent, how can one follow the path to get rid of contamination and attain purification?"

The Buddha asked Well-Appearing One again, "What do you think about this? One with supernatural power of transformation made a transformed person. Is this transformed person real? Can this transformed person make karmas and thus fall into the hells, animal realm, ghost realm, human world, or heavens to experience pains and pleasures?"

Well-Appearing One replied, "As the transformed one is not real, how can he make karmas and thus fall into inferior destinies or be reborn in human world or heavens to experience pains and pleasures?"

The Buddha asked Well-Appearing One again, "What do you think about this? Can the transformed one really cultivate the dharma path to get rid of contamination and attain purification?"

Well-Appearing One replied, "No, World-Honored One. Why? The transformed person is not real; it can neither establish nor can be established. As the cultivation path is nonexistent, how can the transformed person cultivate the path to get rid of contamination and attain purification?"

The Buddha asked Well-Appearing One, "What do you think about this? Are the beings shown in mirages real? Can they make karmas and thus fall into the hells, animal realm, and ghost realm, or be reborn in human world or in heavens to experience pains and pleasures?"

Well-Appearing One replied, “All the beings appearing in the mirages are not real. How can they make karmas and thus fall into the inferior destinies or be reborn in human world or in heavens to experience pains and pleasures?”

The Buddha asked Well-Appearing One, “What do you think about this? Can the things in the mirages serve as a cultivation path to let one get rid of contamination and attain purification?”

Well-Appearing One replied, “No, World-Honored One. Why? The beings appearing in the mirages are not real; they can neither establish nor can be established. As the cultivation of the paths is nonexistent, how can one cultivate the path to get rid of contamination and attain purification?”

The Buddha asked Well-Appearing One, “What do you think about this? Are there real contaminated ones and purified ones in the things appearing in the mirage?”

Well-Appearing One replied, “There are no real contaminated or purified ones in mirages.”

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, “As the contaminated and the purified ones are not real, contamination and purification are not real either. Why? The sentient beings dwelling in the ‘I’ and the associated images think that the contaminated and purified ones are real because of their delusive differentiations. Those who can see the truth do not think that the contaminated and the purified ones exist; for them it is quite clear that contamination or purification is unattainable. All dharmas are empty in the final analysis.”

(The Buddha used similes to illustrate that all dharmas are empty in the final analysis.)

# Chapter 84

## Telling the Truth

## (In the Second Assembly)

At that time, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, “World-Honored One, if contamination and purification do not exist for those who can see the truth, this should also be true for those who do not see the truth. Why? It is because all dharmas are nonexistent. World-Honored One, as contamination and purification do not exist for those who tell the truth, it should also be true for those who do not tell the truth. Why? It is because all dharmas are without self-nature. World-Honored One, as the dharmas without self-nature have no contamination and purification, the dharmas with self-nature and the dharmas with and without self-nature should have no contamination and purification either. Why? It is because all dharmas adopt nonnature as their self-nature. World-Honored One, if contamination and purification do not exist for those who can see and tell the truth and also for those who cannot see and tell the truth, then why does the World-Honored One teach about the dharma of purification?”
(Well-Appearing One asked that if all dharmas are without self-nature, why is there the dharma of purification for purifying the contaminated ones?)

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, “I say the nature of equality of all dharmas is the dharma of purification.”

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, “What is the nature of equality of all dharmas?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing 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 always exist and endures, and this is named the nature of equality of all dharmas. This nature of equality is the dharma of purification, which is established in terms

of the worldly perspective instead of the ultimate meaning. Why? It is because in the ultimate meaning, there is neither differentiation nor nonsensical argument; all names and languages are suspended."

(The Buddha replied that realness, dharma realm, and so forth are the nature of equality of all dharmas; this nature of equality is the dharma of purification, which is inherent for all dharmas; it is the nature of all dharmas; it is not established elsewhere apart from dharmas.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, "If all dharmas are like the dreams, images, echoes, flames, shadows, illusions, transformed things, and mirages that look real but actually unreal, then why do great bodhisattvas initiate aspiration to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi based on these unreal dharmas and vow, 'I should fulfill giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita. I should fulfill superior supernatural powers. I should fulfill expedient skillfulness paramita, exquisite aspiration paramita, abilities paramita, and knowledge paramita. I should fulfill the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations. I should fulfill the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and the noble eightfold path. I should fulfill the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration. I should fulfill the eight liberation gates, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and the ten universal contemplations. I should fulfill internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature. I should fulfill realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable. I should fulfill the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering. I should fulfill the stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilements, and so forth, and the stage of dharma cloud. I should fulfill all dharani gates and all samadhi gates. I should fulfill the five eyes and the six supernatural powers. I should fulfill the Buddha's ten abilities, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and the eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power. I should fulfill staying in correct mindfulness and dwelling in equanimity at all times. I should fulfill the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena. I should fulfill the thirty-two perfect major marks and the eighty distinguishing minor features. I should elicit immeasurable brilliant lights to shine universally over boundless worlds in the ten directions. I should elicit a wonderful voice to fill boundless worlds in the ten

directions and speak of various subtle and exquisite dharma gates suited to various sentient beings' different minds and associated images of definitive understanding, so that they can acquire benefits and happiness?"

(Well-Appearing One asked again, if all dharmas are like dreams and so forth, why should great bodhisattvas vow to fulfill various superior holy dharmas?)

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One by asking him, "What do you think about this? Aren't the dharmas that you are talking about like dreams, images, echoes, flams, shadows, illusions, transformed things, and mirages?"

Well-Appearing One replied, "Yes, they are. World-Honored One, if all dharmas are like dreams, images, and so forth, and mirages that are not real, why do great bodhisattvas practice the fathomless prajna paramita and make great vows to fulfill various merits and virtues to bring benefits, peace, and happiness to innumerable sentient beings?

"World-Honored One, as all beings perceived in dreams, images, and so forth, and mirages cannot practice giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita, how can they fulfill these paramitas? This applies to all other dharmas as well. It is because all these dharmas are not real. World-Honored One, as all beings perceived in dreams, images, and so forth, and mirages cannot practice the thirty-two perfect major marks and the eighty distinguishing minor features, how can they fulfill them? This also applies to all other dharmas as well. It is because all these dharmas are not real. All those perceived in dreams, images, and so forth, and mirages cannot accomplish what they have aspired to, so do the rest of dharmas. It is because all dharmas are not real."

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, "Yes, it is as you say. As the unreal dharmas cannot practice giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita, let alone they can fulfill them. As the unreal dharmas cannot practice the thirty-two perfect major marks and the eighty distinguishing minor features, let alone they can fulfill them. The unreal dharmas cannot accomplish what one aspires to and cannot realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi that one pursues either.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna paramitas and the rest of immeasurable, boundless good dharmas are not real, so they cannot realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. You must know, Well-Appearing One, all these dharmas are created by thinking, and the dharmas created by thinking cannot attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, although these dharmas can elicit one's aspiration to the bodhi path, they cannot nurture and support its fulfillment because all dharmas have no arising, initiation, and real forms. When practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas have since the time aspiring to the bodhi initiated various virtuous dharmas of the body, speech, and mind, namely, the cultivation of giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna paramitas, and so forth, and the cultivation of the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena, but they understand that all dharmas are like dreams, images, echoes, flames, shadows, illusions, transformed things, and mirages; all of them are not real.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas cannot assist the sentient beings to mature, dignify and purify the Buddha lands, and realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi unless they fulfill these various dharmas although all these dharmas are not real. Namely, if they do not 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, they will not be able to assist the sentient beings to mature, dignify and purify the Buddha lands, and realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas accurately know that all virtuous dharmas that they cultivate and in which they dwell are like dreams, images, and so forth, and mirages. That is, when they 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, they should thoroughly understand that these dharmas are like dreams, images, and so forth, and mirages. When they assist the sentient beings to mature,

dignify and purify the Buddha lands, and aspire to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, they should thoroughly understand that these dharmas are like dreams, images, and so forth, and the mirages. They should also realize that the different minds and actions of all sentient beings are like dreams, images, and so forth, and mirages.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas do not grasp all dharmas as existent or nonexistent. Even if they can realize and attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge through grasping some dharmas, they should accurately know that these dharmas are like dreams, images, and so forth, and mirages, and thus should not grasp these dharmas as existent or nonexistent. Why? 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 are ungraspable. The virtuous and the not virtuous dharmas are ungraspable. The morally related and morally unrelated dharmas are ungraspable. The flawed and flawless dharmas are ungraspable. The dharmas of the world and beyond the world are ungraspable. The conditioned and unconditioned dharmas are also ungraspable. The great bodhisattvas should thoroughly understand all dharmas as ungraspable before pursuing the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. Why? It is true that all dharmas are ungraspable and unreal; they are like dreams, images, and so forth, and mirages. The ungraspable dharmas cannot realize and attain the ungraspable dharmas. But sentient beings do not understand all dharmas as they really are. The motivation to benefit the sentient beings inspires great bodhisattvas to pursue the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, since the moment aspiring to the bodhi, the great bodhisattvas have cultivated giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita in order to bring benefits and happiness to all sentient beings. They have pursued the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi not for the sake of themselves or something else, but with an attempt to bring benefits and happiness to all sentient beings.

(The Buddha taught that although all dharmas are not real, great bodhisattvas cannot assist sentient beings and purify Buddha lands unless they cultivate and fulfill all virtuous holy dharmas. But they should not grasp all dharmas as they are not real.)

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas see that the foolish sentient beings are dwelling in incorrect views and mistake selflessness for selfness, nonexistent sentient being for existent sentient being, nonexistent knower for existent knower, and nonexistent viewer for existent viewer. The great bodhisattvas feel pity for them and decide to help them expediently, hoping they can get rid of the upside-down and delusive attachment to stay in the sweet-dew realm of nonthinking, so that they no longer cling to thoughts of the ‘I,’ the sentient being, and so forth, and the knower and the viewer. At that time, they will stay away from restlessness, distraction, nonsensical arguments, and differentiation; their minds will become indifferent to fame and wealth; they will dwell in tranquility and stay far away from nonsensical arguments.

“Well-Appearing One, these great bodhisattvas thus practice the fathomless prajna paramita expediently. They are not attached to all dharmas themselves; they also encourage others to do so. They have practiced in this way in terms of the worldly perspective rather than the superior ultimate meaning. In the superior ultimate meaning, there is no attachment, and the distinction between self and others is also unattainable.

At that time, the ling-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, “World-Honored One, when attaining unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, is the Buddha dharma realized by Buddhas named according to worldly perspective or based on superior ultimate meaning?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “The Buddha dharma realized by the Buddhas when they attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi is named by virtue of the worldly perspective rather than the superior ultimate meaning. Based on the superior meaning, both the one who attains the dharma and the dharma to be attained are unattainable. Why? When we say that someone has attained a dharma, it implies that something like attainment is existent. Once there is attainment, there is attachment to duality. Those attached to duality will neither attain dharma effects nor gain intuitive insights in contemplation.”

(The Buddha explained based on ultimate meaning why attainment is nonexistent.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, “If those attached to duality can attain neither effects nor intuitive insights in contemplation, then can those attached to nonduality attain effects and intuitive insights in contemplation?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “Both the persons attached to duality or nonduality cannot attain effects or intuitive insights. Once holding attachment, they are attached to duality. On the other hand, those not attached to duality, nonduality, or neither duality nor nonduality will attain effects and intuitive insights. Why? It is nonsensical argument either to say this attachment will attain or will not attain dharma effects and intuitive insights. It is because no nonsensical argument is existent within the nature of equality of all dharmas. The nature of equality is so named because it is apart from nonsensical arguments.”

(The Buddha stated that the nature of equality is apart from nonsensical arguments and attachment. All attachments result in duality.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, “If all dharmas adopt nonnature as self-nature, what does the nature of equality mean?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “Given the truth that all dharmas have neither nature nor nonnature, this understanding should not be expressed through language. The nature of equality without speaking is the nature of equality due to the quality of the nature of equality is unspeakable and unknown. No dharmas are attainable apart from the nature of equality, and no nature of equality is attainable apart from the dharmas. Well-Appearing One, you must know that both the ordinary sentient beings and the holy ones cannot practice the nature of equality because it is beyond where they can reach.”

(The Buddha taught the implied meaning of the nature of equality of all dharmas.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, “Isn’t the nature of the equality of all dharmas the level where the Buddhas practice?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “The nature of equality of all dharmas cannot be practiced or realized by holy ones. All stream-enterers, once-returners, nonreturners,

arhats, self-enlightened ones, bodhisattvas, and Thus-Comers cannot practice the level of the nature of equality because within it there are no nonsensical arguments and differentiation."

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, "The Buddhas have attained complete freedom and been at ease in all dharmas, how can we say that the nature of equality is not the level where Buddhas practice?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "The Buddhas have attained complete freedom and been at ease in all dharmas. If the nature of equality is different from the Buddha, we may say that it is the level where the Buddhas practice. Because the nature of equality is not different from the Buddha, how can we say that the nature of equality is the level where the Buddhas practice?

(The Buddha explained why it is not accurate to say Buddhas practice at the level of the nature of equality.)

"You must know, Well-Appearing One, all kinds of nature of equality, either the nature of equality of ordinary sentient beings, or the nature of equality of stream-enterers, once-returners, nonreturners, arhats, self-enlightened ones, bodhisattvas, and Thus-Comers, have only one form, and that is the formlessness. All the natures of equality are the same; they are not different or separate. Therefore, we should not distinguish between the nature of equality for the ordinary sentient beings, the nature of equality for stream-enterers, and so forth, and the nature of equality for Thus-Comers. Within this one nature of equality, various natures of equality are unattainable, and the differences between the forms of ordinary sentient beings and the holy ones are unattainable too."

(All kinds of the nature of equality share the same form, that is formlessness.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, "If in the nature of equality of all dharmas various differences is unattainable, then there should be no differences between the dharma of ordinary sentient beings and the dharma of stream-enterers, once-returners, and so forth."

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “Yes, it is as you say, in the nature of equality of all dharmas, there is no difference between the dharma of ordinary sentient beings and the dharma of holy ones.”

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, “If in the nature of equality of all dharmas, there is no difference between the dharma of ordinary sentient beings and the dharma of holy ones, why does the triple gem, the Buddha, dharma, and the sangha, appear in the world?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One by asking him, “What do you think about this? Are the natures of equality of the Buddha, dharma, and sangha different?”

Well-Appearing One replied, “If my understanding of the Buddha’s teaching is correct, the natures of equality of the Buddha, dharma, and sangha are not different. Why? The natures of equality of the Buddha, the dharma, and the sangha are neither correspondent nor not correspondent. They are immaterial, invisible, and unsubstantial. They have only form, and that is formlessness. But the Buddhas, the World-Honored Ones, have expediently and skillfully taught the dharma of formlessness with different names and forms to distinguish between the ordinary sentient beings and the dharma of ordinary sentient beings, the stream-enterers and the dharma of stream-enterers, and so forth, and the Thus-Comers and the Buddha dharma.”

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, “Yes, it is as you say. The Buddhas have taught formlessness expediently and skillfully with different names and forms of the dharmas and of the sentient beings.

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, what do you think about this? If the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones did not realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, or if they did realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi but they did not establish the names and the forms of all dharmas, could sentient beings distinguish by themselves between the denizens of the hells, animals, ghosts, human beings, and heavenly being by themselves? Could they distinguish between the Heaven of Four Great Kings, Heaven of Thirty-Three Smaller Heavens, and so forth, and the Heaven of Nonthinking and Not Nonthinking? Could they distinguish between matter, feeling,

and so forth, and consciousness; the eye sphere, ear sphere, and so forth, and the conscious sphere; the sight sphere, sound sphere, and so forth, and the mental-image sphere; the eye realm, ear realm, and so forth, and the conscious realm; the sight realm, sound realm, and so forth, and the mental-image realm; the eye consciousness realm, ear consciousness realm, and so forth, and the conscious consciousness realm; the eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and the 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 the consciousness realm; cause and condition, consecutive thoughts, conditions that stimulate the mind, and the conditions that reinforce main causes; the dharmas produced by conditions; and ignorance, action, consciousness, and so forth, and old age and death? Could sentient beings learn by themselves to distinguish between the virtuous and not virtuous dharmas, the morally related and morally unrelated dharmas, the flawed and flawless dharmas, the dharmas of and beyond the world, and the conditioned and unconditioned dharmas? Could they learn by themselves to distinguish between giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita; the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and the noble eightfold path; internal emptiness, external emptiness, 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 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 stage of pure contemplation, stage of embryonic Buddha nature, and so forth, and the stage of Thus-Comer; the stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilements, and so forth, and the stage of dharma cloud; 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 the eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power; the thirty-two perfect major marks and the eighty 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; the perfect knowledge of the forms of exquisite aspirations; the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge; the triple gem; and the three vehicles? Could they learn by themselves to know all these different names and forms?"

Well-Appearing One replied, “No, World-Honored One. If the Buddhas did not establish various different names and forms of dharmas for sentient beings, the sentient beings would not be able to know these various names and forms by themselves.”

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, “Although the Thus-Comers have established various different names and forms for sentient beings with their formless expedient skillfulness, they remain unmovable in the nature of equality of all dharmas. Although they have greatly benefited the sentient beings, and the sentient beings owe them gratitude, the Thus-Comers do not grasp these names and forms of all dharmas.”

At that time, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, “World-Honored One, are only the Thus-Comers unmovable in the nature of equality of all dharmas, or are all ordinary sentient beings, stream-enterers, once-returners, nonreturners, arhats, self-enlightened ones, and bodhisattvas also unmovable in the nature of equality of all dharmas?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “They are all unmovable in the nature of equality of all dharmas. It is because all dharmas and all sentient beings do not go beyond the nature of equality. As like the nature of equality, so are realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable. All dharmas, the ordinary sentient beings, and the holy ones are not different by virtue of realness, dharma realm, and so forth.”

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, “Although the nature of equality of all ordinary sentient beings, all holy ones, and all dharmas are not different, the natures of all sentient beings and all dharmas should be different because their forms are different, and their dharma natures should be different. If this is the case, then the natures of matter, feeling, and so forth, and consciousness should be different because their forms are different. The natures of the eye sphere, ear sphere, and so forth, and conscious spheres should be different because their forms are different. The natures of the sight sphere, sound sphere, and so forth, and mental-image sphere should be different because their forms are different. The natures of eye realm, ear realm, and so forth, and conscious realm should be different because their forms are different. The natures of the sight realm, sound realm, and so forth, and mental-image realm should be different because their forms are different. The natures of the eye consciousness realm, ear consciousness realm, and so forth, and conscious consciousness realm

should be different because their forms are different. The natures of the eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact should be different because their forms are different. The natures of the feelings produced by eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact should be different because their forms are different. The natures of the earth realm, water realm, and so forth, and consciousness realm should be different because their forms are different. The natures of cause and condition, consecutive thoughts, conditions that stimulate the mind, and the conditions that reinforce main causes should be different because their forms are different. The natures of the dharmas produced by conditions should be different because their forms are different. The natures of ignorance, action, consciousness, and so forth, and old age and death should be different because their forms are different. The natures of greed, anger, and ignorance should be different because their forms are different. The natures of incorrect views of ordinary sentient beings should different because their forms are different. The natures of the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations should be different because their forms are different. The natures of the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path should be different because their forms are different. The natures of the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration should be different because their forms are different. The natures of internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature should be different because their forms are different. The natures of realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable should be different because their forms are different. The natures of the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering should be different because their forms are different. The natures of giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita should be different because their forms are different. The natures of the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations should be different because their forms are different. The natures of the stage of pure contemplation, stage of embryonic Buddha nature, and so forth, and stage of Thus-Comer should be different because their forms are different. The natures of the stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilements, and so forth, and stage of dharma cloud should be different because their forms are different. The natures of all dharani gates and all samadhi gates should be different because their forms are different. The natures of the five eyes and six supernatural powers should be different because

their forms are different. The natures of the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power should be different because their forms are different. The natures of the thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features should be different because their forms are different. The natures of staying in correct mindfulness and dwelling in equanimity at all times should be different because their forms are different. The natures of the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena should be different because their forms are different. The natures of ordinary sentient beings, stream-enterers, and so forth, and Thus-Comers should be different because their forms are different. The natures of the virtuous and not virtuous dharmas should be different because their forms are different. The natures of the morally related and morally unrelated dharmas should be different because their forms are different. The natures of the flawed and flawless dharmas should be different because their forms are different. The natures of the dharmas of and beyond the world should be different because their forms are different. The natures of the conditioned and unconditioned dharmas should different because their forms are different.

"World-Honored One, if the forms of the dharmas are different, then their dharma natures should also be different. Then how is the one-form dharma nature established in the different forms of all dharmas? How do the great bodhisattvas not differentiate among the different natures of all dharmas and of all sentient beings when they practice the fathomless prajna paramita? If the great bodhisattvas do not differentiate among the different natures of all dharmas and of all sentient beings, they should not be able to practice the fathomless prajna paramita. If they do not practice the fathomless prajna paramita, they will not be able to progress from one stage to the other. If they do not progress from one stage to the other, they should not be able to enter the correct bodhisattva nature of nonarising. If they do not enter the correct bodhisattva nature of nonarising, they should not be able to transcend the stage of voice-hearer and the stage of self-enlightened one. If they do not transcend the stage of voice-hearer and the stage of self-enlightened one, they should not be able to fulfill the supernatural powers paramita. If they do not fulfill the supernatural powers paramita, they should not be able to play various supernatural powers freely and easily. If they do not play various supernatural powers freely and easily, they should not be able to fulfill giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna

paramita. If they do not fulfill giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita, they should not be able to travel from one Buddha nation to the other to stay close to various Buddhas, the World-Honored Ones and make offerings respectfully to them. If they do not travel from one Buddha nation to the other to stay close to various Buddhas, the World-Honored Ones and make offerings respectfully to them, they should not be able to plant various virtuous roots at the Buddhas' places. If they do not plant various virtuous roots at the Buddhas' places, they should not be able to assist the sentient beings to mature and dignify and purify the Buddha lands. If they do not assist the sentient beings to mature and dignify and purify the Buddha lands, they should not be able to realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, turn the correct dharma wheel to liberate sentient beings permanently from the birth and death in inferior destinies."

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, "As you say, the natures of equality of all ordinary sentient beings, all holy ones, and all dharmas are not different. But because the forms of all sentient beings and all dharmas are different, their natures and dharma natures should be different. Then how can the one-form dharma nature be established in the different forms of all dharmas? How do great bodhisattvas not differentiate among different natures of various dharmas and sentient beings when they practice the fathomless prajna paramita?

"Well-Appearing One, what do you think about this? Is the dharma nature of matter empty? Are the dharma natures of feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness, and so forth, and all conditioned and unconditioned dharmas empty?"

Well-Appearing One replied, "Yes, all dharma natures are empty."

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, "What do you think about this? Are the different forms of all dharmas attainable in empty nature? Are the different forms of matter, feeling, and so forth, and the conditioned and unconditioned dharmas attainable in empty nature?"

Well-Appearing One replied, "No, World-Honored One, in empty nature all different forms are unattainable."

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, “Therefore, you must know that the nature of equality of all dharmas is neither with nor apart from the ignorant ordinary sentient beings, the stream-enterers, and so forth, and the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones. The nature of equality of all dharmas is neither with nor apart from matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness, and so forth, and the conditioned and unconditioned dharmas.”

(The Buddha explained in these paragraphs why the nature of equality remains as one form, which is formless, while the forms of all dharmas look different.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, “Is the nature of equality of all dharmas conditioned or unconditioned?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “The nature of equality is neither conditioned nor unconditioned. The unconditioned dharmas are unattainable apart from the conditioned dharmas, and the conditioned dharmas are unattainable apart from the unconditioned dharmas. Well-Appearing One, you must know that the conditioned realm and the unconditioned realm are neither combined nor separate; they are immaterial, invisible, and unsubstantial, and with only one form, that is formlessness. All Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones teach this in terms of the worldly perspective rather than the ultimate superior meaning. Why? In ultimate superior meaning, no actions of body, speech, and mind are attainable, and no superior meaning is attainable apart from the actions of body, speech, and mind. You must know, Well-Appearing One, it is with the nature of equality of the conditioned and unconditioned dharmas that there is the superior meaning; there is no superior meaning apart from the conditioned and unconditioned dharmas. Therefore, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas should be able to practice all great bodhisattva actions without affecting superior meaning. They will be able to assist sentient beings to mature; dignify and purify Buddha lands; realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi; and turn the wonderful dharma wheel to relieve sentient beings from birth, old age, illness, and death forever, and realize and attain the ultimate and permanent happiness in nirvana.”

# Chapter 85

## Empty Nature

(In the Second Assembly)

At that time, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, “World-Honored One, if the nature of equality of all dharmas is inherently empty and cannot act or be acted upon, how do great bodhisattvas benefit sentient beings through the four approaches of absorption without affecting superior meaning when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “As you say, the nature of equality of all dharmas is inherently empty and cannot act or be acted upon. But the great bodhisattvas still practice giving, pure precept, and so forth to benefit sentient beings. If sentient beings could learn and understand on their own that the original nature of all dharmas is empty, the Thus-Comers and bodhisattvas would not need to undertake unusual things with supernatural powers. That is, they would not need to help sentient beings stay far away from various kinds of delusive upside-down thinking in the inherently unmovable empty self-natures of all dharmas. They would not need to assist sentient beings to stay far away from thinking of the ‘I,’ the sentient being, and so forth, and the knower and the viewer or from thinking of matter, feeling, and so forth, 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 realm, 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. They would not need to help sentient beings stay far away from thinking of the conditioned realm turn to dwell in unconditioned realm and get rid of birth, old age, illness, and death. The unconditioned realm is the emptiness of all dharmas. It is in terms of the worldly perspective to give it this name.”

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, “What kind of emptiness is referred to when speaking of the emptiness of all dharmas?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “It pertains to emptiness of thinking when speaking of the emptiness of all dharmas.

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, what do you think about this? If a transformed body also makes some transformed things, are these transformed things real and not empty?”

Well-Appearing One replied, “All transformed things are not real; they are empty.”

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, “Transformed things and emptiness are neither combined nor separate. Both are empty because of the emptiness of emptiness. We should not distinguish between them. Why? In emptiness, both emptiness and the transformed things are unattainable only because all dharmas are empty in the final analysis.

(The Buddha delineated the relationship between transformed things and emptiness.)

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, matter is not a transformed thing; feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness are transformed things too. No transformed thing is not empty. So are the rest of dharmas and all sentient beings.”

(Buddha described how all dharmas relate to emptiness.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, “Are the dharmas such as aggregates, realms, spheres, and so forth and all sentient beings in the world regarded as transformed entities? Are the dharmas such as the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and all sentient beings in the world regarded as transformed entities?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “All dharmas of the world and beyond the world are nothing other than transformed phenomena; in them, some are transformed voice-hearers, transformed self-enlightened ones, transformed bodhisattvas, or transformed Thus-Comers; some are transformed vexations, transformed karmas, or transformed causes and conditions. I will say that all existent beings are transformed, and they are not different.”

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, “Are the effects caused by the termination of vexations, such as stream-enterer, once-returner, nonreturner, arhat, self-enlightened one, and the Thus-Comer, who has permanently terminated enduring dispositions of vexations, also the transformed things?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “All dharmas that arise and extinguish are transformed things.”

(The Buddha explained how all dharmas relate to transformed things.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, “But what are not transformed things?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “The dharmas without arising and extinction are not transformed things.”

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, “What are the dharmas without arising and extinction?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “The dharmas without illusion and deception are nirvana. They are without arising and extinction, so they are not transformed things.”

(The Buddha defined the dharmas without illusion and deception as nirvana, and the dharmas without arising and extinction as non-transformed things.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, “As World-Honored One has said, the nature of equality of all dharmas is empty; it cannot be affected, and in it no duality is attainable. Not even a little dharma has a self-nature that is not empty. So, how can it be said that nirvana is not a transformed thing?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “It is as you say, not even a little dharma has a self-nature and is not empty. The emptiness of the self-nature is not created by voice-hearers, self-enlightened ones, bodhisattvas, Thus-Comers, or others. The self-nature is always empty whether the Buddhas appear in the world or not, and this is nirvana. Therefore, I say that

nirvana is not a transformed thing. But it does not mean that there is a real dharma named nirvana. You may say that nirvana does not arise or extinguish, and it is not transformed. Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, when I teach novice bodhisattvas and say that nirvana is not a transformed thing, I do not imply that there is another not empty nirvana. Therefore, we should not be attached to this and get in trouble."

(The Buddha cautioned that when we say nirvana is not a transformed thing, we should not think it is not empty.)

At that time, Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "How should we expediently teach and caution novice bodhisattvas so that they are able to understand that the self-natures of all dharmas are always empty?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "Did all dharmas exist in the past and now they become nonexistent, and they are not always empty? The truth is all dharmas are always nonexistent. Don't be shocked and frightened. You must teach and caution novice bodhisattvas expediently and skillfully to let them realize that the self-natures of all dharmas are always empty."

(The Buddha taught how to teach novice learners about emptiness.)

When the Bhagavat finished the teaching of this sutra, numberless great bodhisattvas led by Maitreya Bodhisattva; the voice-hearers led by the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One, Sariputra, Mahamaudgalyayana, Mahakasyapa, and Ananda; and heavenly beings, dragons, asuras, and so forth, all rejoiced greatly after hearing the Buddha's teaching. They believed, accepted, and practiced his teaching.

(This completes the second assembly.)

# Fascicle 479

## Chapter 1

## The Causes and Conditions of the Assembly

## (In the Third Assembly)

This is what I heard.

The Bhagavat once lived at Mount Vulture Peak in Rajagriha with five hundred million senior monks, who were all arhats. These monks had eliminated all flaws and vexations, and attained genuine freedom, peace, and easiness. Their minds were well liberated; their wisdom was well released. They were well tamed like smart horses and great dragons, having accomplished what needed to be done, renounced what should be abandoned, attained self-benefit, ended all bonds, and gained liberation through correct knowledge. They had achieved the uppermost state of mental ease. All these monks were led by Sariputra; among them, Ananda was the only one who had not yet reached the stage of arhat, still in stream-entry stage by that time. Five hundred arhat nuns, led by Yaśodharā, attended the assembly. In addition, thousands of laymen and laywomen participated, all of whom had acquired an insight into the dharma.

Numberless and countless unequaled equal great bodhisattva monastics were also present during the assembly. It is hard to describe or measure them with language. They had mastered great dharani gates and superior samadhi gates, dwelled in emptiness, practiced in formlessness, and held noble aspirations without differentiation. They attained the forbearance of the nature of equality of all dharmas; achieved unhindered understandings; and possessed limitless abilities to teach and debate about the fathomless, subtle, and exquisite essential meanings of the dharma. They also mastered the five supernatural powers that they would never lose. Their characters and manners were always graceful and tender. They worked diligently, bravely, and tirelessly, renouncing their families and discarding all properties, and were always ready to sacrifice their lives when necessary. Free from greed, arrogance, and deceit, they taught wonderful truths to various sentient beings. Having perfectly realized the fathomless dharma forbearance, they

attained great fearlessness and felt free and at ease in body and mind. They had transcended the troubles that demonic followers could cause, subjugated adversaries of vexations, and ceased various karmic obstacles. Their arguments were invincible, and no voice-hearers and self-enlightened ones could measure and comprehend. Their minds were free and at ease toward all dharmas and liberated from all karmic obstacles and vexations. They could interact with all sentient beings expediently and skillfully. They insightfully understood the limitless essential meanings of dependent origination. They effectively removed all incorrect views of the discontinuation of life, eliminated hidden roots of vexations, and terminated bondages and attachments. They had comprehended numberless truths and possessed perfect knowledge, making great vows and initiating aspirations over many kalpas. They always greeted people with smiles and joyful demeanor, presenting themselves in a relaxed manner before talking to them. Their speech was well organized and eloquent, and their voices were peaceful and pleasant. They emitted solemnity and dignity when present before groups, always moving or staying with grace and confidence. They viewed all dharmas as illusions, illusory images of water under sunlight, dreams, the moon reflected in water, and echoes and taught sentient beings expediently and skillfully. To them, all dharmas were comparable to empty flowers in sky, images in mirrors, shadows, transformed objects, and mirages. They understood that all dharmas looked real, but they were not. They taught this profound truth fearlessly with noble and open minds. They excelled at praising and acclaiming others skillfully, possessing a deep understanding of the definitive insights held by sentient beings and the subtle differences in their intentions and actions, and could foresee their futures without hindrance. They achieved the superior dharma forbearance without arising, comprehending the nature of equality of all dharmas and absorbing boundless Buddha lands built on great aspirations. Owing to their powers of samadhi, immeasurable Buddhas of the ten directions often appeared before them. These bodhisattvas encountered all Thus-Comers who appeared and never missed any of them. They asked the Buddhas to stay longer in the worlds to turn the correct dharma wheel and convert more sentient beings. They could overcome all hidden vexations as well as various incorrect views, afflictions, bondages, and complexes, and initiated hundreds of thousands of samadhi to enter and understand insightfully various dharma gates. These great bodhisattvas were equipped with such innumerable merits and virtues that people could not help admiring them ceaselessly for numberless kalpas. The numberless hundreds of thousands of koti nayuta great bodhisattvas

present in the assembly were led by Sage Keeping Bodhisattva, Treasure Nature Bodhisattva, Mentor Bodhisattva, Humanity Conferred Bodhisattva, Star Conferred Bodhisattva, Water Heaven Bodhisattva, Emperor Conferred Bodhisattva, Upper Wisdom Bodhisattva, Contemplating in Freedom Bodhisattva, Attaining Great Power Bodhisattva, Wonderful Auspiciousness Bodhisattva, Diamond Wisdom Bodhisattva, Treasure Seal Hand Bodhisattva, Often Raising Hand Bodhisattva, and Maitreya Bodhisattva.

At that time, the World-Honored One spread a mat on the lion throne, sitting straight up on it with his legs crossed. In correct mindfulness of aspiration, he entered Exquisite King Samadhi, into which various kinds of samadhi were attracted to flow.

The World-Honored One, with correct knowledge and correct mindfulness, rose up peacefully from Exquisite King Samadhi, using his pure heavenly eyes to look at as many Buddha worlds in the ten directions as the sands of the Ganges River. He felt so comfortable and enjoyable. There was a pattern of one thousand wheels in the bottom of his feet, from each foot six million koti nayuta rays emitted. From each of his toes, two insteps, two heels, four ankles, two shins, two buttocks, two knees, two thighs, two haunches, his waist, the flank of his trunk, belly, back, navel, heart, chest with auspicious symbol of perfect virtues, breast, armpits, shoulders, upper arms, elbows, lower arms, wrists, hands, palms, fingers, neck, throat, cheeks, chin, forehead, the top of his head, eye brows, eyes, ears, nose, four front teeth, the forty teeth, and the very fine hairs between his two brows, six million rays emitted. All these rays shined over the large threefold thousand-world, and from there the lights extended to spread all over the Buddha lands, which were as many as the sands of the Ganges River. Any sentient being in these lands, when meeting the lights, would definitely attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.

At that time, the World-Honored One experienced comfort and joy through all his pores. From each of them, six million koti nayuta rays emitted, and the lights shined over the large threefold thousand-world, and from there the lights extended to spread all over the Buddha lands, which were as many as the sands of the Ganges River. Any sentient being in these lands, when meeting the lights, would definitely attain the unsurpassed perfect and universal bodhi.

At that time, the World-Honored One allowed the constant light of his body to shine over the large threefold thousand-world, and from there the lights extended to spread all over the Buddha lands, which were as many as the sands of the Ganges River. Any sentient being in these lands, when meeting the lights, would definitely attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.

In the meantime, the World-Honored One extended his wide, long tongue to cover entire large threefold thousand-world and smiled. Innumerable hundreds of thousands of koti nayuta rays emitted from the Buddha's tongue, and from each of the mixed colors of lights a treasure lotus emerged. The flowers and their thousand leaves were all golden and decorated with various kinds of treasures, which were beautiful and solemn. Such lights and flowers extended to the threefold thousand-world and spread over as many Buddha worlds as the sands of the Ganges. On each lectern of the lotus, a Buddha was sitting and teaching the wonderful dharma in accordance with the six paramitas. Any sentient being who heard it would certainly attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.

At that time, the World-Honored One again entered the Samadhi of Lion's Play. Without rising from seat, he exhibited his supernatural powers to cause the large threefold thousand-world moving in six different ways: 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 border, and rising at the border and sinking in the middle. The whole land was pure, clean, bright, and soft, bringing benefits, peace, and comfort to sentient beings. In the meantime, all sentient beings living in hells, the realm of animals, realm of ghosts, and other perilous and inferior realms of the large threefold thousand-world were relieved from suffering and were reborn in human world or in the six heavens of the realm of desire. Still remembering where they were from, these sentient beings went to the Buddha's residence, full of joy, knelt and bowed with respect, purity, and sincerity at the Buddha's feet. From there the Buddha's powers extended across the Buddha lands in the ten directions, which were as many as the sands of the Ganges River, causing them to quake in six ways. All sentient beings in the inferior realms were relieved from suffering and reborn in the human world or the six heavens in the realm of desire. Still remembering where they were from,

these sentient beings went to the Buddha's residence, full of joy, knelt and bowed with respect at the Buddha's feet.

Meanwhile, in this large threefold thousand-world and the rest of the worlds of the ten directions, which were as many the sands of the Ganges River, the blind could see, the deaf could hear, the dumb could speak, those with wandering thoughts could concentrate, the minds in turmoil could rest, the poor became rich, the naked were clothed, the hungry were fed, the thirsty had drinks, the ill were healed, the ugly became pretty, the physically disabled became healthy, deficient sense were restored, the confused awoke, and the tired now rested in peace and comfort. During this time, all sentient beings treated each other like fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters, friends and relatives. They refrained from harmful words, actions, and occupations and learned to speak correct words, do right things, and engage in beneficial jobs. They moved away from the path of ten negative karmas and chose the path of ten positive karmas. They learned to think positively and let go of all negative thinking. They enjoyed pure celibacy instead of non-celibacy. They loved purity and let go of impurity. They loved quietness and stayed away from noise, and instantly they felt a wonderful joy in body and mind, a feeling of concentration a practitioner could experience when staying in the third stage of meditation. They suddenly had a definitive wisdom arise in mind: "Isn't it wonderful to practice giving, taming, forbearance, diligence, tranquility, and insightful investigation; get away from laziness; practice celibacy; and have loving-kindness, compassion, joy, and equanimity toward all sentient beings, without disturbing each other?"

At that time, as the World-Honored One was sitting on the lion seat, some unique brilliant lights caused by powerful dignity and great virtues illuminated the large threefold thousand-world and as many Buddha lands as the sands of the Ganges River in the ten directions, overshadowing Mount Sumeru, Great Circular Iron Enclosure, the heavenly palaces of dragon gods, and the heavens of purity, and making them invisible. It was like the lights of the full moon in autumn that overshadowed the stars, the sunlight in summer that outshined all colors, and the four treasured Wonderful High King Mountains that eclipsed the lights of smaller mountains. The Buddha used supernatural powers to reveal his original physical body so that all sentient beings in the large threefold thousand-world could see him.

Meanwhile, all heavenly beings in the innumerable heavens of purity in this large threefold thousand-world, as well as the Heaven of Four Great Kings in the realm of desire, along with many humans and nonhumans witnessed the Buddha who was sitting on the lion seat. The Buddha's powerful lights were so bright and significant that they looked like a large golden mountain. When the sentient beings saw this, they celebrated, cheered up, and acclaimed in excitement because they had never seen this before. They went to the Buddha's place, and each of them carried a variety of numberless heavenly flowers, wreaths, spread perfumes, burning incenses, powdered incenses, clothing, jewelry necklaces, treasure banners, canopies, entertainment and music, various rarities and valuable things, and countless species of heavenly lotuses, including heavenly blue lotus, heavenly scarlet lotus, heavenly white lotus, heavenly yellow lotus, heavenly red lotus, heavenly gold money flower, heavenly fragrance flower, as well as numberless flowers grown in waters and grounds. They made all these wonderful things as offerings to the Buddha. The Buddha used his supernatural powers to lift all flower ornaments up in the air and turn them into as many flower tables to accommodate the large threefold thousand-world and then let all the beautiful canopies, treasure bells, pearl banners, and colorful decoration of silks and ribbons fall from the sky. All were so attractive and enjoyable.

At that moment, this Buddha land was completely glorified that it looked like the extremely joyful world in the west. The Buddha's lights shined brilliantly on all species and all objects in the large threefold thousand-world. The entirety of empty space was transformed with a golden radiance, as were the other Buddha lands of the ten directions, said to be as many as the sands of the Ganges River. Meanwhile, because of the Buddha's supernatural powers, every human living in this threefold thousand-world could saw the Buddha seated before them and felt he was teaching the dharma directly to them.

Without rising from his seat, the World-Honored One smiled in joy, great lights emitted from his face to illuminate all over the large threefold thousand-world and as many Buddha lands in the ten directions as the sands of the Ganges River. In the meantime, all sentient beings in this large threefold thousand-world followed the direction of the Buddha lights and saw universally all the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones in as many Buddha lands in the ten directions as the sands of the Ganges River. They also saw the voice-hearers and bodhisattvas gathering in circles around the Thus-Comers and the rest of

sentient and insentient beings of various species in these Buddha lands. In the meantime, all sentient beings in as many Buddha lands in the ten directions as the sands of the Ganges River also followed the direction of the Buddha's lights in this land and saw Sakyamuni Thus-Comer, One Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened One; the voice-hearers and the bodhisattvas gathering together in circles; and the rest of the sentient and insentient beings of various species.

At that time, in the last world of the east at the end of as many worlds as the sands of the Ganges named Lots of Treasures, a Buddha named Treasure Nature was teaching great prajna paramita to great bodhisattvas. A bodhisattva named Universal Light in that land witnessed the great lights, the changes of the earth, and the form of the Buddha's body. He was in wonder, so went to see Buddha and asked, "Why are there such auspicious phenomena?"

Treasure Nature Buddha replied to Universal Light, "At the end of the worlds in the west, which are as many as the sands of the Ganges, there is a world named Barely Tolerable. The Buddha in that land, named Sakyamuni Thus-Comer, One Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened One, is teaching great prajna paramita to great bodhisattvas. It is because of the Buddha's supernatural powers that such auspicious signs appeared."

Hearing what the Buddha said, Universal Light rejoiced and was excited. He said, "World-Honored One, may I have your permission to go to Barely Tolerable World to attend the assembly and make offerings to Sakyamuni Thus-Comer and all the great bodhisattvas? I beg your kind and compassionate permission!"

Treasure Nature Buddha replied to Universal Light, "The time is right. You may go as you wish."

The Buddha handed Universal Light Bodhisattva a golden thousand-stem lotus with a thousand leaves of varied beautiful treasures and said, "You bring this flower to Sakyamuni Buddha's residence and say, 'Treasure Nature Thus-Comer is sending his limitless regards to you, World-Honored One. I am bringing this lotus on my Buddha's behalf to wish you well in doing Buddhist services.' When you go there, you must stay in correct knowledge. You should not be rash and arrogant and thus get in trouble. Why do I say so? It is because all great

bodhisattvas there have attained unhindered understanding of dharani gates and samadhi gates. They are completely free and at ease with supernatural powers, and all have already reached the last stage before becoming a Buddha. They have incomparable virtues and dignity and are whole-heartedly compassionate. Their rebirth in that land was motivated by great causes and conditions."

Universal Light Bodhisattva received the flower and the message, bowed down before the Buddha's feet, and walked around the Buddha clockwise, together with innumerable hundreds of thousands of koti nayuta monastic and lay bodhisattvas as well as numberless, hundreds of thousands of boys and girls, to say goodbye. Each one was carrying numberless best offerings when they started their journey. They passed various Buddha lands in the east and stopped at each Buddha, and on the way making offerings and pay homage to each Buddha with praise and respect. Finally, they arrived at Barely Tolerable World. They bowed down before the Buddha's feet, walked around the Buddha a hundred thousand times, and then stood to one side.

Universal Light Bodhisattva stepped forward and said to the Buddha, "World-Honored One, from this land to the east, at the end of as many Buddha lands as the sands of the Ganges, there is a world with the name Lots of Treasures. The Buddha there is named Treasure Nature Thus-Comer, One Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened One. He is sending his limitless regards to you, World-Honored One. I am bringing you this golden thousand-stem lotus on my Buddha's behalf to wish you well in doing Buddhist services."

Sakyamuni Buddha received the lotus and threw it back to the many Buddha lands as the sands of the Ganges in the east. Because of the Buddha's supernatural powers, the lotus spread through all the Buddha lands. On each flower lectern, a transformed Buddha was sitting with his legs crossed and teaching the dharma in accordance with great prajna paramita to great bodhisattvas. All sentient beings who heard the teachings would definitely attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. When Universal Light and all his associates witnessed this, they rejoiced and were excited and appreciated what they had never experienced before. They thus made offerings of what they had, in accordance with individual root of goodness, to the Buddha and the bodhisattvas with respect and admiration and then sat back. Similar things also happened in the rest of worlds in the east.

At that time, at the end of as many worlds as the sands of the Ganges in the south, there was a world named Leaving All Worries. The Buddha in that world was named Virtue without Worry; a bodhisattva in that world was named Leaving Worry. At the end of as many worlds as the sands of the Ganges in the west, there was a world named Quietude. The Buddha in that world was named Treasure Flame; a bodhisattva in that land was named Act Wisely. At the end of as many worlds as the sands of the Ganges in the north, there was a world named Most Superior. The Buddha in that world was named Superior Emperor; a bodhisattva in that land was named Superior Conferring. At the end of as many worlds as the sands of the Ganges in the northeast, there was a world named Glory of Concentration. The Buddha in that world was named Concentration Elephant Superior Virtue; a bodhisattva in that land was named Leaving Dust Bravery. At the end of as many worlds as the sands of the Ganges in the southeast, there was a world named Wonderfully Enlightened Glory and Delight. The Buddha in that world was named Lotus Superior Virtue; a bodhisattva in that land was named Lotus Hand. At the end of as many worlds as the sands of the Ganges in the southwest, there was a world named Leaving Dust Gathering. The Buddha in that world was named Universal Sunshine Superior Virtue; a bodhisattva in that land was named Bright Sunlight. At the end of as many worlds as the sands of the Ganges in the northwest, there was a world named Genuine Freedom. The Buddha in that world was named One Treasure Canopy Superior; a bodhisattva in that land was named Treasure Superior. At the nadir of as many worlds as the sands of the Ganges, there was a world named Lotus. The Buddha in that world was named Lotus Virtue; a bodhisattva in that land was named Lotus Superior. At the zenith of as many worlds as the sands of the Ganges, there was a world named Delight. The Buddha in that world was named Delight Virtue; a bodhisattva in that land was named Delight Conferring. The events that took place in these worlds were similar to those that happened in the east.

At that time, the large threefold Barely Tolerable Thousand-World was filled with a variety of treasures. Various species of wonderful flowers bloomed everywhere. Rows of banners, flags, and canopies were arranged throughout the area. Trees of flowers, trees of fruits, trees of fragrance, trees of garlands, trees of treasures, trees of clothing, and the trees of other varied ornaments spread amid them. All were so beautiful, glorious, and attractive. It resembled various lotus worlds and pure floral lands of the Thus-Comers, where Wonderfully Auspicious

Bodhisattva, Dwelling Well in Wisdom Bodhisattva, and the rest of numberless great bodhisattvas of great powers have lived.

## Chapter 2

## Sariputra

### Section 1

### (In the Third Assembly)

At that time, knowing that all sentient beings from various worlds, including heavenly beings, demons, Brahmas, sramanas, Brahmans, gandharvas, asuras, dragons, bodhisattvas who had reached the last stage before ascending to the highest throne, and humans and nonhumans who were interested in the dharma, had gathered together, the World-Honored One said to the long-lived sage Sariputra, “If great bodhisattvas would like to become awakened perfectly and universally to the forms of all dharmas, they should learn prajna paramita.”

Upon hearing Buddha’s statement, Sariputra joined his palms together and said to the Buddha respectfully, “World-Honored One, how should great bodhisattvas learn prajna paramita to perfectly and universally become awakened to the forms of all dharmas?”

The Buddha replied to the long-lived sage Sariputra, “Great bodhisattvas should dwell peacefully in prajna paramita by adopting non-dwelling as skillful means as both dwelling and dwellers are unattainable. The great bodhisattvas should fulfill giving paramita by adopting non-renunciation as skillful means as giver, the receiver, and the things given are unattainable. The great bodhisattvas should fulfill pure-precept paramita by adopting non-protection as skillful means as the forms of violation and non-violation are unattainable. The great bodhisattvas should fulfill forbearance paramita by adopting nongrasping as skillful means as the forms of motion and motionlessness are unattainable. The great bodhisattvas should fulfill diligence paramita by adopting non-effort as skillful means as both effort and laziness in body and mind are

unattainable. The great bodhisattvas should fulfill meditation paramita by adopting non-reflection as skillful means as both taste and non-taste in dharma are unattainable. The great bodhisattvas should fulfill prajna paramita by adopting non-attachment as skillful means as existence and nonexistence of dharma nature and dharma forms are unattainable.

(The Buddha instructed how great bodhisattvas learn prajna paramita to become awakened to the forms of all dharmas.)

"Furthermore, Sariputra, the great bodhisattvas should dwell peacefully in prajna paramita and adopt nonattainment as skillful means to cultivate 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 four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations; and the eight liberations and nine concentrations in sequence. They should cultivate the nine reflections by adopting nonattainment as skillful means. The nine reflections include the reflection of the physical body as it swells; it has pus and festering wounds; its skin and flesh are eaten and peeled off; its appearance turns blue owing to bruises; it is eaten by pecking; it is separated and scattered around; it has only bones and skeleton remained; it is burned; and the reflection that nothing in the world can endure forever. They should cultivate ten kinds of mindfulness. What are the ten kinds of mindfulness? They are the mindfulness of Buddha, dharma, sangha, precept, equanimity, heaven, inhalation and exhalation, disgust of the world, death, and body. They should cultivate ten contemplations of impermanence, suffering, selflessness, impurity, death, all worldly things as undesirable, the disgust of food, correct termination, correct departure, and correct extinction. They should cultivate eleven kinds of perfect knowledge: the perfect knowledge of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, the path for the cessation of suffering, exhaustion, nonarising, dharma, the classes of the dharma, the world, knowing others' minds, and the perfect knowledge as taught by the Buddha. They should cultivate the samadhi with general contemplation and specific investigation, the samadhi with specific investigation only, and the samadhi without contemplation and investigation. They should learn three flawless roots: the four noble truths that one should know but has not yet known, more knowledge about the four noble truths, and all aspects of the four noble truths to cease suffering. They should cultivate the contemplation of

impure body, the universal contemplation, and the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. They should cultivate samatha and vipasyana. They should cultivate and fulfill the heavenly eyes, the supernatural power of knowing previous lives, and the flawless knowledge. They should cultivate the four kinds of fearlessness and the four unhindered understandings. They should cultivate the non-regressive five supernatural powers. They should cultivate the six paramitas, seven holy treasures, eight factors for awakening, and the knowledge shared by the sentient beings of the nine realms. They should cultivate the Buddha's ten abilities and the eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power. They should cultivate great loving-kindness, great compassion, great joy, and great equanimity. They should cultivate the subtle and wonderful knowledge of all phenomena, as well as the rest of immeasurable, boundless, and inconceivable merits and virtues of the Buddhas. All these dharmas are unattainable.
(The Buddha further taught that great bodhisattvas should cultivate various holy dharmas based on nonattainment. They should reflect on physical body, stay in ten kinds of mindfulness, and cultivate ten contemplations, eleven kinds of perfect knowledge, samadhi, three flawless roots, and the rest of superior dharmas to become awakened to the forms of all dharmas.)

"Furthermore, Sariputra, if the great bodhisattvas would like to realize and attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge quickly, they should learn prajna paramita. If the great bodhisattvas would like to fulfill the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, perfect knowledge of all phenomena, and the perfect knowledge of the phenomena of all sentient beings' minds and actions, they should learn prajna paramita. If the great bodhisattvas would like to eliminate enduring dispositions of vexations, they should learn prajna paramita. If the great bodhisattvas would like to enter onto the correct bodhisattva path, they should learn prajna paramita. If the great bodhisattvas would like to transcend the stage of voice-hearer and the stage of self-enlightened one, they should learn prajna paramita. If the great bodhisattvas would like to dwell in the stage of bodhisattva without regression, they should learn prajna paramita. If the great bodhisattvas would like to attain the superior six supernatural powers, they should learn prajna paramita. If the great bodhisattvas would like to know the changes and differences of the minds and actions of all sentient beings, they should learn prajna paramita. If the great bodhisattvas would like to surpass the wisdom of all voice-hearers and self-enlightened ones, they should learn prajna paramita. If the great bodhisattvas would like to attain

all dharani gates and all samadhi gates, they should learn prajna paramita. If the great bodhisattvas would like to surpass all voice-hearers and self-enlightened ones with a mind of joyful participation in practicing giving, they should learn prajna paramita. If the great bodhisattvas would like to surpass all voice-hearers and self-enlightened ones with a mind of joyful participation in observing pure precept, they should learn prajna paramita. If the great bodhisattvas would like to surpass all voice-hearers and self-enlightened ones with a mind of joyful participation in the cultivation of the liberation caused by concentration and the wisdom, knowledge, and views of liberation, they should learn prajna paramita. If the great bodhisattvas would like to surpass all voice-hearers and all self-enlightened ones with a mind of joyful participation in meditations, liberations, samadhi, samapatti, and the rest of virtuous dharmas, they should learn prajna paramita. If the great bodhisattvas would like to surpass all ordinary sentient beings, voice-hearers, and self-enlightened ones with a mind of joyful participation in all virtuous dharmas, they should learn prajna paramita. If the great bodhisattvas would like to practice few actions associated with giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna paramita for the sake of sentient beings, and transfer the merits and virtues thus derived equally and skillfully toward the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge to let them attain immeasurable and countless merits and virtues, they should learn prajna paramita.

(The Buddha taught in these paragraphs that learning prajna paramita enabled bodhisattvas to actualize various aspirations.)

"Furthermore, Sariputra, if great bodhisattvas would like to cultivate and fulfill giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna and get rid of various obstacles quickly, they should learn prajna paramita. If great bodhisattvas would like to always encounter Buddhas during future lives to hear correct dharma, achieve enlightenment as Buddhas do, remain within the mindfulness of Buddhas, and receive their cautions and teachings, they should learn prajna paramita. If great bodhisattvas would like to attain thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features, they should learn prajna paramita. If great bodhisattvas would like to be reborn in a Buddhist family, enter the stage of pure child, and never stay away from various Buddhas and bodhisattvas, they should learn prajna paramita. If great bodhisattvas would like to make the best offerings respectfully to esteem and acclaim all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones with the powers of various

superior virtuous roots, so that all their virtuous roots can grow and be fulfilled, they should learn prajna paramita. If great bodhisattvas would like to satisfy the needs of all sentient beings for food, drinks, clothing, beds, bedding, medicines, fragrant flowers, lamps, vehicles, gardens, houses, properties, cereals, rarities, treasures, makeup materials, music and entertainment, most wonderful music instruments that only the kings or high-ranking officials own and enjoy, and various virtuous dharmas of and beyond the world, they should learn prajna paramita.

"Furthermore, Sariputra, if great bodhisattvas would like to universally establish all sentient beings within all empty spaces, dharma realms, and worlds to help them dwell peacefully in giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna paramitas and the rest of boundless superior virtuous dharmas, they should learn prajna paramita. If great bodhisattvas would like to attain the merits and virtues caused by a single virtuous mind, and these merits and virtues will persevere and never exhaust even after they sit peacefully on the throne of the exquisite bodhi, they should learn prajna paramita. If great bodhisattvas would like to be acclaimed, protected, and supported by and kept in the mindfulness of all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones and the great bodhisattvas in the Buddha worlds of the ten directions, they should learn prajna paramita. If great bodhisattvas would like to visit as many worlds as the sands of the Ganges by making a wish, so that they are able to make offerings respectfully to esteem and acclaim all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones and great bodhisattvas, and bring benefits, peace, and happiness to numberless sentient beings, they should learn prajna paramita. If great bodhisattvas would like to lecture with one voice to fill as many worlds of the ten directions as the sands of the Ganges to admire and acclaim various Buddhas and give teachings and cautions to all sentient beings, they should learn prajna paramita. If the great bodhisattvas would like to inherit the seeds of triple gem, keep them from discontinuation, so they are able to bring benefits, peace, and happiness to all sentient beings, they should learn prajna paramita.

"Furthermore, Sariputra, if great bodhisattvas would like to thoroughly understand internal emptiness, external emptiness, internal-external emptiness, emptiness of space, emptiness of emptiness, 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 selflessness, emptiness of self-nature, emptiness of selfless self-nature, emptiness of perceived objects, emptiness of reinforcing conditions, and emptiness of equality of nonexistence, they should learn prajna paramita. If great bodhisattvas would like to thoroughly understand realness, dharma realm, dharma nature, the nature of nonillusion, nature of changelessness, nature of equality, nature of nonarising, dharma concentration, dharma dwelling, and reality, they should learn prajna paramita. If great bodhisattvas would like to fully know as many large threefold thousand-worlds of the ten directions as the sands of the Ganges, including all their vast lands, space, mountains, oceans, rivers, ponds, valleys, lakes, and the ultimate particles of earth, water, fire, wind, they should learn prajna paramita. If great bodhisattvas would like to put off instantly the conflagration that will consume the entire large threefold thousand-world at the end of a kalpa with a single breath, they should learn prajna paramita. If great bodhisattvas would like to stop hurricane with one finger from swirling up the large threefold thousand-world and all big mountains, such as Sumeru, Large Sumeru, Circular Iron Enclosure, and Large Circular Iron Enclosure, smaller mountains, and vast grounds within it, and protect them from breaking and squeezing into chaffs, they should learn prajna paramita. If great bodhisattvas would like to fill the entirety of the large threefold thousand-world through sitting in meditation with legs crossed, they should learn prajna paramita. If great bodhisattvas would like to throw with a hair the entirety of the large threefold thousand-world, including the mountains Sumeru, Large Sumeru, Circular Iron Enclosure, Large Circular Iron Enclosure, other smaller mountains, as well as many other things on the earth, to immeasurable, innumerable, and boundless worlds on the other side of the universe, without disturbing sentient beings within them, they should learn prajna paramita. If great bodhisattvas would like to make merely one food, one incense, one flower, one wreath, one piece of clothes, one canopy, one tent, one lamp, and so forth as offerings to esteem and acclaim all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones, and their disciples in as many worlds of the ten directions as the sands of the Ganges River, and the offerings always remain sufficient, they should learn prajna paramita. If great bodhisattvas would like to well establish the sentient beings in as many worlds of the ten directions as the sands of Ganges and let them dwell peacefully in aggregates of precept, concentration, wisdom, liberation, and the knowledge and views of liberation; dwell in stream-

entry effect, once-return effect, nonreturn effect, arhat effect, and self-enlightenment bodhi; or enter the ultimate peace and happiness in nirvana without remainder, they should learn prajna paramita.

"Furthermore, Sariputra, because of cultivating prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas know accurately what wonderful rewards giving will brought about. They know accurately that giving enables one to be reborn in a noble family of a Ksatriya, Brahman, elder, or layperson; reborn in the Heaven of Four Great Kings, Heaven of Thirty-Three Smaller Heavens, Heaven of Yama, Heaven of Tusita, Heaven of Enjoying Self-Made Changes, or Heaven of Enjoying Other-Made Changes; achieve the first, second, the third meditation, or the fourth meditation; attain the concentration of boundless emptiness, boundless consciousness, nothingness, or nonthinking and not nonthinking. They know accurately that owing to certain giving, one can initiate thirty-seven aids to enlightenment or attain stream-entry effect, once-return effect, nonreturn effect, arhat effect, self-enlightenment bodhi, or unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. They also know accurately what great rewards the cultivation of pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna will bring about.

"Furthermore, Sariputra, because of cultivating prajna paramita, great bodhisattvas know accurately the expedient and skillful practice of giving can fulfill giving paramita, pre-precept paramita, forbearance paramita, diligence paramita, meditation paramita, and prajna paramita. They also know accurately that the expedient and skillful practice of pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, or prajna can each lead to thee fulfillment of the six paramitas."

In the meantime, Sariputra asked the Buddha, "World-Honored One, how do great bodhisattvas cultivate prajna paramita and know accurately that the expedient and skillful practice of giving can fulfill giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita? How do they know accurately that the expedient and skillful practice of pure precept, forbearance, and so forth, and prajna can fulfill giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita?"

The Buddha replied to venerable Sariputra, "It is because the great bodhisattvas have adopted nonattainment as skillful means. That is, if the great bodhisattvas practice giving and thoroughly understand that the givers, receivers, and the things given are unattainable, then they

can fulfill giving paramita. If they thoroughly understand that the forms of violation and nonviolation are unattainable, they can fulfill pure-precept paramita. If they thoroughly understand that the forms of motion and motionlessness are unattainable, they can fulfill forbearance paramita. If they thoroughly understand that industry and laziness in body and mind are unattainable, they can fulfill diligence paramita. If they thoroughly understand that both restfulness and restlessness are unattainable, they can fulfill meditation paramita. If they thoroughly understand that the natures and the forms of all dharmas are unattainable, they can fulfill prajna paramita. Sariputra, this is how the great bodhisattvas expediently and skillfully fulfill the six paramitas when they practice giving. Thus, Sariputra, if the great bodhisattvas expediently and skillfully practice pure precept, forbearance, and so forth, and prajna, they can fulfill the six paramitas.

(The Buddha said to Sariputra how great bodhisattvas fulfill the six paramitas through expedient skillfulness.)

"Furthermore, Sariputra, if great bodhisattvas would like to attain all superior merits and virtues of the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones in the past, future, and present, they should learn prajna paramita. If great bodhisattvas would like to cross all conditioned and unconditioned dharmas to reach the ultimate other shore, they should learn prajna paramita. If great bodhisattvas would like to achieve realness, dharma realm, dharma nature, nonarising, and reality of all dharmas in the past, future, and present, they should learn prajna paramita. If great bodhisattvas would like to become the leaders of all voice-hearers and self-enlightened ones, they should learn prajna paramita. If great bodhisattvas would like to become intimate attendants of various Buddhas, they should learn prajna paramita. If great bodhisattvas would like to become intimate associates of various Buddhas, they should learn prajna paramita. If great bodhisattvas would like to have a large group of associates for every generation to come, they should learn prajna paramita. If great bodhisattvas would like to have other bodhisattvas as their family and associates, they should learn prajna paramita. If great bodhisattvas would like to become genuine and pure fields of bliss of the world, they should learn prajna paramita. If great bodhisattvas would like to overcome greed, cease precept violation, eliminate anger and hatred, abandon tiredness and laziness, calm restlessness, and stay away from wisdom abuse in their minds, they should learn prajna paramita. If great bodhisattvas

would like to establish all sentient beings in practicing giving, observing precept, undertaking cultivation, making offerings, providing services, and serving as a base of reliance to invite bliss, they should learn prajna paramita.

"Furthermore, Sariputra, if great bodhisattvas would like to attain five eyes, namely, the physical eye, heavenly eye, wisdom eye, dharma eye, and Buddha eye, they should learn prajna paramita. If great bodhisattvas would like to use their heavenly eyes to see Buddhas in as many worlds of the ten directions as the sands of the Ganges, they should learn prajna paramita. If great bodhisattvas would like to use their heavenly ears to hear the essential meanings of the correct dharma taught by the Buddhas in as many worlds of the ten directions as the sands of the Ganges, they should learn prajna paramita. If great bodhisattvas would like to use their supernatural power of knowing others' minds to know accurately the minds and associated images of the Buddhas in as many worlds of the ten directions as the sands of the Ganges, they should learn prajna paramita. If great bodhisattvas would like to hear tirelessly and consistently the dharma teachings given by the Buddhas in the worlds of the ten directions until attaining the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, they should learn prajna paramita. If great bodhisattvas would like to see all Buddha lands in the past, future, and present, they should learn prajna paramita. If great bodhisattvas would like to hear the texts (sutra), lectures given partially in verses (geya), prophecies (vyākarana), lectures all given in verses (gāthā), teachings initiated by Buddha (udāna), origins (nidāna), anecdotes (itivrttaka), previous lives (jātaka), elaborated teachings (vaipulya), unusual conducts (abdhuta-dharma), similes (avadāna), and discourses (upadeśa) taught by the Buddhas of the ten directions in the past, future, and present, which have never been heard by voice-hearers, and would like to understand thoroughly their essential, profound meanings, they should learn prajna paramita. If great bodhisattvas would like to accept, embrace, thoroughly understand, and cultivate all dharma gates taught by the Buddhas of the ten directions in the past, future, and present, and further teach these gates extensively to others and encourage them to cultivate, they should learn prajna paramita. If great bodhisattvas would like to bring lights to as many dark hells or the worlds without sun and moon in the ten directions as the sands of the Ganges, they should learn prajna paramita. If great bodhisattvas would like to enlighten and guide sentient beings expediently to let them initiate correct views, hear triple gem, and deeply believe in the law of cause and effect in as many ignorant worlds of the ten directions

as the sands of the Ganges River, where incorrect views flourish and sentient beings have never heard triple gem or believed in causality, they should learn prajna paramita. The great bodhisattvas should learn prajna paramita if they would like to assist with their own virtues and powers sentient beings in as many worlds of the ten directions as the sands of the Ganges, so that the blind can see, deaf can hear, dumb can speak, insane can be in peace, wandering minds can concentrate, poor ones become rich, naked ones are dressed, hungry ones are fed, thirsty ones can drink, ills are healed, ugly ones become pretty, handicapped ones are recovered, deficient organs become perfect, the minds once got lost are awakened, tired ones have rest, all sentient beings treat each other lovingly and kindly, those in inferior destinies can be reborn in superior destinies, those who are used to negative karma convert to positive karma, those used to violate pure precept dwell in pure precepts, the distracted and wandering minds stay in concentration, the ignorant ones dwell in wisdom, those fettered become free, those not knowing liberation are set free, those not understanding truth can dwell in stream entry effect, once-return effect, nonreturn effect, arhat effect, or self-enlightenment bodhi, or attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi step by step. The great bodhisattvas should learn prajna paramita if they would like to have similar superior appearance and demeanors of the Buddha, which the sentient beings are delighted to watch tirelessly, and by which all are inspired to do virtuous things and avoid wrongdoing.

"Furthermore, Sariputra, when cultivating prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas think, 'When can I teach dharma to the public in a solemn demeanor with the gaze as an elephant king? When can I attain pure action, speech, and mind in accordance with wisdom always? When can I walk freely, maintaining a four-finger distance between my feet and the ground with my feet off the ground?' The great bodhisattvas should learn prajna paramita to fulfill these wishes.

"When cultivating prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas think, 'When can I be worthy of the offerings made with respect and admiration by innumerable hundreds of thousands of koti nayuta heavenly beings and dragons from various heavens, namely, the Heaven of Four Great kings, Heaven of Thirty-Three Smaller Heavens, Heaven of Yama, Heaven of Tusita, Heaven of Enjoying Self-Made Changes, Heaven of Enjoying Other-Made Changes, Heaven of Brahma Followers, Heaven of Brahma Associates, Heaven of Brahma Family, Heaven of Great Brahma, Heaven of Light, Heaven of Lesser Light, Heaven of Infinite Light, Heaven of Extremely Great

Brightness and Purity, Heaven of Purity, Heaven of Lesser Purity, Heaven of Infinite Purity, Heaven of Universal Purity, Heaven of Expansion, Heaven of Lesser Expansion, Heaven of Infinite Expansion, Heaven of Extensive Rewards, Heaven of No Aspiration, Heaven of No Affliction, Heaven of Good Appearance, Heaven of Good Sight, and Heaven of Ultimate Form, and be ushered and surrounded by them when I walk toward the bodhi tree? When can I sit under the bodhi tree on the mattress made of heavenly clothing provided by immeasurable hundreds of thousands of koti nayuta heavenly beings? When can I sit with the legs crossed under the bodhi tree, soothe and comfort the vast land with my graceful hands that are glorified by various wonderful features and inspire the earth gods and their family members to rise from underground to witness what I am doing? When can I sit under the bodhi tree, subjugate all evil demons and adversaries, and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, and from that time on, the places around me turn into diamonds when I walk, stay, sit, or lay after I attain the perfect and universal enlightenment?' The great bodhisattva should learn prajna paramita if they would like to fulfill these wishes.

"When cultivating prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas think, 'Can I attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal enlightenment the day when I renounce the high position in my own country and become a monk? Can I start to turn the wonderful dharma wheel the same day when I become a monk, so I am able to immediately assist innumerable sentient beings to stay far away from dusts and defilements and obtain pure dharma eye? Can I further assist innumerable sentient beings to eliminate flaws permanently and obtain the liberation of wisdom? Can I assist innumerable sentient beings to persevere in the pursuit of the unsurpassed bodhi without regression?' The great bodhisattvas should prajna paramita if they would like to fulfill these wishes.

"When cultivating prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas think, 'When can I attain the unsurpassed bodhi and have innumerable voice-hearers and bodhisattvas as my disciples, and whenever I teach the dharma, immeasurable sentient beings will attain arhat effect even without rising from their seats? And moreover, immeasurable sentient beings will achieve nonregression in the pursuit of the unsurpassed bodhi even without rising from their seats.' The great bodhisattvas should prajna paramita if they would like to fulfill these wishes.

"When cultivating prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas think, 'I wish I can acquire endless longevity, boundless brightness, and glorious and dignified appearance; those who see me will never feel bored. I wish as I walk, a thousand-leaf lotus will support my feet, and the sign of thousand-spoke wheel of my sole will remain on the ground. I wish as I raise my leg to walk, the earth will be greatly shocked, but the sentient beings living underground will not be disturbed. I wish as I look around, my whole body will turn accordingly, and wherever I walk, the ground around me will turn into diamonds and the earth about the size of a wheel will move. I wish as my limbs emit lights to illuminate boundless worlds of the ten directions, the sentient beings within my lights will greatly benefit.' The great bodhisattvas should prajna paramita if they would like to fulfill these wishes.

"When cultivating prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas think, 'When I attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, I wish in my Buddha lands, there will be no names for greed, anger and ignorance; the sentient beings will obtain the wonderful wisdom as those in other Buddha lands. They will always think, "Isn't it wonderful to practice giving, taming and overcoming, forbearance, brave progress, tranquility, and insightful contemplation; stay away from laziness and slack; practice celibacy, loving-kindness, compassion, joy, equanimity and all will not annoy each other?" I wish after teaching as many sentient beings as possible in this world, I will enter nirvana, and afterward I will continue working to benefit sentient beings, so that the correct dharma will endure.' The great bodhisattvas should prajna paramita if they would like to fulfill these wishes.

"When cultivating prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas think, 'When can I attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi so that the sentient beings in as many worlds of the ten directions as the sands of the Ganges will also be able to definitely attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi if they have only ever heard my name?' The great bodhisattvas should prajna paramita if they would like to fulfill this wish.

"Sariputra, in order to attain these innumerable, countless, and inconceivable superior merits and virtues, great bodhisattvas should learn prajna paramita."

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Chapter 2

Sariputra

Section 2

(In the Third Assembly)

"Furthermore, Sariputra, the great bodhisattvas have cultivated prajna paramita and thus are able to initiate such merits and virtues. At that time, the four great heavenly kings of the large threefold thousand-world are thrilled and think, 'Now it is the right time for us to present four bowls to the bodhisattvas as our ancient heavenly kings did to the Buddha in the past.' At that moment, the Heaven of Thirty-Three Smaller Heavens, Heaven of Yama, Heaven of Tusita, Heaven of Enjoying Self-Made Changes, and Heaven of Enjoying Other-Made Changes in the large threefold thousand-world are also thrilled and think, 'We should make offerings with respect and admiration to these great bodhisattvas so that the powers of vicious asuras gangs will diminish and the heavenly sentient beings will benefit.' At that time, the heavenly beings in the Heaven of Braham Followers, Heaven of Braham Associates, Heaven of Brahma Family, and Heaven of Great Brahma; the Heaven of Light, Heaven of Lesser Light, Heaven of Infinite Light, and Heaven of Extremely Great Brightness and Purity; the Heaven of Purity, Heaven of Lesser Purity, Heaven of Infinite Purity, and Heaven of Universal Purity; the Heaven of Expansion, Heaven of Lesser Expansion, Heaven of Infinite Expansion, and Heaven of Extensive Rewards; and Heaven of No Aspiration, Heaven of Affliction, Heaven of Good Appearance, Heaven of Good Sight, and Heaven of Ultimate Form are thrilled think, 'We must plead these bodhisattvas to attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi very soon, and turn the dharma wheel to benefit all sentient beings.'

"Furthermore, Sariputra, seeing that the great bodhisattvas are cultivating prajna paramita to develop the six paramitas, the good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth in the same world are thrilled and think, 'We would like to become parents, brothers, sisters, wives, family, and

virtuous and knowledgeable friends of these great bodhisattvas.' In the meantime, the heavenly beings in the Heaven of 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 Great Brahma; the Heaven of Light, Heaven of Lesser Light, and so forth, and Heaven of Extremely Great Brightness and Purity; the Heaven of Purity, Heaven of Lesser Purity, and so forth, and Heaven of Universal Purity; the Heaven of Expansion, Heaven of Lesser Expansion, and so forth, and Heaven of Extensive Rewards; and the Heaven of No Aspiration, Heaven of No Affliction, and so forth, and Heaven of Ultimate Form associated with this world are thrilled and think, 'We would like to do things helpful to assist these great bodhisattvas so they will stay away from impure actions and always practice celibacy from the time of aspiring to great bodhi until becoming a Buddha. Why? Anything contaminated by desires will become obstacles for rebirth in heaven, let alone attaining the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.' Therefore, only if great bodhisattvas eliminate desires, renounce family, and cultivate celibacy will they attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. Otherwise, they cannot."

Sariputra asked the Buddha, "World-Honored One, should great bodhisattvas live with parents, wives, relatives, and friends?"

The Buddha replied, "Sariputra, some practitioners of bodhisattva actions live with parents, wives, and family, while some do not have wives and always practice celibacy since their initial aspiration to the great bodhi until finally becoming a Buddha. Some great bodhisattvas have demonstrated to live a life containing five desires in an expedient way, and later they renounce family, practice celibacy, and finally attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.

"Sariputra, a master magician made an illusion showing that he was indulged in the pleasure of five desires. What do you think about this? Is the illusion real?"

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

The Buddha said, "Sariputra, so too are great bodhisattvas. Intending to assist sentient beings to mature, they show expediently and skillfully a transformed life of enjoying five desires,

but they are not contaminated. Why? These great bodhisattvas find the five desires distasteful. Besides, they also scold the five desires by using negative words, such as desire is a burning fire; desire is filthy; desire is a crime and always harmful; desire is an enemy; desire is like a poisoned arrow or the sort; desire is a dark well. Sariputra, the bodhisattvas often use numberless negative phrases to rebuke all kinds of desire, reminding people of the faults that desire may activate, showing that it is illusory and unreal. They use expedient means to appear engaged in desires, though they are not, in order to benefit sentient beings.

At that time, Sariputra asked the Buddha, "World-Honored One, how should great bodhisattvas practice the fathomless prajna paramita?"

The Buddha replied, "Sariputra, when cultivating prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas should contemplate in this way, 'Bodhisattvas actually do not see bodhisattva or the name of bodhisattva; they do not see prajna paramita or the name of prajna paramita; they do not see action nor nonaction.' Why? Sariputra, the self-nature of bodhisattva is empty, and the name of bodhisattva is empty too. Why? The self-nature of matter is inherently empty, not because of emptiness. The self-natures of feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness are inherently empty, not because of emptiness. The emptiness of matter is not matter, and the emptiness of feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness is not feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness. Matter is not apart from emptiness, and emptiness is not apart from matter; feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness are not apart from emptiness, and emptiness is not apart from feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness. Matter is emptiness, and emptiness is matter. Feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness are emptiness, and emptiness is feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness. Why? Sariputra, bodhi is only a name, sattva is only a name, bodhisattva is only a name, and emptiness is only a name. Their self-natures have no arising, extinction, contamination, or purification. When cultivating the fathomless prajna paramita in this way, the great bodhisattvas do not see arising, extinction, contamination, or purification. Why? They are merely provisionally established names used to indicate different dharmas, and based on these names, the differentiation of the dharmas appears. These are then followed by the languages, and because of such and such languages, attachment is produced. When cultivating prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas do not see all of these, and thus they have no attachment.

“Furthermore, Sariputra, when cultivating prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas should contemplate in this way: ‘Bodhisattva is just a name; Buddha is just a name; prajna paramita is just a name. Matter is just a name; feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness are just names. All the rest of dharmas are just names. Sariputra, ‘I’ is just a name and unattainable, so are the sentient being, the living one, the one who gives birth, the one who raises others, the gentleperson, the individual in reincarnation, and so forth, and the knower and the viewer; all are just names. They are unattainable because of emptiness of nonattainment. They are provisionally established names in terms of the worldly perspective. All dharmas are the same. Therefore, we should not be attached to them. When cultivating prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas do not see the ‘I,’ the sentient being, and so forth, and the viewer, nor do they see the dharma nature.

“Sariputra, if the great bodhisattvas cultivate prajna paramita in this way, they will attain the wisdom inferior only to the Buddha, but superior to the wisdom owned by all voice-hearers and self-enlightened ones. Why? The great bodhisattvas view the names and the objects named as unattainable. They do not see them and are not attached to them. Sariputra, if the great bodhisattvas cultivate prajna paramita in this way, they are named good practitioners of prajna paramita.

(The Buddha taught that the great bodhisattvas are good prajna paramita practitioners when they do not see nor become attached to various dharmas.)

“Sariputra, suppose the wisdom possessed by senior voice-hearers, which may be likened to vast fields of reeds, rice, millet, sugarcane, hemp, and forests that cover the entirety of continent of Jambudvipa. While on the other hand, great bodhisattvas possess the wisdom caused by practicing prajna paramita. In comparison, the former wisdom is inferior to the latter one by one hundredth, one thousandth, one hundred thousandth, and too little to be counted, reckoned, and measured, even as little as one upanisadam-api. Why? The wisdom of bodhisattva can guide all sentient beings in the ten directions toward nirvana. Moreover, Sariputra, the wisdom that the great bodhisattvas cultivate in a single day exceeds what all voice-hearers and self-enlightened ones can achieve.

“Sariputra, let us put Jambudvipa aside at this moment. Suppose the wisdom possessed by senior voice-hearers, which may be likened to vast fields of reeds, rice, millet, sugarcane,

hemp, and forests that cover the four continents. While on the other hand, great bodhisattvas possess the wisdom caused by practicing prajna paramita. In comparison, the former wisdom is inferior to the latter one by one hundredth, one thousandth, one hundred thousandth, and too little to be counted, reckoned, and measured, even as little as one upanisadam-api. Why? The wisdom of bodhisattva can guide all sentient beings in the ten directions toward nirvana. Moreover, Sariputra, the wisdom that the great bodhisattvas cultivate in a single day exceeds what all voice-hearers and self-enlightened ones can achieve.

"Sariputra, let us put the four continents aside at this moment. Suppose the wisdom possessed by senior voice-hearers, which may be likened to vast fields of reeds, rice, millet, sugarcane, hemp, and forests that cover the entire large threefold thousand-land. While on the other hand, great bodhisattvas possess the wisdom caused by practicing prajna paramita. In comparison, the former wisdom is inferior to the latter one by one hundredth, one thousandth, one hundred thousandth, and too little to be counted, reckoned, and measured, even as little as one upanisadam-api. Why? The wisdom of bodhisattva can guide all sentient beings in the ten directions toward nirvana. Moreover, Sariputra, the wisdom that the great bodhisattvas cultivate in a single day exceeds what all voice-hearers and self-enlightened ones can achieve.

"Sariputra, let us put the large threefold thousand-world aside at this moment. Suppose the wisdom possessed by senior voice-hearers, which may be likened to vast fields of reeds, rice, millet, sugarcane, hemp, and forests that cover as many Buddha lands in the ten directions as the sands of the Ganges. While on the other hand, great bodhisattvas possess the wisdom caused by practicing prajna paramita. In comparison, the former wisdom is inferior to the latter one by one hundredth, one thousandth, one hundred thousandth, and too little to be counted, reckoned, and measured, even as little as one upanisadam-api. Why? The wisdom of bodhisattva can guide all sentient beings in the ten directions toward nirvana. Moreover, Sariputra, the wisdom that the great bodhisattvas cultivate in a single day exceeds what all voice-hearers and self-enlightened ones can achieve."

At that time, Sariputra asked the Buddha, "World-Honored One, if there is no difference among the wisdom of stream-enterer, once-returner, nonreturner, and arhat; the wisdom of self-enlightened one; the wisdom of great bodhisattva; and the wisdom of the Thus-Comer, One

Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened One; if all these kinds of wisdom are not in conflict, they are without arising and extinction, and their self-natures are empty; and if the differences of all these dharmas are unattainable, then why does the World-Honored One say that the wisdom that the great bodhisattvas as prajna paramita practitioners cultivate in one day will be much higher than the wisdom that all voice-hearers and self-enlightened ones can achieve?"

The Buddha said, "What do you think about this? Do the superior things performed by a great bodhisattva practicing prajna paramita and developing wisdom in one day also apply to voice-hearers and self-enlightened ones?"

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

"Moreover, Sariputra, what do you think about this? The wisdom that a great bodhisattva develops in one day can activate the subtle and exquisite knowledge of all phenomena, the perfect knowledge of everything, the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena to bring benefits, peace, and happiness to all sentient beings, helping them become awakened to the forms of all dharmas and establishing them in peace and comfort of the nirvana without remainder. Can the wisdom practiced by all voice-hearers and self-enlightened ones do the same thing?"

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

"Moreover, Sariputra, what do you think about this? Do all voice-hearers and self-enlightened ones think, 'I will realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi in order to expediently establish all sentient beings in the nirvana without remainder?"

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

"Moreover, Sariputra, what do you think about this? Do all voice-hearers and self-enlightened ones think, 'I should cultivate giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna paramitas; assist sentient beings to mature; dignify and purify Buddha lands; fulfill the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, four unhindered understandings, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power; and realize

and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi to expediently establish immeasurable, countless, and boundless sentient beings in the nirvana without remainder?"

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

The Buddha said, "Sariputra, the great bodhisattvas as prajna paramita practitioners always think, 'I must cultivate giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna paramitas; assist sentient beings to mature; dignify and purify Buddha lands; fulfill the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, four unhindered understandings, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power; and realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi to expediently establish immeasurable, countless, and boundless sentient beings in the nirvana without remainder.'

"Sariputra, it is like firefly who does not think, 'I hope my light will shine all over and illuminate the entirety of continent of Jambudvipa.' So voice-hearers and self-enlightened ones do not think, 'I must cultivate the six paramitas; assist sentient beings to mature; dignify and purify Buddha lands; fulfill the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, four unhindered understandings, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power; and realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi to expediently establish immeasurable, countless, and boundless sentient beings in the nirvana without remainder.'

"Sariputra, like the bright and flaming sun that illuminates the entire continent of Jambudvipa universally, so do the great bodhisattvas who cultivate prajna paramita and think, 'I must cultivate the six paramitas; assist sentient beings to mature; dignify and purify Buddha lands; fulfill the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, four unhindered understandings, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power; and realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi to expediently establish immeasurable, countless, and boundless sentient beings in the nirvana without remainder.'"

(The Buddha explained why the wisdom of bodhisattva was superior to the wisdom of voice-hearers and self-enlightened ones.)

At that time, Sariputra asked the Buddha, “World-Honored One, how do great bodhisattvas surpass the stage of voice-hearer and the stage of self-enlightened one, reach the bodhisattva stage of nonregression, and purify the bodhi path?”

The Buddha replied, “Sariputra, since initially aspiring to cultivate the six paramitas and dwell in emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration, the great bodhisattvas have already surpassed all voice-hearers and self-enlightened ones, therefore, they are able to achieve the stage of nonregression through the path of pure bodhi.”

Meanwhile, Sariputra asked the Buddha again, “World-Honored One, in which stage can great bodhisattvas plant genuine fields of bliss for the sake of all voice-hearers and self-enlightened one?”

The Buddha replied, “Sariputra, since beginning to cultivate six paramitas, various kinds of emptiness, and so forth, until sitting peacefully on the throne of the exquisite bodhi, the great bodhisattvas have always planted genuine fields of bliss for all voice hearers and self-enlightened ones. Why? Sariputra, it is because of great bodhisattvas that all virtuous dharmas appear in the world, namely, the path of the ten virtuous karmas; the five precepts and eight precepts for lay believers; the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations; the four noble truths; 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 kinds of fearlessness, four unhindered understandings, Buddha’s ten abilities, six paramitas, the eighteen distinctive features of Buddha’s wisdom and power, and other innumerable, countless, and boundless virtuous dharmas appear in the world. It is also because of these virtuous dharmas of bodhisattva, the noble family of Ksatriya, Brahman, elder, or layperson; the Heaven of 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 Great Brahma; the Heaven of Light, Heaven of Lesser Light, and so forth, and Heaven of Extremely Great Brightness and Purity; the Heaven of Purity, Heaven of Lesser Purity, and so forth, and Heaven of Universal Purity; the Heaven of Expansion, Heaven of Lesser Expansion, and so forth, and Heaven of Extensive Rewards; the Heaven of Sentient Beings without Thinking; the Heaven of No Aspiration, Heaven of No

Affliction, and so forth, and Heaven of Ultimate Form; and the Heaven of Boundless Emptiness, Heaven of Boundless Consciousness, and so forth, and Heaven of Nonthinking and Not Nonthinking appear in the world.

"It is because of the virtuous dharmas of bodhisattva that stream-enterers, once-returners, nonreturners, arhats, self-enlightened ones, great bodhisattvas, and Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, the Perfectly, Universally Enlightened Ones appear in the world."

Meanwhile, Sariputra asked the Buddha again, "World-Honored One, should great bodhisattvas purify their own fields of bliss?"

The Buddha replied, "Sariputra, they don't need to do so. Why? It is because theirs are extremely pure already. Why? Sariputra, the great bodhisattvas are great givers. They have given a lot of virtuous dharmas, of and beyond the world, to sentient beings. Namely, they have given sentient beings the path of the ten virtuous karmas, five precepts for lay believers, eight precepts for lay believers, four meditations, four immeasurable minds, four formless concentrations, four noble truths, four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, four bases of power, five roots, five powers, seven factors for enlightenment, noble eightfold path, the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, four unhindered understandings, six paramitas, eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power, and other immeasurable, countless, and boundless virtuous dharmas. Therefore, the bodhisattvas are great givers; they have already purified their own fields of bliss and have also brought about numberless blessings for the world."

(The Budda explained why great bodhisattvas were great givers and how they had purified their own fields of bliss.)

At that time, Sariputra asked the Buddha, "World-Honored One, with what dharmas do great bodhisattvas correspond when they are cultivating prajna paramita, so that they are regarded as in accordance with prajna paramita?"

The Buddha replied, "Sariputra, as great bodhisattvas correspond with the emptiness of matter, they are said to be in accordance with prajna paramita; as they correspond with the emptiness of feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness, they are said to be in accordance with prajna paramita. As they correspond with the emptiness of the eye sphere, they are said to be in

accordance with prajna paramita; as they correspond with the emptiness of the ear, nose, tongue, body, and conscious spheres, they are said to be in accordance with prajna paramita. As great bodhisattvas correspond with the emptiness of the sight sphere, they are said to be in accordance with prajna paramita; as they correspond with the emptiness of the sound, smell, taste, touch, and mental-image spheres, they are said to be in accordance with prajna paramita. As great bodhisattvas correspond with the emptiness of the eye realm, they are said to be in accordance with prajna paramita; as they correspond with the emptiness of the ear, nose, tongue, body, and conscious realms, they are said to be in accordance with prajna paramita. As great bodhisattvas correspond with the emptiness of the sight realm, they are said to be in accordance with prajna paramita; as they correspond with the emptiness of the sound, smell, taste, touch, and mental-image realms, they are said to be in accordance with prajna paramita. As great bodhisattvas correspond with the emptiness of the eye consciousness realm, they are said to be in accordance with prajna paramita; as they correspond with the emptiness of the ear consciousness, nose consciousness, tongue consciousness, body consciousness, and conscious consciousness realms, they are said to be in accordance with prajna paramita. As great bodhisattvas correspond with the emptiness of the noble truth of suffering, they are said to be in accordance with prajna paramita; as they correspond with the emptiness of the noble truths of the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering, they are said to be in accordance with prajna paramita. As great bodhisattvas correspond with the emptiness of ignorance, they are said to be in accordance with prajna paramita; as they correspond with the emptiness of action, consciousness, name and form, six sense spheres, contact, reception, craving, grasping, existence, birth, old age, death, worry, sorrow, misery, anxiety, and upset, they are said to be in accordance with prajna paramita. As great bodhisattvas correspond with the emptiness of all dharmas, they are said to be in accordance with prajna paramita; as they correspond with the emptiness of the conditioned and unconditioned dharmas, they are said to be in accordance with prajna paramita. As great bodhisattvas correspond with the emptiness of original nature, they are said to be in accordance with prajna paramita. Sariputra, because the great bodhisattvas correspond with these seven kinds of emptiness, they are said to be in accordance with prajna paramita.

(The Buddha taught that as great bodhisattvas correspond with seven kinds of emptiness, they are in accordance with prajna paramita."

"Sariputra, as the great bodhisattvas correspond with these seven kinds of emptiness, they do not see matter as correspondent or not correspondent, nor feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness as correspondent or not correspondent. They do not see matter as a dharma of arising or a dharma of extinction, nor feeling, thinking, intention, and consciousness as the dharmas of arising or the dharmas of extinction. They do not see matter as a dharma of contamination or a dharma of purity, nor feeling, thinking, intention, and consciousness as the dharmas of contamination or the dharmas of purity. They do not see matter and feeling combine, feeling and thinking combine, thinking and action combine, and action and consciousness combine. Why? Sariputra! There is not a dharma that can combine with other dharmas because the original nature of all dharmas is empty.

(The Buddha elaborated the features of the relationship between emptiness and dharmas.)

"Sariputra, as various matters are empty, they are not matters. As various feelings, thinkings, actions, and consciousnesses are empty, they are not feelings, thinkings, actions, and consciousnesses. Why? Sariputra, as various matters are empty, they are not changeable substances. As various feelings are empty, they do not receive. As various thinkings are empty, they do not form images. As various actions are empty, they do not initiate karmas. As various consciousnesses are empty, they do not cognize. Why? Sariputra, matter is not different from emptiness, and emptiness is not different from matter; matter is emptiness, and emptiness is matter. So are feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness.

(We may find archetype of *Heart Sutra* in these paragraphs.)

"Sariputra, all dharmas are empty; they are without arising and extinction, contamination and purity, addition and subtraction, and the past, future, and present. In emptiness, there is no matter, and there are no feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness; there is no eye sphere, and there are no ear, nose, tongue, body, and conscious spheres; there is no sight sphere, and there are no sound, smell, taste, touch, and mental-image spheres; there is no earth realm, and there are no water, fire, wind, empty space, and consciousness realms; there is no eye realm, and there are

no ear, nose, tongue, body, and conscious realms; there is no sight realm, and there are no sound, smell, taste, touch, and mental-image realms; there is no eye consciousness realm, and there are no ear consciousness, nose consciousness, tongue consciousness, body consciousness, and conscious consciousness realms; there is no ignorance and the extinction of ignorance; there are no action, consciousness, name and form, six sense spheres, contact, feeling, craving, grasping, existence, birth, old age, death, worry, sorrow, misery, anxiety, and upset and their extinction; there is no noble truth of suffering, and there are no noble truths of the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering; there are no attainment and intuitive contemplation; there is no stream-enterer or stream-entry effect; there is no once-returner or once-return effect; there is no nonreturner or nonreturn effect; there is no arhat or arhat effect; there is no self-enlightened one or self-enlightenment bodhi; there is no bodhisattva or the bodhisattva path; there is no perfect and universal enlightenment or the perfect and universal bodhi.

"Sariputra, as the great bodhisattvas correspond with this law, they are correspondent with prajna paramita.

"Furthermore, Sariputra, when cultivating prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas do not see giving paramita as correspondent or not correspondent; pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna paramitas as correspondent or not correspondent. They do not see matter as correspondent or not correspondent, nor do they see feeling, thinking, action and consciousness as correspondent or not correspondent. They do not see the eye sphere as correspondent or not correspondent, nor do they see the ear, nose, tongue, body, and consciousness spheres as correspondent or not correspondent. They do not see the sight sphere as correspondent or not correspondent, nor do they see the sound, smell, taste, touch, and mental-image spheres as correspondent or not correspondent. They do not see the eye realm as correspondent or not correspondent, nor do they see the ear, nose, tongue, body, and conscious realms as correspondent or not correspondent. They do not see the sight realm as correspondent or not correspondent, nor do they see the sound, smell, taste, touch, and mental-image realms as correspondent or not correspondent. They do not see the eye consciousness realm as correspondent or not correspondent, nor do they see the ear consciousness, nose consciousness, tongue consciousness, body consciousness, and conscious consciousness realms as

correspondent or not correspondent. They do not see the noble truth of suffering as correspondent or not, nor do they see the noble truths of the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering as correspondent or not correspondent. They do not see ignorance as correspondent or not correspondent, nor do they see action, consciousness, name and form, six sense spheres, contact, reception, craving, grasping, existence, birth, old age, and death as correspondent or not correspondent. They do not see the four bases of mindfulness as correspondent or not correspondent, nor do they see the four correct endeavors, four bases of power, five roots, five powers, seven factors for enlightenment, and noble eightfold path as correspondent or not correspondent. They do not see the six supernatural powers as correspondent or not correspondent. They do not see the Buddha's ten abilities as correspondent or not correspondent, nor do they see the four kinds of fearlessness, four unhindered understandings, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power as correspondent or not correspondent. They do not see the subtle and exquisite knowledge of all phenomena as correspondent or not correspondent, nor do they see the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge as correspondent or not correspondent. Sariputra, if the great bodhisattvas cultivate prajna paramita and correspond with this principle, they are correspondent with prajna paramita.

(The Buddha taught more about how great bodhisattvas correspond with prajna paramita.)

"Furthermore, Sariputra, when cultivating prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas do not contemplate whether emptiness combines with emptiness or whether emptiness is correspondent with emptiness; whether formlessness combines with formlessness or whether formlessness is correspondent with formlessness; whether nonaspiration combines with nonaspiration or whether nonaspiration is correspondent with nonaspiration. Why? It is because emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration have nothing to do with combination or non-combination, correspondence or non-correspondence. Sariputra, as the great bodhisattvas cultivate prajna paramita and correspond with this principle, they are correspondent with prajna paramita.

"Furthermore, Sariputra, as the great bodhisattvas cultivate prajna paramita and enter the emptiness of the characteristics of all dharmas, they do not contemplate whether matter is combined or separate, and whether feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness are combined or

separate. They do not contemplate whether matter is combined with or separate from the past. Why? It is because the past cannot be seen. They do not contemplate whether matter is combined or separate from the future. Why? It is because the future cannot be seen. They do not contemplate whether matter is combined with or separate from the present. Why? It is because the present cannot be seen. They do not contemplate whether feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness are combined with or separate from the past. Why? It is because the past cannot be seen. They do not contemplate whether feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness are combined with or separate from the future. Why? It is because the future cannot be seen. They do contemplate whether feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness are combined with or separate from the present. Why? It is because the present cannot be seen. As the great bodhisattvas cultivate prajna paramita and correspond with this principle, they are correspondent with prajna paramita.

"Furthermore, Sariputra, the great bodhisattvas do not contemplate whether the past and the future are combined or separate, whether the past and the present are combined or separate, whether the future and the past are combined or separate, whether the future and the present are combined or separate, whether the present and the past are combined or separate, and whether the present and the future are combined or separate. They do not contemplate whether the past is combined with or separate from the future and present, whether the future is combined with or separate from the past and present, whether the present is combined with or separate from past and future, and whether the past, future, and present are combined or separate. Why? It is because the three phases of time are empty. Sariputra, as the great bodhisattvas cultivate prajna paramita and correspond with this principle, they are correspondent with prajna paramita.

"Furthermore, Sariputra, when cultivating prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas do not contemplate whether the perfect knowledge of everything is combined with or separate from the past. Why? As the past cannot be seen, how can one contemplate whether the perfect knowledge of everything is combined with or separate from the past? They do not contemplate whether the perfect knowledge of everything is combined with or separate from the future. Why? As the future cannot be seen, how can one contemplate whether the perfect knowledge of everything is combined with or separate from the future? They do not contemplate whether the perfect knowledge of everything is combined with or separate from the present. Why? As the present

cannot be seen, how can one contemplate whether the perfect knowledge of everything is combined with or separate from the present? They do not contemplate whether the perfect knowledge of everything is combined with or separate from matter. Why? As matter cannot be seen, how can one contemplate whether the perfect knowledge of everything is combined with or separate from matter? They do not contemplate whether the perfect knowledge of everything is combined with or separate from feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness. Why? As feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness cannot be seen, how can one contemplate whether the perfect knowledge of everything is combined with or separate from feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness? They do not contemplate whether the perfect knowledge of everything is combined with or separate from the eye sphere. Why? As the eye sphere cannot be seen, how can one contemplate whether the perfect knowledge of everything is combined with or separate from the eye sphere? They do not contemplate whether the perfect knowledge of everything is combined with or separate from the ear, nose, tongue, body, and conscious spheres. Why? As the ear, nose, tongue, body, and conscious spheres cannot be seen, how can one contemplate whether the perfect knowledge of everything is combined with or separate from the ear, nose, tongue, body, and conscious spheres? They do not contemplate whether the perfect knowledge of everything is combined with or separate from the sight sphere. Why? As the sight sphere cannot be seen, how can one contemplate whether the perfect knowledge of everything is combined with or separate from the sight sphere? They do not contemplate whether the perfect knowledge of everything is combined with or separate from the sound, smell, taste, touch, and mental-image spheres. Why? As the sound, smell, taste, touch, and mental-image spheres cannot be seen, how can one contemplate whether the perfect knowledge of everything is combined with or separate from the sound, smell, taste, touch, and mental-image spheres? They do not contemplate whether the perfect knowledge of everything is combined with or separate from the eye realm. Why? As the eye realm cannot be seen, how can one contemplate whether the perfect knowledge of everything is combined with or separate from the eye realm? They do not contemplate whether the perfect knowledge of everything is combined with or separate from the ear, nose, tongue, body, and conscious realms. Why? As the ear, nose, tongue, body, and conscious realms cannot be seen, how can one contemplate whether the perfect knowledge of everything is combined with or separate from the ear, nose, tongue, body, and conscious realms? They do not contemplate whether the perfect knowledge of everything is combined with or separate from the

sight realm. Why? As the sight realm cannot be seen, how can one contemplate whether the perfect knowledge of everything is combined with or separate from the sight realm? They do not contemplate whether the perfect knowledge of everything is combined with or separate from the sound, smell, taste, touch, and mental-image realms. Why? As the sound, smell, taste, touch, and mental-image realms cannot be seen, how can one contemplate whether the perfect knowledge of everything is combined with or separate from the sound, smell, taste, touch, and mental-image realms? They do not contemplate whether the perfect knowledge of everything is combined with or separate from the eye consciousness realm. Why? As the eye consciousness realm cannot be seen, how can one contemplate whether the perfect knowledge of everything is combined with or separate from the eye consciousness realm? They do not contemplate whether the perfect knowledge of everything is combined with or separate from the ear consciousness, nose consciousness, tongue consciousness, body consciousness, and conscious consciousness realms. Why? As the ear consciousness, nose consciousness, tongue consciousness, body consciousness, and conscious consciousness realms cannot be seen, how can one contemplate whether the perfect knowledge of everything is combined with or separate from the ear consciousness, nose consciousness, tongue consciousness, body consciousness, and conscious consciousness realms? They do not contemplate whether the perfect knowledge of everything is combined with or separate from the noble truth of suffering. Why? As the noble truth of suffering cannot be seen, how can one contemplate whether the perfect knowledge of everything is combined with or separate from the noble truth of suffering? They do not contemplate whether the perfect knowledge of everything is combined with or separate from the noble truths of the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering. Why? As the noble truths of the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering cannot be seen, how can one contemplate whether the perfect knowledge of everything is combined with or separate from the noble truths of the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering? They do not contemplate whether the perfect knowledge of everything is combined with or separate from ignorance. Why? As ignorance cannot be seen, how can one contemplate whether the perfect knowledge of everything is combined with or separate from ignorance? They do not contemplate whether the perfect knowledge of everything is combined with or separate from action, consciousness, name and form, six sense spheres, contact, reception, craving, grasping, existence, birth, old age, and death.

Why? As action, consciousness, and so forth, and old age and dearth cannot be seen, how can one contemplate whether the perfect knowledge of everything is combined with or separate from action, consciousness, and so forth, and old age and death? They do not contemplate whether the perfect knowledge of everything is combined with or separate from giving paramita. Why? As giving paramita cannot be seen, how can one contemplate whether the perfect knowledge of everything is combined with or separate from giving paramita? They do not contemplate whether the perfect knowledge of everything is combined with or separate from pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna paramitas. Why? As pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna paramitas cannot be seen, how can one contemplate whether the perfect knowledge of everything is combined with or separate from pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna paramitas? They do not contemplate whether the perfect knowledge of everything is combined with or separate from the four bases of mindfulness. Why? As the four bases of mindfulness cannot be seen, how can one contemplate whether the perfect knowledge of everything is combined with or separate from the four bases of mindfulness? They do not contemplate whether the perfect knowledge of everything is combined with or separate from the four correct endeavors, four bases of power, five roots, five powers, seven factors for enlightenment, and noble eightfold path. Why? As the four correct endeavors, four bases of power, and so forth, and noble eightfold path cannot be seen, how can one contemplate whether the perfect knowledge of everything is combined with or separate from the four correct endeavors, four bases of power, and so forth, and noble eightfold path? They do not contemplate whether the perfect knowledge of everything is combined with or separate from the six supernatural powers. Why? As the six supernatural powers cannot be seen, how can one contemplate whether the perfect knowledge of everything is combined with or separate from the six supernatural powers? They do not contemplate whether the perfect knowledge of everything is combined with or separate from the Buddha's ten abilities. Why? As the Buddha's ten abilities cannot be seen, how can one contemplate whether the perfect knowledge of everything is combined with or separate from the Buddha's ten abilities? They do not contemplate whether the perfect knowledge of everything is combined with or separate from the four kinds of fearlessness, four unhindered understandings, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power. Why? As the four kinds of fearlessness, four unhindered understandings, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power cannot be seen, how can one

contemplate whether the perfect knowledge of everything is combined with or separate from the four kinds of fearlessness, four unhindered understandings, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power? They do not contemplate whether the perfect knowledge of everything is combined with or separate from the Buddha, nor do they contemplate whether the Buddha is combined with or separate from the perfect knowledge of everything. Why? The perfect knowledge of everything is the Buddha, and Buddha is the perfect knowledge of everything. They do not contemplate whether the perfect knowledge of everything is combined with or separate from the bodhi, nor do they contemplate whether the bodhi is combined with or separate from the perfect knowledge of everything. Why? The perfect knowledge of everything is the bodhi and bodhi is the perfect knowledge of everything. Sariputra, as the great bodhisattvas cultivate prajna paramita and correspond with this principle, they are correspondent with prajna paramita.

"Furthermore, Sariputra, when cultivating prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas are not attached to thinking that matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness are existent or nonexistent. They are not attached to thinking that matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness are permanent or impermanent. They are not attached to thinking that matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness are pleasant or painful. They are not attached to thinking that matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness are with or without selfness. They are not attached to thinking that matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness are tranquil or not tranquil. They are not attached to thinking that matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness are empty or not empty. They are not attached to thinking that matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness are with or without form. They are not attached to thinking that matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness are with or without aspiration. Sariputra, as the great bodhisattvas cultivate prajna paramita and correspond with this principle, they are correspondent with prajna paramita.

"Sariputra, when cultivating prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas do not think, 'I practice prajna paramita. I do not practice prajna paramita. I practice and I do not practice prajna paramita. I neither practice nor not practice prajna paramita.' Sariputra, as the great bodhisattvas cultivate prajna paramita and correspond with this principle, they are correspondent with prajna paramita."

"Furthermore, Sariputra, the great bodhisattvas cultivate prajna paramita not for the sake of giving paramita, or for the sake of pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna paramitas. They cultivate prajna paramita not for the sake of entering the definitive correct bodhisattva effect or the bodhisattva stage of nonregression. They cultivate prajna paramita not for the sake of assisting sentient beings to mature or dignifying and purifying Buddha lands. They cultivate prajna paramita not for the sake of the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, four bases of power, five roots, five powers, seven factors for enlightenment, or noble eightfold path. They cultivate prajna paramita not for the sake of the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, four unhindered understandings, and the eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power. They cultivate prajna paramita not for the sake of internal emptiness, external emptiness, internal-external emptiness, emptiness of space, emptiness of emptiness, 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 selflessness, emptiness of self-nature, or emptiness of selfless self-nature. They cultivate prajna paramita not for the sake of realness, dharma realm, dharma nature, or reality. Why? Sariputra, when cultivating prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas do not see the differences among various dharma natures. Sariputra, as the great bodhisattvas cultivate prajna paramita and correspond with this principle, they are correspondent with prajna paramita.

"Furthermore, Sariputra, the great bodhisattvas cultivate prajna paramita not for the sake of heavenly eye, heavenly ear, knowing others' minds, knowing previous lives, mindfulness, transformation, and flawless knowledge. Why? Sariputra, when cultivating prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas do not see prajna paramita, let alone they see great bodhisattvas, Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones, and the six supernatural powers. Sariputra, as the great bodhisattvas cultivate prajna paramita and correspond with these dharmas, they are correspondent with prajna paramita.

"Furthermore, Sariputra, when cultivating prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas do not think, 'I will use my supernatural power of heavenly eye to look at all sentient beings in as many Buddha worlds as the sands of the Ganges to know how they differ from each other when they

pass away from this world and being reborn into another world.' Nor do they think, 'I will use my supernatural power of heavenly ear to hear all sentient beings in as many Buddha worlds as the sands of the Ganges to know how they differ from each other in speaking.' Nor do they think, 'I will use my supernatural power of reading others' minds to know all sentient beings in as many Buddha worlds as the sands of the Ganges about their previous lives.' Nor do they think, 'I will use my supernatural power of making transformation to go to as many Buddha worlds as the sands of the Ganges to teach all sentient beings living there about correct dharma.' Nor do they think, 'I will use my supernatural power of flawless knowledge to know all sentient beings in as many Buddha worlds as the sands of the Ganges whether they are flawless in knowledge.' Sariputra, as the great bodhisattvas cultivate prajna paramita and correspond with this principle, they are correspondent with prajna paramita.

"Furthermore, Sariputra, if great bodhisattvas cultivate prajna paramita and correspond with prajna paramita, they can establish immeasurable, countless, and boundless sentient beings in nirvana without remainder, and no evil demon can take advantage to harm them. Their vexations will be eliminated, and all worldly affairs can be performed as they wish. All Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones and great bodhisattvas in as many realms of the ten directions as the sands of the Ganges will keep and protect these bodhisattvas, prevent them from falling in the stage of voice-hearer or self-enlightened one. All voice-hearers, self-enlightened ones, and heavenly beings from the Heaven of 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 Great Brahma; the Heaven of Light, Heaven of Lesser Light, and so forth, and Heaven of Extremely Great Brightness and Purity; the Heaven of Purity, Heaven of Lesser Purity, and so forth, and Heaven of Universal Purity; the Heaven of Expansion, Heaven of Lesser Expansion, and so forth, and Heaven of Extensive Rewards; and the Heaven of No Aspiration, Heaven of No Affliction, and so forth, and Heaven of Ultimate Form in as many realms of the ten directions as the sands of the Ganges will embrace and guard these bodhisattvas, remove all obstacles in whatever they do, and heal their physical and mental diseases. The enormous pain caused by guilty karmas they are supposed to suffer as retribution in the lives to come will be present in this life but greatly alleviated in painfulness. Why?

Sariputra, it is because these great bodhisattvas have bestowed loving-kindness and compassion universally on all sentient beings.

"Sariputra, because of the mighty supernatural powers produced by cultivating prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas are able to initiate quickly the most carefree dharani gates and samadhi gates with less effort to make them arise and manifest. Because of these powers, they can bring about various merits and virtues of the world and beyond the world as they wish. Wherever they are reborn, they will be able to make offerings to, serve, and never stay away from all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones and great bodhisattvas until attaining the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. Sariputra, you must know that as these great bodhisattvas cultivate prajna paramita and correspond with prajna paramita, they are able to attain such immeasurable, boundless, and unbelievable merits, virtues, and superior benefits.

"Furthermore, Sariputra, when cultivating prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas do not think, 'There are dharmas that are correspondent or not correspondent with other dharmas, equal or not equal to other dharmas.' Why? Sariputra, the great bodhisattvas do not see any dharma correspondent or not correspondent with other dharmas, equal or not equal to other dharmas. Sariputra, as great bodhisattvas cultivate prajna paramita and correspond with this principle, they are correspondent with prajna paramita."

(The Buddha taught how great bodhisattvas become correspondent with prajna paramita when they practice prajna paramita.)