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The Great Prajna Paramita Sutra

Volume 26

(Fascicles 501-520)

Translated by

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A Complete English Version of

The 600-fascicle Chinese

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

Translated from Sanskrit by

Master Xuanzang

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Fascicle 501

Chapter 5

The Stupas

Section 2

(In the Third Assembly)

"Furthermore, Kausika, if good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth wholeheartedly listen to, accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate diligently, reflect reasonably on, write, explain, and disseminate extensively the fathomless prajna paramita, they will gain superior benefits in the present and in the future. I will explain for you respectively. Now please listen to me attentively and reflect carefully on what I am going to say."

Heavenly Emperor Indra replied, "Yes, please go on. We look forward to your teaching."

The Buddha said, "Kausika, if other-path practitioners, demons and their followers, or arrogant people who exaggerate their achievement in cultivation intend to harm great bodhisattvas, as soon as they form these harmful intentions, something unfortunate will happen to them and their plans will never succeed. Why? Kausika, it is because these great bodhisattvas have always stayed in a mind correspondent with the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge under the guidance of great compassion to adopt nonattainment as expediency to cultivate giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita. If sentient beings are always stingy and greedy and argue and fight each other, the great bodhisattvas will renounce all they have internally and externally to assist expediently these sentient beings to dwell in giving paramita. If sentient beings always violate precepts, the great bodhisattvas will renounce all they have internally and externally to assist expediently these sentient beings to dwell in pure-precept paramita. If sentient beings always hate and harm each other, the great bodhisattvas will also renounce all they have internally and externally to assist expediently these sentient beings to

dwell in forbearance paramita. If sentient beings become tired and lazy for doing virtuous actions, the great bodhisattvas will renounce all they have internally and externally to assist expediently these sentient beings to dwell in diligence paramita. If sentient beings become restless and wandering in mind, the great bodhisattvas will renounce all they have internally and externally to assist expediently these sentient beings to dwell in meditation. If sentient beings are ignorant and cannot distinguish virtuous dharmas from not virtuous dharmas, the great bodhisattvas will renounce all they have internally and externally to assist expediently these sentient beings to dwell in prajna paramita. If sentient beings drift in birth and death and their minds are twisted and bound by greed, anger, and ignorance thus cannot be relieved from many unbeneficial things, the great bodhisattvas will expediently and skillfully assist them to overcome greed, anger, and ignorance and other factors causing birth and death. The great bodhisattvas will assist these sentient beings 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; the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration; the eight liberations and nine concentrations in sequence; the various stages of bodhisattva; 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 stage of pure contemplation, stage of embryonic Buddha nature, and so forth, and the stage of Thus-Comer; the five eyes and six supernatural powers; the Thus-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 dwelling in equanimity at all times; all dharani gates and all samadhi gates; 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 virtuous dharmas in the world and beyond the world.

(The Buddha described how great bodhisattvas would help sentient beings based on six paramitas according to individual differences. No other-path practitioners, demons, or arrogant people can do harm to these great bodhisattvas.)

“Kausika, this is how great bodhisattvas gain superior benefits in present life if they can wholeheartedly listen to, accept, embrace, read, recite, diligently cultivate and learn, reasonably reflect on, write, explicate, and disseminate extensively the fathomless prajna paramita.

“Kausika, because of this cause and condition, these great bodhisattvas will realize the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly in the future life and turn wonderful dharma wheel to deliver immeasurable sentient beings. They will establish sentient beings well according to their original aspirations, let them cultivate and learn the three vehicles thoroughly until realizing and attaining the nirvana without remainder.

“Kausika, this is how great bodhisattvas gain superior benefits in the lives to come if they can wholeheartedly listen to, accept, embrace, read, recite, diligently cultivate and learn, reasonably reflect on, write, explicate, and disseminate extensively the fathomless prajna paramita.

“Furthermore, Kausika, suppose that some good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth have wholeheartedly listened to, accepted, embraced, read, recited, diligently cultivated and learned, reasonably reflected on, written, explicated, and extensively disseminated prajna paramita. On the other hand, some demons and their followers, other-path practitioners, and arrogant ones who overstate their achievements in cultivation try to hinder, ruin, denounce, insult, and reject these good gentlemen and gentlewomen, intending to make them vanish because they are jealous of and hate prajna paramita. What they intend to do will never succeed. Besides, they may happen to hear the voice of prajna, their evils fade away, and merits and virtues will arise instead. In a later time, they will be rid of all suffering by relying on the three vehicles, or they will stay away from negative destinies and will be reborn in heaven or the human world.

“Kausika, once there was a very good antidote named Mahilā. Wherever there was this drug, no poisonous insects could get close. A big poisonous snake was hungry and looking for food. As the snake aimed at an animal and was going to bite, the animal was frightened and rushed to the antidote for help. The snake was scared away because of the smell of the drug. Why? Kausika, because the antidote has powerful effect to remove all kinds of poisons, it is good for all sentient beings to survive. So is prajna paramita. If good gentlemen, gentlewomen,

and so forth can wholeheartedly listen to, accept, embrace, read, recite, diligently and attentively cultivate and learn, reasonably reflect on, write, explicate, and extensively disseminate prajna paramita, no demons can harm them because of the mighty supernatural powers of prajna paramita. Why? Prajna paramita possesses great powers to destroy all evils and foster all virtuous dharmas.

(The Buddha used similes to emphasize the invincible powers of prajna paramita.)

"How does prajna paramita eliminate various not virtuous dharmas while fostering the virtuous ones? Prajna paramita will eliminate greed, hatred, and ignorance, the lack of the knowledge of the truth, and so forth, and the aggregate of severe suffering; hindrances and concealments; hidden roots of vexations; bondages and defilements; incorrect views of the 'I,' the sentient being, and so forth, and the viewer; the incorrect views of discontinuation, permanence, nonexistence, and existence and other incorrect views leading to negative destinies; stinginess, greedy desire, violation of precepts, anger and hatred, laziness and tiredness, distraction and restlessness of the mind, stupidity, the thought of permanence, thought of pleasure, thought of selfness, thought of purity, and the rest of dharmas related to greed, hatred, foolishness, arrogance, skepticism, and incorrect views. All these dharmas will be removed by prajna paramita. It will also remove the attachment to matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness, and so forth, and the attachment to the perfect knowledge of all phenomena, bodhi, and nirvana. Kausika, prajna paramita can remove all these not virtuous dharmas, and foster all virtuous dharmas. Prajna paramita thus has immeasurable and countless great supernatural powers.

(The Buddha continued to describe the powers and merits of prajna paramita.)

"Furthermore, Kausika, if good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth can wholeheartedly listen to, accept, embrace, read, recite, diligently and attentively cultivate and learn, reasonably reflect on, write about, explicate, and extensively disseminate prajna paramita, then they will always be welcomed and protected by all beings in this threefold thousand-world and the Heaven of Four Great Kings, Heavenly Emperor Indra, the lord Brahman King of the barely tolerable realm, the deities in the Heaven of Pure Residence, and other virtuous gods and goddesses. Because of their support and protection, these great bodhisattvas will be free from all

disasters and accidents, and when they intend to pursue the dharma, they always can fulfill their wishes. The present Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones in the worlds of the ten directions will always keep these great bodhisattvas in their minds and protect them, so that their negative dharmas will diminish while the virtuous dharmas will continuously grow and become stronger. The virtuous dharmas include giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita. They also include the perfect knowledge of everything, the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena. By adopting nonattainment as expediency, their effort in cultivating or dwelling in all virtuous dharmas will never diminish. Kausika, because of this cause and condition, the great bodhisattvas will speak in dignity and solemnity, and all hearers will respect them and love them. Their voices will not be noisy, and the contents of their speeches will not be contaminated. They will treat and serve virtuous friends very well and are delighted to return the favors they have received. Their minds will not be concealed by stinginess, jealousy, hatred, anger, annoyance, flattery, deceit, and arrogance.

(The Buddha described the virtues and benefits gained by the great bodhisattvas who can learn and practice prajna paramita tirelessly and correctly.)

"Kausika, these great bodhisattvas will not only break the chain of life themselves but also encourage others to do so. They will praise the way of breaking the chain publicly and rejoice and acclaim those who have also broken the chain of life. And so forth, they will not only remove incorrect views themselves but also encourage others to do so. They will praise the way of removing incorrect views publicly and rejoice and acclaim those who have removed incorrect views. Kausika, these great bodhisattvas will not only practice giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita themselves, but also encourage others to do so. They will praise the way of practicing giving paramita, pure-precept paramitam and so forth, and prajna paramita publicly, and rejoice and acclaim those who have practiced giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita. These great bodhisattvas will not only cultivate the perfect knowledge of everything, the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena themselves, but also encourage others to do so. They will praise the way of cultivating the perfect knowledge of everything, the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena publicly, and

rejoice and acclaim those who have cultivated the perfect knowledge of everything, the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena.

"Kausika, as these great bodhisattvas cultivate giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita, they will adopt nonattainment as expediency to transfer the merits and virtues thus derived along with all sentient beings equally toward the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. These great bodhisattvas will often think, 'If I do not cultivate giving paramita, I will be reborn as one of the poor and inferior ones. If I do not cultivate pure-precept paramita, I will find that the doors to the heavens and human world are not open for me; rather, I will be reborn in various bad destinies. If I do not cultivate forbearance paramita, my physical organs will be incomplete, and my build and face will be ugly; I cannot have a perfect physical body as a bodhisattva should have. If I do not cultivate diligence paramita, I will not be able to cultivate the path of bodhisattva; I will be lazy and tired and cannot achieve anything. If I do not cultivate meditation paramita, I will be unable to cultivate superior concentrations of bodhisattva; my mind will always be restless and distracted and cannot accomplish whatever I intend to do. If I do not cultivate prajna paramita, I will not be able to attain expedient skillfulness and thus cannot transcend the stage of voice-hearer and the stage of self-enlightened one. If the things such as poverty and so forth happen to me, I will not have sufficient powers to assist sentient beings to mature and dignify and purify Buddha lands, not to mention I will be able to attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge.' These great bodhisattvas will also always think, 'I should not be driven by the force of stinginess and greed; if I am, I will never fulfill giving paramita. I should not be driven by the force of precept violation; if I am, I will never fulfill pure-precept paramita. I should not be driven by the force of anger and hatred; if I am, I will never fulfill forbearance paramita. I should not be driven by the force of laziness and tiredness; if I am, I will never fulfill diligence paramita. I should not be driven by the force of restlessness and distraction; if I am, I will never fulfill meditation. I should not be driven by the force of ignorance; if I am, I will never fulfill prajna paramita. If I cannot fulfill the six paramitas, I will not attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, and thus cannot bring benefits, peace, and happiness to all sentient beings.'

"Kausika, because these great bodhisattvas have stayed in a mind in accord with the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge and adopted nonattainment as expediency to

wholeheartedly listen to, accept, embrace, read, recite, diligently and attentively cultivate and learn, reasonably reflect on, write about, explicate, and extensively disseminate prajna paramita, they are able to gain such merits, virtues, and superior benefits of the world and beyond the world presently and in the future."

(The Buddha explained how great bodhisattvas should think and practice the six paramitas and outlined the merits and benefits gained the great bodhisattvas who correctly learn and help sentient beings.)

At that time, Heavenly Emperor Indra said to the Buddha, "World-Honored One, prajna paramita is so rare and unique that it will make the minds of great bodhisattvas apart from arrogance and further let them transfer all merits and virtues thus derived toward the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge."

The Buddha asked Heavenly Emperor Indra, "Kausika, how will this rare and unique prajna paramita make the minds of great bodhisattvas apart from arrogance and let them transfer the merits and virtues thus derived toward the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge?"

Heavenly Emperor Indra replied, "World-Honored One, some great bodhisattvas practice giving paramita in the world, they will practice giving to Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones, bodhisattvas, self-enlightened ones, voice-hearers, as well as the poor, lonely, aged, and ill, the walkers, and beggars, with such a thought in mind, 'I can practice almsgiving to the Buddhas, great bodhisattvas, and so forth, and the beggars,' then these great bodhisattvas are practicing giving with arrogance instead of expedient skillfulness, so they are unable to transfer the merits and virtues toward the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. If great bodhisattvas practice pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna paramitas in the world with such a thought, 'I can cultivate pure-precept paramita, forbearance paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita,' or with such a thought, 'I can fulfill pure-precept paramita, forbearance paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita,' then they are practicing pure-precept paramita, forbearance paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita with arrogance instead of expedient skillfulness, so they will not be able to transfer the merits and virtues toward the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. If great bodhisattvas cultivate the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of

the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena with such a thought, ‘I can perfectly fulfill the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena,’ then they are cultivating the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena with arrogance instead of expedient skillfulness, so they will not be able to transfer the merits and virtues toward the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. When assisting sentient beings to mature and dignifying and purifying Buddha lands, the great bodhisattvas have such a thought in mind, ‘I can assist sentient beings to mature and dignify and purify Buddha lands. No one else can do so.’ Because these great bodhisattvas have assisted sentient beings to mature and dignified and purified Buddha lands with arrogance instead of expedient skillfulness, they are unable to transfer the merits and virtues toward the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge.

“World-Honored One, because these great bodhisattvas have cultivated virtuous dharmas with a mind in accord with the world rather than expedient skillfulness, they are disturbed by the attachment to the ‘I’ and associated images. Although they have cultivated prajna paramita, they can neither tame arrogance nor transfer the merits and virtues toward the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. World-Honored One, if great bodhisattvas can cultivate prajna paramita well when practicing giving paramita beyond the world, they will not attain givers, receivers, and almsgiving, then they do practice giving based on prajna paramita and thus can tame arrogance and transfer the merits and virtues toward the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. If great bodhisattvas cultivate prajna paramita well when practicing pure-precept paramita, forbearance paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita beyond the world, they will not attain pure precept, forbearance, and so forth, and prajna and all dharmas, then they do practice pure precept, forbearance, and so forth, and prajna based on prajna paramita, and thus can tame arrogance and transfer the merits and virtues toward the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. And so on, if great bodhisattvas cultivate prajna paramita well when practicing the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena, they will not attain the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, perfect knowledge of all phenomena and all dharmas, then they do cultivate the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena based on prajna paramita, and thus can tame

arrogance and transfer the merits and virtues toward the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. If great bodhisattvas cultivate prajna paramita well when assisting sentient beings to mature and dignifying and purifying Buddha lands, they will not attain what they do, then they do assist sentient beings to mature and dignify and purify Buddha lands based on prajna paramita, and thus can tame arrogance and transfer the merits and virtues toward the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge.

(Heavenly Emperor stated how great bodhisattvas could practice the virtuous dharmas based on prajna paramita to tame their arrogance and transfer the merits and virtues toward the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge.)

"World-Honored One, because of this cause and condition, I will say that prajna paramita is very rare and unique; it can remove arrogance from great bodhisattvas' minds and let them transfer the merits and virtues toward the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge."

At that time, the Buddha said to Heavenly Emperor Indra, "Kausika, if good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth stay in a mind in accord with the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge and adopt nonattainment as expediency to wholeheartedly listen to, accept, embrace, read, recite, diligently cultivate, reasonably reflect on, write about, explicate, and extensively disseminate the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita, then these great bodhisattvas will attain peace and happiness in body and mind, and will not be attacked or disturbed by all kinds of disasters. If, during times of war, great bodhisattvas sincerely recite prajna paramita, hold all living beings in their hearts, and offer prayers of loving-kindness and compassion wishing no harm comes to anyone, then even their enemies may become caring and compassionate. If the enemies have vicious minds arise, they will naturally collapse in defeat. It is unreasonable to conclude that these good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth will be hurt or killed in the war. Why? Kausika, they have long cultivated giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna paramitas by adopting nonattainment as expediency. They can subjugate the swords and rods of their own greed, anger, foolishness, arrogance, incorrect views, hidden roots of vexations, bondages and defilements, and the not virtuous karmas; they are able to subjugate the swords and rods of others as well.

“Furthermore, Kausika, if good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth stay in a mind in accord with the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge and adopt nonattainment as expediency to wholeheartedly listen to, accept, embrace, read, recite, diligently learn and cultivate, reasonably reflect on, make offerings respectfully to, admire and acclaim, write about, explicate, and extensively disseminate the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita, then these good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth will not be harmed by all kinds of poisonous medicines, poisonous insects, evil spirits, negative prayers, and curses. They will not be drowned or burnt, or hurt by swords and rods, fierce beasts, enemies, vicious deities, the wicked ones, demons, and monsters. Why? Kausika, it is because prajna paramita is great divine mantra, supernatural spell, great bright spell, unsurpassed spell, and unequaled equal spell. Prajna paramita is the king of all spells, the highest and most wonderful one. No spells are equivalent to it. Prajna paramita possesses the most powerful and invincible strength so it can overcome all. If good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth learn and cultivate diligently and attentively this spell king, they will not harm themselves or others. Why? Kausika, when good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth learn this prajna paramita, they understand that they and others are unattainable. Kausika, when good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth learn this great spell king, they will not attain the ‘I,’ the sentient being, and so forth, and the knower and the viewer. They will not attain matter, feeling, and so forth, and consciousness. And so on, they will not attain the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena. Due to nonattainment, they will not do anything to harm themselves or others.

(The Buddha explained how prajna paramita, the holy mantra, is invincible and can subjugate all. Those who learn this spell king will not attain various dharmas and thus will not harm themselves and others.)

“Kausika, as good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth learn prajna paramita the spell king, they will not attain the self and related dharmas. That is why they can realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. Nevertheless, they can investigate different minds and actions of sentient beings, so when turning the unsurpassed dharma wheel, they teach them properly according to individual differences to benefit each one. Why? Kausika, it is because the great bodhisattvas in the past, future, and present had cultivated, will cultivate, and are cultivating this great holy spell king, the fathomless prajna paramita, diligently and attentively.

They had realized and attained, will realize and attain, and are realizing and attaining the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi to turn the wonderful dharma wheel to deliver numberless sentient beings.

"Furthermore, kausika, if good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth wholeheartedly listen to, accept, embrace, read, recite, diligently cultivate and learn, reasonably reflect on, write about, explicate, and extensively disseminate the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita, then they and their neighbors, wherever they live, including humans and nonhumans, will not be harmed by all kinds of disasters and accidents. Why? Kausika, wherever these good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth live, all heavenly beings and various dragons, deities, and asuras from the Heaven of Four Great Kings, Heaven of Thirty-Three Smaller Heavens, and so forth, and the Heaven of Ultimate Form in this threefold thousand-world and the rest of immeasurable, countless, and boundless worlds of the ten direction will always protect, make offerings respectfully to esteem and acclaim them, so that the great holy spell king, the prajna paramita, will not encounter any trouble or hindrance.

(The Buddha emphasized the magic powers of prajna paramita and how sentient beings will be protected by it wherever the great bodhisattvas cultivate and disseminate it.)

"Furthermore, Kausika, if good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth write the great magic spell king, prajna paramita, display the writing in a clean and pure place, and make offerings to honor it, then all humans and nonhumans living in this area will not be harmed by disasters, accidents, and plagues even if they do not listen to, accept, embrace, read, recite, reflect reasonably on, or explicate it. Why? Kausika, wherever prajna paramita the great magic spell king is located, the heavenly deities from the Heaven of Four Great Kings, Heaven of Thirty-Three Smaller Heavens, and so forth, and the Heaven of Ultimate Form, various dragons, asuras, and so forth in this large threefold thousand-world and the rest of boundless worlds in the ten directions will always protect, make offerings respectfully to esteem and acclaim it, so prajna paramita will not encounter any trouble.

"Kausika, if good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth have only written prajna paramita, the great spell king, displayed it in a clean and pure place, and made offerings respectfully to esteem and acclaim it, they will obtain a lot of benefits in present life, not to

mention if they can listen to, accept, embrace, read, recite, learn and cultivate diligently, and reflect reasonably on prajna paramita, and further explicate it extensively for others. You must know that these people will gain innumerable merits and virtues and thus will attain the great bodhi to bring benefits and happiness to all sentient beings.

"Furthermore, Kausika, if good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth are afraid of enemies, wild beasts, disasters, wicked prayers, plagues, poisonous medicines, curses, and so on, they should write prajna paramita, the great magic spell king, and store it in a small perfume bag, then put the box in a treasure barrel. They will always carry this spell king and make offerings respectfully to esteem and acclaim it, then all things that they fear will not happen. It is because the heavenly dragons, deities, and spirits will always protect them. Kausika, when humans and animals stay close to the bodhi tree, no humans or nonhumans can do harm to them. Why? Kausika, because all the Buddhas in the past, present, and future attained, are attaining, or will attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi by sitting under this tree. After attaining the bodhi, they teach the bodhi to let all sentient beings get rid of fear, terror, resentment, and damage in body and mind. They help innumerable sentient beings live with noble actions in human world and heaven to enjoy exquisite peace and happiness of the three vehicles. They establish innumerable sentient beings well to let them attain stream-entry effect, once-return effect, nonreturn effect, and arhat effect, the self-enlightenment bodhi, or the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. All these wonderful things are caused by the supernatural powers of prajna paramita. This is why heavenly deities, dragons, asuras, and so forth have worked together to protect and keep, make offerings respectfully to esteem and acclaim prajna paramita. Where there are the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita, all heavenly deities, dragons, asuras, and so forth will protect, make offerings to esteem them, so that the prajna paramita will not encounter any trouble or difficulty.

"Kausika, the real monastery is where the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita reside. All sentient beings should pay homage and make the most wonderful wreaths, spread perfumes, powdered incenses, clothing, jewel necklaces, treasure pennants, canopies, rarities, entertainments, and lamps as offerings to esteem and acclaim them."

(The Buddha taught about the exquisite benefits the sutras of prajna paramita would bring to humans and heaven beings, and why the sutras are treasured and protected by all heavenly dharma protectors.)

At that time, Heavenly Emperor Indra asked the Buddha, "World-Honored One, some good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth have written the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita and made all kinds of wonderful things as offerings to esteem and acclaim them. They have further made different kinds of wreaths, spread perfumes, powdered incenses, clothing, jewel necklaces, treasure pennants, canopies, and various rare and unique things along with entertainment and lamps as offerings to them. On the other hand, some other good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth, after the Buddha passed away, have built a stupa decorated with seven treasures, in which a treasure case of the Buddha's relics was stored. They have also made the most wonderful wreaths, spread perfumes, powdered incenses, clothing, jewel necklaces, treasure pennants, canopies, and different kinds of rare and unique things along with entertainments and lamps as offerings respectfully to esteem and acclaim the relics. Between these two groups of people, who will invite more blessings?"

The Buddha said, "Let me ask you a question, you may answer as you like. Through which dharma cultivation did the Thus-Comer attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, the perfect major marks, and the distinguishing minor features?

Heavenly Emperor Indra said, "World-Honored One, it is through the cultivation and learning of the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita that the Thus-Comer attained the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, the perfect major marks, and the distinguishing minor features."

The Buddha said to Kausika, "Yes, it is as you say. I have attained the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge and the perfect marks through the cultivation and learning of the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita. Why? Kausika, it does not make sense to say that one can attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi without learning the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita.

"Kausika, one is named the Thus-Comer, One Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened One not only because he has attained the perfect physical features but also because he has attained the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. Kausika, the achievement of the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge is caused by prajna paramita. It also relies on the Buddha's perfect physical features that the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge is initiated. Therefore, prajna paramita is the cause for the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, but to make this perfect knowledge present and endure, one should further cultivate the perfect physical features. If the perfect physical features could not be relied on by the universal knowledge, all the heavenly deities, dragons, humans, and nonhumans would not wholeheartedly make offerings respectfully to them. It is because the Buddha's universal knowledge relies on his perfect physical features that various deities, dragons, humans, and nonhumans will make offerings respectfully to them. Based on this cause and condition, various heavenly deities, dragons, humans, and nonhumans should make offerings respectfully to my relics after I enter nirvana.

"Kausika, as good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth make offerings respectfully to the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita with esteem and acclamation, it means that they make offerings to the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, the perfect major marks on which the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge relies, and the Buddha's relics after his passing away. Why? Kausika, the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, the perfect marks, and the Buddha's relics are all based on prajna paramita. Kausika, if good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth only make offerings respectfully to esteem and acclaim the perfect major marks of the Buddha and his relics, it does not mean that they also make offerings respectfully to the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge and prajna paramita. Why? Kausika, the Buddha's relics are not the foundation of prajna paramita and the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. Kausika, based on this cause and condition, if good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth would like to make offerings respectfully to the Buddha's body and spirit as well as his other merits and virtues, they should first of all listen to, accept, embrace, read, recite, learn and cultivate diligently and attentively, reflect reasonably on, write about, and explicate the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita. They should further make various most wonderful wreathes, spread perfumes, powdered incenses, clothes, jewel necklaces, treasure pennants, canopies, various

rarities, music, entertainments, and lamps as offerings to the sutras of prajna paramita with esteem and acclamation.

(The Buddha clarified the relationship between Buddha's perfect marks, his relics, and the sutras of prajna paramita, further explained why Buddhist practitioners should first of all learn the sutras of prajna paramita.)

"Therefore, Kausika, suppose that some good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth have written the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita, and made offerings in various solemn and magnificent ways to esteem and acclaim them. They have further made various most wonderful wreaths, spread perfumes, powdered incenses, clothing, jewel necklaces, treasure pennants, canopies, rarities, music, entertainments, and lamps as offerings to the sutras of prajna paramita. While some other good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth have built a stupa decorated with seven treasures after the Buddha passed into nirvana. They stored the Buddha's relics in a treasure box, made offerings respectfully to esteem and acclaim them. They have further made various most wonderful wreaths, spread perfumes, powdered incenses, clothes, jewelry necklaces, treasure pennants, canopies, rarities, music, entertainments, and lamps as offerings to the Buddha's relics. The blessings gained by the former good gentlemen and gentlewomen gained are much more than the latter ones by immeasurable times.

"Why? Kausika, it is because the profound sutras of prajna paramita can fulfill giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita quickly. They can make 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 realm of termination, realm of getting away, and so forth, and the unconditioned realm; 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 and nine concentrations in sequence; 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 defilement, and so forth, and the stage of dharma cloud; 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; all dharani gates and all samadhi gates; the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena, and the growth and maturation of sentient beings and the dignification and purification of Buddha lands fulfilled quickly. The profound sutras of prajna paramita can also make the perfect caste, perfect physical body and strength, perfect treasure and property, and perfect family and associates of various great bodhisattvas fulfilled quickly. They will make the path of the ten virtuous karmas as well as the rest of immeasurable virtuous dharmas, including making offerings to the monastics, parents, teachers, and elders and practicing almsgiving, precepts, and cultivations, fulfilled quickly. The profound sutras of prajna paramita will make the noble families of Ksatriya, Brahma, elders, laypersons, and the Heaven of Four Great Kings, Heaven of Thirty-Three Smaller Heavens, and so forth, and the Heaven of Nonthinking and Not Nonthinking fulfilled quickly. The profound sutras of prajna paramita will also make the stream-entry effect, once-return effect, nonreturn effect, arhat effect, self-enlightenment bodhi, all great bodhisattva actions, and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas possible. They make the voice-hearers, self-enlightened ones, bodhisattvas, and the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones possible. The profound sutras of prajna paramita make the unimaginable, unspeakable, unsurpassed, and unequaled equal perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge possible."

(The Buddha further described that prajna paramita can make all kinds of virtuous and beneficial things possible or fulfilled quickly.)

In the meantime, Heavenly Emperor Indra asked the Buddha, "Some sentient beings living in the continent of Jambudvipa do not make offerings respectfully to esteem and acclaim the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita. Don't they know that making offerings respectfully to and esteeming and acclaiming the profound sutras of prajna paramita will allow ones to gain various merits, virtues, and superior benefits?"

The Buddha said to Kausika, "Let me ask you some questions, and you may reply as you like. What do you think about this? How many people in the continent of Jambudvipa have

realized the purity of the Buddha, the dharma, and the sangha? How many have no doubt about the Buddha, the dharma, and the sangha? How many thoroughly know the Buddha, the dharma, and the sangha? How many have cultivated the path of the ten virtuous karmas? How many have practiced almsgiving, precept, and cultivation? How many have attained the thirty-seven aids to enlightenment? How many have attained the three liberations? How many have attained the eight liberations? How many have attained the nine concentrations in sequence? How many have attained the four unhindered understandings? How many have achieved six supernatural powers? How many have terminated the three bonds forever and attained stream-entry effect? How many have mitigated greed, anger, and ignorance and attained once-return effect? How many have permanently terminated the lower five bonds and attained the nonreturn effect? How many have permanently terminated the upper five bonds and attained arhat effect? How many have definitely aspired to the pursuit of self-enlightenment bodhi? And how many have definitely aspired to the pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas?"

Heavenly Emperor Indra replied, "Very few people in the continent of Jambudvipa have realized the purity of the Buddha, the dharma, and the sangha, and so forth, and aspired to the pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas."

At that time, the Buddha said to Heavenly Emperor Indra, "Yes, it is as you say. Kausika, in the continent of Jambudvipa, very few people have realized and attained the purity of the Buddha, the dharma, and the sangha. Fewer have known the Buddha, the dharma, and the sangha without puzzles; fewer have resolved to aspire to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi; fewer have resolved to cultivate and learn the actions leading to the bodhi; and even fewer have cultivated and learned diligently the actions leading to the bodhi and attained the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi without regression. Why? Kausika, the sentient beings have for innumerable generations reincarnated in birth and death. They have not seen the Buddha, heard the correct dharma, and stayed close to the sangha for a very long time. Most of them have not cultivated the path of the ten virtuous karmas, practiced almsgiving, observed precepts, and undertaken cultivation. Most of them have not heard about or cultivated giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita. And so on, most of them have not heard about and cultivated the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena. Because of this cause and condition, only a few

people in the continent of Jambudvipa realize the purity of the Buddha, the dharma, and the sangha; fewer have no doubt about the Buddha, the dharma, and the sangha; fewer have resolved to aspire to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi; fewer have diligently and attentively cultivated all actions leading toward the great bodhi; and even fewer have cultivated diligently and attentively the actions leading toward the great bodhi and finally attained the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi without regression.

(The Buddha confirmed Kausika's reply that there are very few people in the continent of Jambudvipa have learned and understood the three gems, not to mention they have attained the perfect knowledge.)

"Furthermore, Kausika, let me ask you some questions and you may reply as you like. Let us put all human beings in the continent of Jambudvipa aside. What do you think about this? In this large threefold thousand-world, how many sentient beings have made offerings respectfully to parents, teachers, and elders? How many sentient beings have made offerings to sramanas and Brahmans? How many sentient beings have practiced giving, observed precepts, and cultivated the virtuous bliss-inviting karmas? How many sentient beings have practiced the path of the ten virtuous karmas? How many sentient beings have stayed in the mindfulness of disgust, impermanence, suffering, selflessness, impurity, disgust of eating food, and undesirability of the world? How many sentient beings have cultivated the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations? How many sentient beings have realized the purity of the Buddha, dharma, and sangha? How many sentient beings have resolved to aspire to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas? How many sentient beings have aspired to the cultivation leading to the bodhi? How many sentient beings have worked hard to nurture and foster the mind of great bodhi? How many sentient beings have cultivated prajna paramita expediently and skillfully? How many sentient beings have dwelled in the nonregressive stage of bodhisattva? How many sentient beings will realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly?"

Heavenly Emperor Indra replied, "In this large threefold thousand-world, very few sentient beings have made offerings respectfully to parents, teachers, and elders, and so forth, and have realized and attained the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly.

The Buddha said to Kausika, “Yes, it is as you say. Kausika, in this large threefold thousand-world, only a few sentient beings have made offerings respectfully to parents, teachers, and elders. Fewer sentient beings make offerings respectfully to the monastics and Brahmas. Even fewer sentient beings dwell in the nonregressive stage of bodhisattva. And even the smallest group of sentient beings can realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly.

“Furthermore, Kausika, I have used my unhindered pure eyes to look around the boundless worlds in the ten directions and found immeasurable and countless sentient beings are aspiring to the great bodhi and cultivating the great bodhisattva actions. But because of the lack of expedient skillfulness in fathomless prajna paramita, only a few sentient beings, perhaps one, two, or three sentient beings, can dwell in the nonregressive stage of bodhisattva. Most of them have, unfortunately, regressed to inferior intentions and actions; they stay in the stage of voice-hearer or self-enlightened one and cannot move forward. Why? Kausika, the merits and virtues of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi are boundless and very difficult to realize. The inferior sentient beings with poor wisdom, laziness, inefficient diligence, and weak understanding are unable to attain them.

“Kausika, because of this cause and condition, if good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth are determined to pursue the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, cultivate diligently and assiduously the actions leading to the bodhi, dwell in the bodhisattva stage of nonregression, and realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly, they should always listen to, accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate and learn diligently, reflect reasonably on the fathomless prajna paramita. They should often ask their teachers about it, and further enthusiastically explain it to others. They should write it and dignify the writing with various kinds of treasures, make offerings respectfully to esteem and acclaim it. They should further make various most wonderful wreaths, spread perfumes and powdered incenses, clothing, jewel necklaces, treasure banners, canopies, rarities, entertainments, and lamps as offerings to the fathomless prajna paramita.

“Kausika, the good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth should also listen to, accept, embrace, read, recite, diligently cultivate and learn, reasonably reflect on, frequently inquire

about, and delightedly explain for others the rest of the superior virtuous dharmas absorbed in the fathomless prajna paramita. They should write and make offerings respectfully to them. What are the rest of the superior virtuous dharmas absorbed in the fathomless prajna paramita? They are giving pramita, 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 realm of termination, realm of getting away, and so forth, and the unconditioned realm; 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 and nine concentrations in sequence; the three liberation gates; the stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilement, and so forth, and the stage of dharma cloud; 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; all dharani gates and all samadhi gates; 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. These are the rest of the superior virtuous dharmas absorbed in the fathomless prajna paramita.

(The Buddha enumerated the superior holy dharmas, including the rest of the superior virtuous dharmas absorbed in the fathomless prajna paramita.)

"Kausika, these good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth should also listen to, accept, embrace, read, recite, and reasonably reflect on the rest of immeasurable dharma gates, such as the aggregates, spheres, and the realms in compliance with the fathomless prajna paramita. They should not reject them or slander them so to let the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi encounter troubles. Why? Kausika, these good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth should think, 'When the Thus-Comer was still a bodhisattva in the past, he always cultivated and learned diligently the dharmas in compliance with the bodhi. These dharmas are prajna, meditation, diligence, forbearance, pure precept, and giving paramitas, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of everything, the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, the perfect knowledge of all phenomena, the rest of immeasurable and boundless Buddha dharmas, and the

immeasurable dharma gates, such as the aggregates, spheres, and the realms, that are in compliance with the fathomless prajna paramita. Because of the cultivation and learning of these dharmas, the Thus-Comer could realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi that he pursued. Now, we should cultivate and learn as the Thus-Comer did to attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi that we are pursuing. The fathomless prajna paramita and the rest of the superior virtuous dharmas in compliance with prajna paramita are our great masters. If we can follow and learn from them, all our aspirations will be fulfilled. They are really the dharma seals for the Buddhas. All Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones have followed and learned from them, so they are able to realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. These are also the real dharma seals for all voice-hearers and self-enlightened ones, who have followed and learned from them and so are able to reach the other shore of nirvana.'

(The Buddha taught that great bodhisattvas should always cultivate and learn diligently the dharmas in compliance with the bodhi as Thus-Comer did when he was a bodhisattva. These dharmas include the six paramitas, and so forth, and the three kinds of perfect knowledge, the rest of immeasurable Buddha dharmas, and the numberless dharma gates.)

"Therefore, Kausika, various good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth should, either in the time when the Buddha was still alive or after his passing away, cultivate and learn diligently prajna paramita, meditation paramita, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena, the rest of immeasurable and boundless Buddha dharmas, and the rest of the immeasurable dharma gates such as the aggregates, spheres, and the realms. These are where the voice-hearers, self-enlightened ones, bodhisattvas, and the rest of heavenly beings, human beings, asuras, and so forth and their benefits, peace, and happiness reside."

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Chapter 5

The Stupas

Section 3

(In the Third Assembly)

At that time, Heavenly Emperor Indra said to the Buddha, “World-Honored One, if good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth stay in a mind in accord with the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge and adopt nonattainment as expediency to listen wholeheartedly to, accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate and learn diligently, reflect reasonably on, lecture for sentient beings on, and disseminate extensively the fathomless sutras of the prajna paramita, or write and decorate them with various treasures and further make various most wonderful wreaths, spread perfumes and powdered incenses, clothing, jewel necklaces, treasure banners, canopies, varied rare and pretty matters, music, entertainments, and lamps as offerings to esteem and acclaim the sutras, then how much will these good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth be blessed?”

The Buddha replied to Kausika, “Let me ask you a question, and you may reply as you like. Some good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth have, after various Thus-Comers passed into nirvana, built a stupa, which was one yojana tall and half-yojana wide, decorated with seven treasures and dignified with various unique rarities. They further made various wonderful heavenly flower wreaths, spread perfumes and powdered incenses, clothing, jewel necklaces, treasure banners, canopies, rarities, music, entertainments, and lamps as offerings to esteem and acclaim the Buddha’s relics for the rest of their lives, then what do you think about this? Will these good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth be much blessed because of this cause and condition?”

Heavenly Emperor Indra replied, “Very much, World-Honored One; very much, Well-Gone One.”

The Buddha said to Kausika, “But the former good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth will be blessed more by immeasurable and boundless times than the latter ones.

“Furthermore, Kausika, let us put this aside at this moment. Suppose that some good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth have built the stupas after various Thus-Comers passed into nirvana. Each stupa was one yojana tall and half-yojana wide. They were all decorated with seven treasures and dignified with various unique rarities. The stupas were so many that they filled entire continent of Jambudvipa, four continents, one small thousand-world, one medium thousand-world, or one large threefold thousand-world. They further made the wonderful heavenly flower wreaths, spread perfumes and powdered incenses, and so forth, and lamps as offerings to esteem and acclaim the Buddha’s relics for the rest of their lives. What do you think about this? Will these good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth be much blessed because of this cause and condition?”

Heavenly Emperor Indra said, “Very much, World-Honored One; very much, Well-Gone One.”

The Buddha said to Kausika, “But the first group of good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth mentioned above will be blessed more than the latter ones by immeasurable and boundless times. Let us now put the large threefold thousand-world aside. Suppose that all sentient beings in all large threefold thousand-worlds have each built a stupa with one yojana height and half-yojana width after various Thus-Comers passed into nirvana. All these stupas were decorated with seven treasures and dignified with various unique rarities. The stupas were so many that they filled all threefold thousand-worlds with no empty space left. They further made various wonderful heavenly flower wreaths, spread perfumes and powdered incenses, and so forth, and lamps as offerings to esteem and acclaim the Buddha’s relics for the rest of their lives. What do you think about this? Will these sentient beings be much blessed because of this cause and condition?”

The heavenly emperor Indra replied, “They will be much blessed, World-Honored One. They will be much blessed, Well-Gone One.”

The Buddha said to Kausika, “But the first group of good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth mentioned above will be more blessed than these sentient beings by immeasurable and boundless times.”

In the meantime, Heavenly Emperor Indra said to the Buddha, “Yes, World-Honored One. Yes, Well-Gone One. If the good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth make offerings respectfully to esteem and acclaim the fathomless prajna paramita, they equally make offerings respectfully to esteem and acclaim the Buddhas, the World-Honored Ones, in the past, future, and present. Suppose that each sentient being in as many worlds of the ten directions as the sands of the Ganges has built a stupa with one joyana height and half-joyana width after the Buddhas passed into nirvana, and all stupas are decorated with seven treasures and dignified with various unique rarities. The stupas are so many that they fill all threefold thousand-worlds with no empty space left. These sentient beings have further made various wonderful heavenly flower wreaths, spread perfumes and powdered incenses, and so forth, and lamps as offerings to esteem and acclaim the Buddha’s relics for one kalpa or even longer. World-Honored One, will these sentient beings be much blessed because of this cause and condition?”

The Buddha replied, “They will be blessed very much.”

Heavenly Emperor Indra said, “If the good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth have stayed in a mind in accord with the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge and adopted nonattainment as expediency to wholeheartedly listen to, accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate and learn diligently, reflect reasonably on, lecture on, and disseminate extensively the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita, and if they further write and decorate the sutras with magnificent treasures, and make various most wonderful wreaths, spread perfumes and powdered incenses, and so forth, and lamps as offering to esteem and acclaim the sutras of prajna paramita for a very brief instant, then these good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth will be much more blessed than the former ones by immeasurable and boundless times. The blessings thus gained by them will be beyond one’s imagination or measurement. Why? World-Honored One, it is because prajna paramita has absorbed all virtuous dharmas, such as the path of the ten virtuous karmas; the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations; the thirty-seven aids to enlightenment; three liberation gates; the eight liberations and nine concentrations

in sequence; the five eyes and the 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 realm of termination, realm of getting away, and so forth, and the unconditioned realm; the four noble truths; the twelve chains of dependent arising; 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 defilement, and so forth, and the 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; 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. All these virtuous dharmas are absorbed in the fathomless prajna paramita.

"World-Honored One, prajna paramita is the genuine dharma seal for the Thus-Comers. It is also the real dharma seal for all voice-hearers and self-enlightened ones. All Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones in the past, future, and present learned, will learn, and are learning from it and thus were, will be, and are able to realize and attain the unsurpassed bodhi. All voice-hearers and self-enlightened ones learned, will learn, and are learning from it and thus were, will be, and are able to reach the other shore of nirvana. Because of this cause and condition, if good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth stay in a mind in accord with the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge and adopt nonattainment as expediency to wholeheartedly listen to, accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate and learn diligently, reflect reasonably on, lecture on, and disseminate extensively the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita; if they further write and decorate them with various treasures, and make various most wonderful wreaths, perfumes and incenses, and so forth, and lamps as offerings to esteem and acclaim the sutras of prajna paramita, then the blessings thus gained by them will be immeasurable, boundless, and beyond one can imagine and measure, and no other blessings will be equivalent to them."

(Under the guidance of the Buddha, Heavenly Emperor Indra made such a wonderful conclusion regarding the relationship between prajna paramita and stupas.)

Chapter 6

Praising the Merits and Virtues

Section 1

(In the Third Assembly)

At that time, the Buddha said to Heavenly Emperor Indra, “Yes, it is as you say. Kausika, if good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth have stayed in a mind in accord with the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge and adopted nonattainment as expediency to wholeheartedly listen to, accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate and learn diligently, reflect reasonably on, lecture on, and extensively disseminate the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita; if they further write and decorate the sutras with various treasures, and make various most wonderful wreaths, perfumes and incenses, and so forth, and lamps as offerings to esteem and acclaim the sutras of prajna paramita, then they will attain immeasurable and boundless blessings, more than one can imagine and measure. Why? Kausika, it is because prajna paramita can comprehensively fulfill the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena of all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones. Prajna paramita can fulfill giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and meditation paramita. It 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 realm of termination, realm of getting away, and so forth, and the unconditioned realm; the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering; the thirty-seven aids to enlightenment; the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations; the eight liberations and nine concentrations in sequence; the three liberation gates; 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 defilement, and so forth, and the stage of dharma cloud; 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 dharani gates and the samadhi gates. It also enables great bodhisattvas to assist sentient beings to mature and dignify and purify Buddha lands. It can fulfill the voice-hearer vehicle, self-enlightened one vehicle, and the unsurpassed vehicle. It can also fulfill the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas.

"Therefore, Kausika, if good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth stay in a mind in accord with the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge and adopt nonattainment as expediency to wholeheartedly listen to, accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate and learn diligently, reflect reasonably on, lecture extensively for the sentient beings on, and write and decorate with various treasures the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita, and further make various most wonderful wreaths, perfumes and incenses, and so forth, and lamps as offerings to esteem and acclaim the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita, then in comparison, the blessings gained by the ones who have built stupas in order to make offerings respectfully to the Buddhas' relics will be much less than these good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth by one hundredth, one thousandth, and so forth, and one upanisadam-api. Why? Kausika, if the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita dwell among sentient beings in the continent of Jambudvipa, then the triple gem, namely the Buddha, dharma, and Sangha, will never disappear from this world. Because of this cause and condition, the path of the ten virtuous karmas will always exist in the world. The four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations; giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita; and the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena will always exist in the world. Because of this cause and condition, the noble families of Ksatriya, Brahman, elders, and laypersons will always exist in the world. Because of this cause and condition, the Heaven of Four Great Kings, Heaven of Thirty-Three Smaller Heavens, and so forth, and the Heaven of Nonthinking and Not Nonthinking; the voice-hearer vehicle, self-enlightened one vehicle, and the unsurpassed vehicle, as well as the stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi will always exist in the world. Because of this cause and condition, the great bodhisattvas will be able to assist sentient beings to mature and dignify and purify Buddha lands, and the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones will realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal

bodhi, and turn the wonderful dharma wheel to deliver various sentient beings. All these superior things will always exist in this world and will never disappear."

(The Buddha confirmed the statement made by Heavenly Emperor Indra, and further elaborated the same topic.)

At that time, in this barely tolerable threefold thousand-world, all heavenly beings from the Heaven of Four Great Kings, Heaven of Thirty-Three Smaller Heavens, and so forth, and the Heaven of Ultimate Form said to Heavenly Emperor Indra, "Great immortal one, we would like to always listen to, accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate and learn diligently, reflect reasonably on, make offerings respectfully to esteem and acclaim the fathomless prajna paramita. Why? If one can wholeheartedly listen to, accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate and learn diligently, reflect reasonably on, make offerings respectfully to esteem and acclaim this fathomless prajna paramita, all evil dharmas will diminish while virtuous dharmas will grow and increase; the heavenly beings will increase while asuras and their gangs will decrease and become weaker; the Buddha eye, dharma eye, and sangha eye will not be destroyed and the seeds of the Buddha, the dharma, and the sangha will exist and last forever. Great immortal one, as you know, due to the continuation of the seeds of triple gem, giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna paramitas will also continue in this world; internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature will endure; and the perfect knowledge of everything, the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena will never disappear. Because the seeds of the triple gem continue, stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi; the great bodhisattva actions; and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi will also continue. Owing to the continuation of the seeds of the triple gem, the voice-hearers, self-enlightened ones, bodhisattvas, and the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones will always exist in this world. Therefore, great immortal one, we should always wholeheartedly listen to, accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate and learn diligently, reflect reasonably on, make offerings respectfully to, esteem, and acclaim the fathomless prajna paramita."

(The heavenly beings also expressed their understanding of the indispensability of prajna paramita and its sutras.)

At that time, the Buddha said to Heavenly Emperor Indra, “Kausika, you must wholeheartedly listen to, accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate and learn diligently, reflect reasonably on, and make offerings respectfully to esteem and acclaim the fathomless prajna paramita. Why? If asuras and their evil gang members have such a thought arise in their minds, ‘We want to fight against the heavenly beings,’ then you all heavenly family members and associates should recite sincerely and attentively, make offerings respectfully to esteem and acclaim this fathomless prajna paramita. When you do so, the evils ideas that appear in asuras and their gang members’ minds will vanish. If heavenly sons or heavenly ladies have the five signs of decay appearing in their bodies and they become frightened and fear they will be reborn in inferior destinies, you heavenly beings and family should sincerely and attentively recite the fathomless prajna paramita beside them. Upon hearing your recitation of prajna paramita, these heavenly sons or ladies will recover from the five signs of decay and return to peace and stability in body and mind owing to the powers of their virtuous roots and pure belief in prajna paramita. If they die, they will be reborn where they left, enjoying even greater pleasure and wealth than before. Why? It is because of the powers of the blessings caused by hearing and believing in prajna paramita.

“Kausika, if good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth or heavenly sons and daughters happened to hear and accept the fathomless prajna paramita, they will attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi because of the powers of the virtuous roots. Why? Various Buddhas and their disciples in the past, future, and present learned, will learn, and are learning the fathomless prajna paramita and attained, will attain, and are attaining the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi to enter nirvana without remainder. Why? Kausika, it is because the fathomless prajna paramita has comprehensively absorbed all factors for enlightenment, such as the dharma of voice-hearer, dharma of self-enlightened one, dharma of bodhisattva, and the Buddha dharma.”

(The Buddha encouraged Kausika to learn, cultivate, and make offerings respectfully to prajna paramita; he also explained why.)

In the meantime, Heavenly Emperor Indra said to the Buddha, “The fathomless prajna paramita is the great divine mantra, great brilliant spell, unsurpassed spell, unequaled equal spell,

and the king of all spells. It is the superior, most venerable, uppermost, and most wonderful one. It is invincible and can overcome all beings. Why? The fathomless prajna paramita can eliminate all evil, not virtuous dharmas, foster superior virtuous dharmas and help them reach perfection."

At that time, the Buddha said to Heavenly Emperor Indra, "Yes, it is as you say. Why? Because of prajna paramita the great divine spell king, the Buddhas in the three phases of time are able to realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi and turn the wonderful dharma wheel to deliver all sentient beings. Why? Kausika, because of the fathomless prajna paramita, the path of the ten virtuous karmas appears in the world. Because of the fathomless prajna paramita, the almsgiving, precept, and cultivation; the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations; giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita; the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena appear in the world. It is also because of the fathomless prajna paramita that the voice-hearer effects, self-enlightenment bodhi, great bodhisattva actions, and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas appear in the world.

"Furthermore, Kausika, because of the fathomless prajna paramita, there are the great bodhisattvas. Because of the great bodhisattvas, there are the path of ten virtuous karmas, the four meditations, and so forth, and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas, the voice-hearers, self-enlightened ones, bodhisattvas, and the Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones. Because of the full moon, the herbs, stars, mountains, and seas flourish. So it is because of the bodhisattvas, the merits and virtues of the path of the ten virtuous karmas, and so forth, and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi flourish. Because of the bodhisattvas, the stars of human beings, heavenly beings, voice-hearers, self-enlightened ones, ones needing more learning, ones needing no more learning, the sages, and the holy ones flourish. Because of the bodhisattvas, the big mountains and great oceans of bodhisattvas and Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones flourish. Before the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones appeared in the world, great bodhisattvas were the only ones who could correctly teach the dharmas of the world and beyond the world for sentient beings because they owned the powers of expedient skillfulness. Why? The vehicle of human beings, vehicle of heavenly beings, vehicle of voice-

hearers, vehicle of self-enlightened ones, and the unsurpassed vehicle can be fulfilled because of the expedient skillfulness of great bodhisattvas. The expedient skillfulness of great bodhisattvas is fulfilled because of prajna paramita. Because the great bodhisattvas have achieved the powers of expedient skillfulness, they are able to 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. It is also because of the expedient skillfulness, they are able to attain the thirty-two perfect major marks and the eighty distinguishing minor features; they do not fall in the stage of voice-hearer and the stage of self-enlightened one; they are able to assist sentient beings to mature and dignify and purify Buddha lands; and they are able to fulfill perfect lifespan, perfect organs, perfect pure lands, perfect caste, and perfect physical body and strength and attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge.

(The Buddha taught that because of prajna paramita, the expedient skillfulness of bodhisattvas is possible. Because of bodhisattvas, voice-hearers, self-enlightened ones, and Thus-Comers and relevant superior dharmas and other wonderful things appear in the world.)

"Furthermore, Kausika, if good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth can wholeheartedly listen to, accept, embrace, read, recite, diligently cultivate and learn, reasonably reflect on, write, explicate, and extensively disseminate the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita, they will achieve the merits, virtues, and the superior benefits of the world and beyond the world in the present and in the future."

(The Buddha further instructed that those who can hear, read, reflect on, write, interpret, and disseminate prajna paramita will gain various superior benefits of and beyond the world, presently and in the future.)

Meanwhile, Heavenly Emperor Indra asked the Buddha, "What merits, virtues, and superior benefits of and beyond the world will these good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth achieve in the present and in the future?"

The Buddha replied to Kausika, "These good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth will not be harmed by all poisons, negative prayers, and evil curses in the present. They will not be

burnt by fires, drowned in waters, killed by swords or rods, or will die of any of the four hundred and four kinds of illness except they have to receive the negative effects of previous karmas that become mature now. Kausika, as good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth, oppressed by unjust officials or hating robbers, will not be harmed if they can wholeheartedly recite the fathomless prajna paramita. Why? Kausika, it is because of the virtues and the powers of the fathomless prajna paramita. Kausika, the good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth who are visiting with kings, princes, or high-rank officials will be greeted delightedly and respectfully if they can wholeheartedly recite the fathomless prajna paramita before they arrive. Why? Kausika, it is because these good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth have always treated all sentient beings with loving-kindness, compassion, joy, and equanimity. Kausika, these good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth will achieve such merits, virtues, and superior benefits in the present.

(In response to Kausika's question, the Buddha gave examples of the benefits such good gentleperson would receive presently.)

"Kausika, wherever the good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth are reborn, they never stay far away from the path of the ten virtuous karmas; almsgiving, precepts, and cultivation; the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations; the six paramitas; 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. They will not fall into hells, the realm of animals, or the realm of ghosts except they are willing to do beneficial things for various sentient beings. Wherever they are born, their organs and physical marks will be perfect and magnificent. They will not be born in poverty or low social class, or as a worker, trader, janitor, butcher, fisherman, robber, prison guard, candela, pulkasa, and sudra. Most of them are born through transformation of lotus in the Buddha's dignified pure lands. They will not do anything evil nor stay far away from the swift supernatural powers. They will be able to visit various Buddha lands as they wish, stay close and make offerings to various Buddhas, the World-Honored Ones, assist sentient beings to mature, and dignify and purify Buddha lands. They will listen to correct dharma teachings and cultivate in accord with them, thus will realize and attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge step by step. Kausika, this is how these good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth will achieve the merits, virtues, and superior benefits in the future.

(The Buddha further gave examples of the merits and benefits such great people would receive in the future.)

"Therefore, Kausika, if the good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth would like to attain such merits, virtues, and superior benefits of and beyond the world in the present and future, and if they would like to stay close to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, they should dwell in a mind in accord with the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge and adopt nonattainment as expediency to wholeheartedly listen to, accept, embrace, read, recite, diligently cultivate and learn, reasonably reflect on, write, explicate, and extensively disseminate the fathomless prajna paramita. They should further make various most wonderful wreaths, spread perfumes and powdered incenses, clothing, jewel necklaces, treasure banners, canopies, varied rarities, music, entertainments, and lamps as offerings respectfully to esteem and acclaim the prajna paramita uninterruptedly."

(The Buddha instructed how good gentlepersons could gain such superior benefits presently and in the future.)

At that time, many other-path practitioners came and tried to rebuke and criticize the Buddha. Heavenly Emperor Indra saw what was going to happen, so he thought to himself, 'Now these other-path practitioners are coming to criticize and argue against the Buddha. Won't it hinder the prajna paramita? I must recite the fathomless prajna paramita that I have learned from the Buddha's teaching so these evil ones will leave."

After his recitation of the fathomless prajna paramita, all these other-path practitioners stood, made homage to, and walked around the World-Honored One, then turned around and left.

Meanwhile, Sariputra saw what was happening, and thought, "Why did they just come and leave?"

The Buddha knew what Sariputra was thinking, so he said, "Those other-path practitioners came to criticize me. They just came and left because Heavenly Emperor Indra had recited prajna paramita. Sariputra, I do not see those other-path practitioners have any virtuous dharmas. What they have are just evil ideas. They came to criticize my 'faults,' as they so called. Sariputra, I do not see that various heavenly demons and other-path practitioners can take

advantage of my teaching to harm prajna paramita. Why? Sariputra, in this threefold thousand-world, all heavenly beings, voice-hearers, self-enlightened ones, bodhisattvas, Buddhas, and dragons, yaksas, and asuras with great powers have worked together to protect prajna paramita, so it will not be hindered by any vicious ones. Why? Sariputra, all heavenly beings, voice-hearers, self-enlightened ones, and so forth arise because of the powers of prajna paramita.

(The Buddha explained why prajna paramita would not be hindered or harmed.)

"Furthermore, all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones, voice-hearers, self-enlightened ones, bodhisattvas, deities, dragons, yaksas, asuras, and so forth in as many world of the ten directions as the sands of the Ganges have worked together to keep and protect the fathomless prajna paramita, so it will not be hindered by any evil being. Why? Sariputra, the powers of the Thus-Comers and so forth arise because of prajna paramita."

At that time, the evil demons thought to themselves, "Now the four groups of people gather surrounding the Buddha. The heavenly beings from the realms of desire, form, and formlessness also come to attend this assembly, in which the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi will be taught. It is certain that some great bodhisattvas among the attendees will be conferred by Buddha the prophecy of becoming a Buddha in the future. They certainly will attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi and turn the wonderful dharma wheel of empty selfness. I must go there to destroy their eyes." After having this thought, the demons transformed four armies fiercely coming to the Buddha's place.

In the meantime, Heavenly Emperor Indra saw what was happening and thought, "Won't the evil demons make such transformations to disturb and annoy the Buddha and hinder prajna paramita? Why? These four armies are over-decorated and look too pretty and solemn to be true. They look superior to the four armies led by King Bimbisāra (Solid Shadow) of Magadha, King Prasenajit (Conquering Army) of Kosala, King Sakya-Seed of Kapilavastu, King Licchavi of Vaiśālī, or King Kuśinagara (Mighty Warriors) of City Kusa. We can tell they are transformed by the demons. The demons have for a long time tried to find faults with the Buddha attempting to destroy various superior things that the sentient beings have cultivated. I must recite the

fathomless prajna paramita that I have learned from the Buddha's teaching to make them turn around and go back home."

After having such a thought, Heavenly Emperor Indra started to recite the fathomless prajna paramita. These demons thus turned around and left because they were driven by the powers of the fathomless prajna paramita, the king of great divine mantra.

(Heavenly Emperor Indra once again recited prajna paramita to successfully dispel demons after he first drove away the evil other-path practitioners.)

At that time, in this assembly, all heavenly beings from the Heaven of Four Great Kings, Heaven of Thirty-Three Smaller Heavens, and so forth, and the Heaven of Ultimate Form made wonderful transformed heavenly flowers and wreaths and other things as offerings. They jumped high up in the sky and spread the offerings to the Buddha. They put their palms together respectfully and said to the Buddha, "We hope this prajna paramita remains permanently with the humans of Jambudvipa. Why? If the prajna paramita flows and spread among human world of Jambudvipa, the triple gem, the Buddha, dharma, and sangha, will never disappear. The same is true with the entire threefold thousand-world, and so forth, and the immeasurable, countless, and boundless Buddha countries of the ten directions. Because of this cause and condition, we can recognize the superior actions that the great bodhisattvas cultivate. Where there are the good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth, to write, embrace, and make offerings respectfully to prajna paramita with deep faith, there are the brilliant lights to drive away darkness and bring in various superior blessings."

At that time, the Buddha said to various heavenly beings, "Yes, it is as you say. If prajna paramita spreads among human in Jambudvipa, the Buddha, dharma, and sangha will endure. We may also say that where the good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth write prajna paramita with pure, deep faith and make offerings respectfully to it, the brilliant lights will drive away darkness and bring in various superior blessings."

(The Buddha confirmed the statement made by heavenly beings that where the good gentlepersons write prajna paramita with pure, deep faith and make offerings respectfully to it, darkness will be dispelled, and superior blessings will be brought in.)

Meanwhile, the heavenly beings again made all kinds of transformed heavenly flowers, fragrant wreaths, and so forth and spread them on the Buddha as offerings. They said to the Buddha, "If the good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth wholeheartedly listen to, accept, embrace, read, recite, diligently cultivate and learn, reasonably reflect on, write about, explicate, and extensively disseminate this fathomless prajna paramita, then the demons and their armies will not be able to take advantage to harm these good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth. Besides, we all the heavenly beings should always keep an eye on and do our best to protect them, so they will not be disturbed or harmed. Why? World-Honored One, because we esteem the dharma, we also esteem these good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth as we esteem the Buddha or the disciples that the Buddha values."

Meanwhile, Heavenly Emperor Indra said to the Buddha again, "These good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth cannot accomplish this great job if they do not accumulate a lot of virtuous roots. They must have accumulated many virtuous roots at numberless Buddhas' places in previous lives. They must have vowed to pursue many correct aspirations, made offerings to the Buddhas very often, and offered services to many virtuous friends, so they are able to wholeheartedly listen to, accept, embrace, read, recite, diligently cultivate and learn, reasonably reflect on, write, explicate, and extensively disseminate the fathomless prajna paramita. World-Honored One, if the good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth would like to attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge of the Buddhas, they should learn prajna paramita. If they would like to attain prajna paramita, they should learn the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge of the Buddhas. Why? The perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge attained by the Buddhas is initiated by prajna paramita, and prajna paramita is initiated by the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge attained by the Buddhas. Why? It is because the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge attained by the Buddhas is not different from prajna paramita, and prajna paramita is not different from the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge attained by the Buddhas. Why? The perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge attained by the Buddhas and prajna paramita are neither dualistic nor separate."

At that time, the Buddha said to Heavenly Emperor Indra, "Yes, it is as you say. The merits, virtues, dignity, and spirit of prajna paramita are unique and rare."

At that time, the long-lived sage Joyfully Celebrating One asked the Buddha, “World-Honored One, why does the Thus-Comer, One Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened One not extensively praise the names, merits, and virtues of giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, and meditation paramitas, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena, but solely praise the name, merits, and virtues of prajna paramita?”

The Buddha replied to Joyfully Celebrating One, “It is because prajna paramita is the noblest and the leading one among the other five paramitas, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena. So, I have solely praised the name, merits, and virtues of prajna paramita.

“Furthermore, Joyfully Celebrating One, what do you think about this? If great bodhisattvas cultivate giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena without transferring the merits and virtues toward the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, can it truly be said they cultivate giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge?”

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

The Buddha said to Joyfully Celebrating One, “As ones cultivate giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena, they should transfer the merits and virtues toward the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, so it can be truly said they are cultivating giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena. So, I say that prajna paramita is the noblest and the leading one among the other five paramitas, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena. That is why I have solely praised the name, merits, and virtues of prajna paramita.”

(The Buddha explained why he only praised the names, merits, and virtues of prajna paramita.)

At that time, Joyfully Celebrating One asked the Buddha again, “How should great bodhisattvas cultivate giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena and transfer the merits and virtues toward the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge?”

The Buddha replied to Joyfully Celebrating One, “Ones should adopt nonduality, nonarising, and nonattainment as expediency to transfer the merits and virtues toward the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge when they cultivate giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena.”

(The Buddha instructed the right way of transferring merits and virtues toward the perfect knowledge.)

The long-lived sage Joyfully Celebrating One asked the Buddha again, “What nonduality, nonarising, and nonattainment should ones adopt as expediency to transfer the merits and virtues toward the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge when cultivating giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena?”

The Buddha replied to Joyfully Celebrating One, “Ones should adopt nonduality, nonarising, and nonattainment of matter, feeling, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena as expediency to transfer the merits and virtues toward the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge when cultivating giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena.”

At that time, Joyfully Celebrating One asked the Buddha again, “Why should ones adopt nonduality, nonarising, and nonattainment of matter, feeling, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena as expediency to transfer the merits and virtues toward the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge when cultivating giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena?”

The Buddha replied to Joyfully Celebrating One, “Matter and the nature of matter are empty, feeling and the nature of feeling are empty, and so forth, the perfect knowledge of all phenomena and its nature are empty too. Why? The empty natures of matter, feeling, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena and giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena are not dualistic or separate.

“You must know, Joyfully Celebrating One, because of prajna paramita it is possible to do transference toward the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. Because of the transference toward the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, giving paramita, pure-

precept paramita, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena can be ultimately fulfilled, so prajna paramita is the noblest and the leading one among giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena. That is why I have solely praised prajna paramita.

"Joyfully Celebrating One, you must know that it is like sowing seeds in a vast land, when causes and conditions properly combine, the seeds will grow. It must be known that the earth provides a basis for the seeds to rely on and grow, so prajna paramita and the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge toward which it makes the transference also provide a basis for the first five paramitas, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena to rely on and grow. I have only praised prajna paramita because it is the leader and the noblest of all paramitas, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena.

(The Buddha further elaborated why he only praised prajna paramita.)

At that time, Heavenly Emperor Indra said to the Buddha, "World-Honored One, now the Thus-Comer, One Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened One has taught about the merits, virtues, and superior benefits of prajna paramita, but he has not taught all of them yet. Why? The merits, virtues, and the superior benefits of prajna paramita that I have learned from the World-Honored One are so profound and widespread; they are immeasurable and without boundaries. If good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth can wholeheartedly listen to, accept, embrace, read, recite, diligently cultivate and learn, reasonably reflect on, write, explicate, and extensively disseminate the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita, and further make varied most wonderful wreaths, perfumes and incenses, and so forth, and lamps as offerings to the sutras, then the merits and virtues gained by them will also be without boundaries. If good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth can wholeheartedly listen to, accept, embrace, read, recite, diligently cultivate and learn, reasonably reflect on, write, explicate, and extensively disseminate the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita, they are equally absorbing and receiving all Buddha dharma. Because of this cause and condition, the path of the ten virtuous karmas will appear in the world. Because of this cause and condition, almsgiving, precepts, and cultivation will appear in the world. In addition, the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations; the six paramitas, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena; the

stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi; the noble families of Ksatriya, Brahman, and so forth, and laypersons; the Heaven of Four Great Kings, Heaven of Thirty-Three Smaller Heavens, and so forth, and the Heaven of Nonthinking and Not Nonthinking, as well as the rest of superior things will also appear in the world."

(Indra expressed that the merits, virtues, and superior benefits of prajna paramita are immeasurable and boundless.)

At that time, the Buddha said to Heavenly Emperor Indra, "Kausika, I won't say that I have talked exhaustibly about the merits, virtues, and the superior benefits of this fathomless prajna paramita. Why? Kausika, the merits, virtues, and the superior benefits that the fathomless prajna paramita possesses are without boundaries, no one can exhaustibly talk about them. I won't say that if the good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth can wholeheartedly listen to, accept, embrace, read, recite, diligently cultivate and learn, reasonably reflect on, write, explicate, and extensively disseminate the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita, they will only gain the merits, virtues, and the superior benefits that I have talked about earlier. Why? Kausika, if the good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth stay in a mind in accord with the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge and adopt nonattainment as expediency to wholeheartedly listen to, accept, embrace, read, recite, diligently cultivate and learn, reasonably reflect on, write, explicate, and extensively disseminate the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita, and further make various most wonderful wreaths, perfumes and incenses, and so forth, and lamps as offerings to them, these good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth will achieve immeasurable superior aggregate of precept, aggregate of concentration, aggregate of wisdom, aggregate of liberation, and aggregate of the perfect knowledge and views of liberation.

(The Buddha confirmed Kausika's statement and elaborated it in the following.)

"Kausika, you must know that these good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth are almost the Buddha. Why? It is because they have accepted and embraced the unsurpassed path of all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones in the past, future, and present. It is because they have resolved to aspire to the bodhi of the Buddha. It is because they have brought benefits, peace, and happiness to all sentient beings endlessly. It is

also because they have transcended the stages of voice-hearers and self-enlightened ones. Kausika, all the aggregates of precept, concentration, wisdom, liberation, and the perfect knowledge and views of liberation of the voice-hearers and the self-enlightened ones are, in comparison, much inferior than the aggregates of precept, concentration, wisdom, liberation, and the perfect knowledge and views of liberation of these good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth by one hundredth, one thousandth, and so forth, and one upanisadam-api. Why? Kausika, these good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth have gone beyond the inferior intentions of all voice-hearers and the self-enlightened ones. They will not admire and acclaim the vehicles of voice-hearers and self-enlightened ones. They have known all dharmas correctly as nonexistent.

"Kausika, because these good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth have stayed in a mind in accord with the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge and adopted nonattainment as expediency to wholeheartedly listen to, accept, embrace, read, recite, diligently cultivate and learn, reasonably reflect on, write, explicate, and extensively disseminate the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita, and have further made various most wonderful wreaths, perfumes and incenses, and so forth, and lamps as offerings to esteem and acclaim them, I must say that they will gain immeasurable and boundless merits, virtues, and superior benefits now and in the future."

Meanwhile, Heavenly Emperor Indra said to the Buddha, "We all heavenly beings will always stay with these good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth, keep and protect them, so they will not be harmed or annoyed by various negative conditions caused by humans and nonhumans."

(Kausika swore to protect these good gentlemen and women from harms, annoyance, and hindrance.)

At that time, the Buddha said to Heavenly Emperor Indra, "If good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth stay in a mind in accord with the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge and adopt nonattainment as expediency to accept, embrace, read, and recite the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita, then immeasurable hundreds of thousands of heavenly sons will rejoice and come to attend the assembly, joyfully and respectfully accept the fathomless prajna paramita.

"Kausika, if good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth stay in a mind in accord with the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge and adopt nonattainment as expediency to teach the dharmas correspondent with the fathomless prajna paramita, then immeasurable heavenly sons and so forth will attend the assembly to empower the dharma teachers' talent of debate with their heavenly powers and dignity, so the teachers will lecture on and on endlessly.

"Kausika, if good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth stay in a mind in accord with the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge and adopt nonattainment as expediency to lecture on the fathomless prajna paramita, then immeasurable heavenly sons and so forth will come to attend the assembly solely because they esteem the dharma. They will use their heavenly powers and dignity to assist the dharma speakers to lecture and debate fluently without hesitation, so that no obstacles will hinder them from teaching of the dharma.

"Kausika, if good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth stay in a mind in accord with the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge and adopt nonattainment as expediency to wholeheartedly listen to, accept, embrace, read, recite, diligently cultivate and learn, reasonably reflect on, write, explicate, and extensively disseminate the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita, and further make various most wonderful wreaths, perfumes and incenses, and so forth, and lamps as offerings to them, then these good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth will gain boundless merits, virtues, and superior benefits in present life and no demons and demonic armies can harm and annoy them.

"Furthermore, Kausika, if good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth lecture on prajna paramita to the four groups of sentient beings, they will not be afraid of or overcome by the challenge of all kinds of arguments. Why? It is because they are supported and protected by the great king of divine spell, the fathomless prajna paramita. Additionally, in the secret storage of prajna paramita, all different kinds of dharmas are contained. They are the virtuous dharmas and the not virtuous dharmas, the morally related dharmas and the morally unrelated dharmas, the flawed dharmas and the flawless dharmas, the conditioned dharmas and the unconditioned dharmas, the dharmas of the world and the dharmas beyond the world, the dharmas shared by and not shared by other sentient beings, the dharmas of the voice-hearers, the dharmas of the self-enlightened ones, the dharmas of bodhisattvas, and the dharmas of the Thus-Comers. All

these immeasurable and boundless different dharmas gates are absorbed and contained in prajna paramita. Furthermore, because of prajna paramita, the good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth will dwell peacefully in internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature, so they will not see the challengers, the one to be challenged, or the prajna paramita spoken. Therefore, Kausika, because these good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth are supported and protected by the great king of divine spell, the fathomless prajna paramita, they will never be subjugated by any challenge of argument.

"Furthermore, Kausika, if good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth wholeheartedly listen to, accept, embrace, read, recite, diligently cultivate and learn, reasonably reflect on, write, explicate, and extensively disseminate the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita, then these good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth will never be frightened, scared, or terrified, nor will their minds be drowned, sinking, or regretful. Why? It is because these good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth do not see any dharma that makes one frightened or regretful. Kausika, if good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth would like to attain such merits, virtues, and superior benefits, they should wholeheartedly listen to, accept, embrace, read, recite, diligently cultivate and learn, reasonably reflect on, write, explicate, and extensively disseminate the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita, and further make various most wonderful wreaths, perfumes and incenses, and so forth, and lamps as offerings to esteem and acclaim them uninterruptedly.

"Furthermore, Kausika, if good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth stay in a mind in accord with the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge and adopt nonattainment as expediency to wholeheartedly listen to, accept, embrace, read, recite, diligently cultivate and learn, reasonably reflect on, write, explicate, and extensively disseminate the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita, and further make various most wonderful wreaths, perfumes and incenses, and so forth, and lamps as offerings to esteem and acclaim them, these good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth will always be adored and respected by parents, teachers, elders, relatives and friends, kings, high-ranking officials, and various sramanas and Brahmans. They will be protected by and kept in the mindfulness of various Buddhas, bodhisattvas, self-enlightened ones, and voice-hearers in the boundless worlds of the ten directions. They will also be guarded by various deities, demons, Brahmas, humans, nonhumans, asuras, and so forth.

These good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth will achieve the superior and unhindered talent of debate and can cultivate giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena at all times. They will be able to assist sentient beings to mature and dignify and purify Buddha lands tirelessly. They will achieve superior supernatural powers of the bodhisattvas and travel through various Buddha lands in complete freedom and ease. These good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth will not be overcome by the arguments made by other-path practitioners, instead, they can overcome all these challenges.

"Kausika, if good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth would like to attain such uninterrupted and endless merits, virtues, and superior benefits in present and future, they should stay in a mind in accord with the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge and adopt nonattainment as expediency to wholeheartedly listen to, accept, embrace, read, recite, diligently cultivate and learn, reasonably reflect on, write, explicate, and extensively disseminate the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita, and further make various most wonderful wreaths, perfumes and incenses, and so forth, and lamps as offerings to esteem and acclaim them.

"Furthermore, Kausika, if good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth write this fathomless prajna paramita, place the writing in a pure, magnificently adorned position, and make offerings respectfully to it with esteem and admiration, then all heavenly beings, who have resolved to aspire the unsurpassed bodhi, from the Heaven of Four Great Kings, Heaven of Thirty-Three Smaller Heavens, and so forth, and the Heaven of Extensive Rewards in this threefold thousand-world and the rest of boundless worlds in the ten directions will often come to attend the services and read and recite prajna paramita. They will make offerings and show respect for it with admiration, then they will walk around it clockwise, pay homage to it, and leave with their palms joined together. All the heavenly beings living in the Heaven of Pure Residence will often come to attend the services and read, recite, make offerings respectfully to, esteem, and admire it, then they will walk around it clockwise, pay homage to it, and leave with their palms put together. Various dragons, yaksas, and so forth, as well as all humans and nonhumans with great dignity and powers will also visit often to attend the services, and read, recite, make offerings respectfully to esteem and admire the writing of the fathomless prajna paramita, then they will walk around it clockwise, pay homage to it, and leave with palms joined

together. Kausika, these good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth should think, ‘Now all heavenly beings, dragons, and so forth, and humans and nonhumans in this threefold thousand-world and the rest of boundless worlds of the ten directions have often come to attend the services and read and recite the prajna paramita that I have written. They have come to make offerings respectfully to esteem and admire it, then walk around it clockwise, pay homage to it, and leave with palms joined together. This is the dharma giving that I have established.’ After having such a thought, they will rejoice and jump in excitement, and the blessings that they attain will grow and double.

“Kausika, because of the support and protection of the heavenly beings, dragons, yaksas, asuras, and so forth in this large threefold thousand-world and the rest of boundless worlds of the ten directions, these good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth will not be annoyed and harmed by humans and nonhumans, except their bad karmas from previous lives are now due or their karmic retributions have now become much less severe but due earlier. Kausika, owing to the great supernatural powers of the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita, these good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth will gain such unique and superior benefits, merits, and virtues. Namely, the heavenly deities and so forth, who have resolved to aspire to the unsurpassed bodhi or have gained unique and superior benefits, benefits, and blessings because of the Buddha dharma, will always guard and protect these good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth, and enhance their powers only because of esteeming the dharma. Why? Kausika, these good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth have resolved to aspire to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal enlightenment to relieve sentient beings and assist them to mature. They have vowed that they will never turn away from sentient beings and will always do their best to bring benefits and happiness to all of them. The heavenly deities have also resolved to do so. That is why these heavenly deities will always guard and protect these good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth, and keep them from being annoyed and harmed by disasters.”

(The Buddha elaborated to show what great merits and virtues would be received by these great gentlemen and women and how heavenly beings and other dharma protectors would keep these good persons to protect them from all kinds of harmful things.)

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Chapter 6

Praising the Merits and Virtues

Section 2

(In the Third Assembly)

At that time, Heavenly Emperor Indra asked the Buddha, “World-Honored One, how can good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth recognize that the heavenly deities, dragons, yaksas, asuras, and so forth in this large threefold thousand-world and from the rest of boundless worlds of the ten directions have come to attend the services, read and recite the writing of the fathomless prajna paramita, make offerings respectfully to esteem and acclaim it, walk around it clockwise with palms joined together, and joyfully protect and keep it in mind?”

The Buddha replied to Heavenly Emperor Indra, “If the good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth see brilliant lights shining in the places where the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita are displayed, smell extraordinary fragrances, or hear the subtle and tender music, they should be aware that the deities, dragons, and so forth with great power, virtues, and dignity have come to attend the services, read and recite the fathomless prajna paramita, make offerings respectfully to esteem and acclaim it, walk around it clockwise with palms joined together, and joyfully protect and keep it in mind.

(The Buddha taught how great gentlepersons could recognize the arrival of the heavenly dharma believers and protectors.)

“Furthermore, Kausika, if good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth have cleaned, purified, and adorned the place where the writing of prajna paramita is displayed, and have further made offerings to the fathomless prajna paramita, you must know that various heavenly deities, dragons, and so forth with great power, virtues, and dignity will come to attend the services, read and recite the writing of the fathomless prajna paramita, make offerings

respectfully to esteem and admire it, walk around it clockwise with palms joined together, and joyfully protect and keep it in mind.

“Kausika, because these heavenly deities, dragons, and so forth with mighty power and dignity have come and stay, all evil ghosts and wicked beings will escape and dare not to stay any longer. Because of this cause and condition, these good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth can initiate pure and definitive superior understanding, so the virtuous actions that they are practicing will become brighter, and whatever they do will not be hindered.

“Therefore, Kausika, in the area where the fathomless prajna paramita is displayed, all kinds of dirt and defilements should be cleaned. The hall should be well maintained and repainted, fragrance should be diffused throughout the space, and the treasure throne must be stable and comfortable. Incense should be burned, flowers scattered, canopies open and erected, with treasure banners displayed and adorned with flags and bells. In addition, various rarities and exquisite items, gold and silver utensils, garments, jewel necklaces, music, entertainments, lamps, and varied colorful silks are to be arranged to enhance the dignity and elegance of the entire setting. If you can make offerings to the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita this way, numberless courageous, enthusiastic, dignified, and powerful deities, dragons, and so forth will come to attend the services, pay homage to, read, recite, make offerings respectfully to esteem and acclaim the written fathomless prajna paramita. They will walk around the writing clockwise with their palms joined together and joyfully vow to protect and remain in mindfulness.

“Furthermore, kausika, if good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth can make offerings respectfully to esteem and acclaim the fathomless prajna paramita this way, their bodies and minds will not be tired, rather, they will stay in peace, pleasure, harmony, tenderness, brightness, and swiftness. If they remain in mindfulness of prajna paramita, they will not have nightmares. They rather will have auspicious dreams, seeing the real golden body of the Thus-Comer, with magnificent thirty-two perfect marks and eighty distinguishing minor features. Brilliant lights shine from Thus-Comer's body, illuminating everything in the world. The Thus-Comer is surrounded by voice-hearers and self-enlightened ones, who are listening to his dharma teaching correspondent with giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna paramitas, and so forth, and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. They will see a bodhi

tree in their dreams. The bodhi tree is very wide and tall, adorned with varied treasures, and looks beautiful and magnificent. They will also in their dreams see a bodhisattva who is coming to sit under the bodhi tree, subjugate the demons, attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, and turn the wonderful dharma wheel to deliver immeasurable sentient beings. They will also see innumerable hundreds of thousands of koti nayuta great bodhisattvas who are discussing and making decisions from various dharma meanings, and figuring out how they should assist sentient beings to mature, dignify and purify Buddha lands, cultivate great bodhisattva actions, conquer demons and their armies, terminate negative disposition of vexations forever, and approach the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. They will in dreams see immeasurable hundreds of thousands of koti nayuta Buddhas in the worlds of the ten directions, hear the voices introducing the names of the Thus-Comers and the names of the worlds where they are teaching the dharma. They can see the Thus-Comers, who are surrounded by hundreds of thousands of koti nayuta great bodhisattvas and hundreds of thousands of koti nayuta voice-hearers, all are the Buddha's disciples. They will also in their dreams see immeasurable hundreds of thousands of koti nayuta Buddhas in the worlds of the ten directions, who are entering nirvana. After the Buddhas enter nirvana, the believers build immeasurable hundreds of thousands of stupas with wonderful seven treasures to worship the Buddhas' relics. In each pagoda, innumerable most wonderful wreaths, spread perfumes and powdered incenses, clothing, jewel necklaces, treasure banners, canopies, rarities, music, entertainments, and lamps are made as offerings to esteem and admire the relics for immeasurable kalpas.

"Kausika, when seeing the auspicious phenomena in dreams, the good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth will be happy and peaceful in body and mind even after they wake up. Heavenly deities have energized them, making their bodies feel light and effortless. Because of this cause and condition, they do not rely much on food, medicine, clothes, and bedding. A master yogi can stay in exquisite concentration easily, and his or her mind and body will be nurtured by the power of concentration. When getting out of concentration, this yogi will not be much attracted by delicious food. So are the good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth. Why? Kausika, because of the protection and the mindfulness of all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones, as well as the voice-hearers, self-enlightened ones, bodhisattvas, heavenly deities, dragons, yaksas, asuras, and so forth with

mighty powers and great virtues, in this large threefold thousand-world and the rest of boundless worlds in the ten direction, these good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth will be empowered so they will become courageous in spirit and energetic in physical strength.

(The Buddha instructed how great bodhisattvas should make offerings to the sutras of prajna paramita and further described the great benefits they could receive.)

"Kausika, if good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth would like to attain various merits, virtues, and superior benefits in present life, they should initiate a mind in accord with the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge and adopt nonattainment as expediency to wholeheartedly listen to, accept, embrace, read, recite, diligently cultivate and learn, reasonably reflect on, write, explicate, and extensively disseminate the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita.

"Kausika, some good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth do not listen to, accept, embrace, read, recite, diligently cultivate and learn, reasonably reflect on, and extensively disseminate the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita, but they do write the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita and solemnly adorn it with various treasures. They further make various best wreaths, spread perfumes, powdered incenses, clothing, jewel necklaces, treasure banners, canopies, rarities, music, entertainments, and lamps as offerings to esteem and acclaim it, they thus will also attain the same merits, virtues, and superior benefits. Why? Kausika, it is because these good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth can bring benefits and happiness to immeasurable and boundless sentient beings.

"Furthermore, Kausika, if good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth stay in a mind in accord with the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge and adopt nonattainment as expediency to wholeheartedly listen to, accept, embrace, read, recite, diligently cultivate and learn, reasonably reflect on, and extensively disseminate the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita, and further make various best wreaths, perfumes, incenses, and so forth, and lamps as offerings to worship and pay homage to the writing, then they will also attain immeasurable and boundless blessings. The blessings thus gained will be much more than the sentient beings who have made innumerable most wonderful food and drinks, clothing, bedding, medicines, money, and materials as offerings respectfully to esteem and acclaim all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones and their disciples in the worlds of the ten

directions for the rest of their lives. Their blessings will also be much more than those who have built tall, wide, dignified, and magnificent pagodas with wonderful seven treasures to worship the Buddhas' relics after the Buddhas and their disciples enter nirvana and have further made innumerable wonderful heavenly flower wreaths, and so forth, and the lamps as offerings respectfully to esteem and acclaim the relics for the rest of their lives. Why? It is because all the Buddhas and their disciples in the worlds of the ten directions arise and grow because of the fathomless prajna paramita."

Chapter 7

The Relics

(In the Third Assembly)

At that time, the Buddha said to Heavenly Emperor Indra, "Kausika, if this continent of Jambudvipa were filled with Buddha's relics, and if, on the other hand, there is a writing of the fathomless prajna paramita, which will you prefer between them?"

Heavenly Emperor Indra replied, "I will prefer the fathomless prajna paramita. Why? It does not mean that I do not believe in the Buddhas' relics, or I would not make offerings respectfully to esteem and acclaim the relics. But the Buddhas' bodies and their relics arise because of the fathomless prajna paramita. They are permeated and cultivated gradually by the merits, virtues, and the powers of the fathomless prajna paramita, so all heavenly beings, human beings, asuras, and so forth always make offerings respectfully to esteem and acclaim them."

In the meantime, Sariputra said to Heavenly Emperor Indra, "Kausika, the fathomless prajna paramita is immaterial, invisible, and unsubstantial. It has only one form, and that is formlessness. The formless dharma is ungraspable. Then how can you prefer and choose it? Why? Kausika, the fathomless prajna paramita has no grasping or renunciation, increase or

decrease, gathering or separation, gain or loss, and contamination or purification. It does not stay with the Buddha dharma, the dharma of bodhisattva, self-enlightened one, or voice-hearer, nor turn away from the dharma of ordinary sentient being. It does not stay with the unconditioned realm, nor turn away from the conditioned realm. It does not stay with various kinds of emptiness, nor turn away from various kinds of existence. It does not stay with paramitas, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena, nor turn away from all contaminated dharmas."

At that time, Heavenly Emperor Indra said to the long-lived sage Sariputra, "Yes, it is as you say. Great virtuous one, to accurately know that the fathomless prajna paramita is immaterial, invisible, and unsubstantial and has only one form, namely, formlessness, and that the fathomless prajna paramita has neither grasping nor renunciation, neither increase nor decrease, and so forth, and it does not stay with the perfect knowledge of all phenomena nor turn away from the contaminated dharmas is really to prefer and cultivate the fathomless prajna paramita. Why? It is because prajna, meditation, diligence, forbearance, pure precept, and giving paramitas have no dualistic actions and dualistic forms."

(In response to Buddha's question, Kausika said that he would prefer the fathomless prajna paramita to the relics and explained why. Then Sariputra said as prajna paramita is formless and ungraspable, how could Kausika choose to grasp it? Sariputra thus further said that as one understands that prajna paramita is formless and neither increases nor decreases and so forth, he or she truly cultivates prajna paramita.)

At that time, the Buddha praised Heavenly Emperor Indra, "Excellent, excellent. It is as you say. The fathomless prajna paramita, meditation paramita, and so forth, and giving paramita have no dualistic actions and dualistic forms. Kausika, those who try to make the fathomless prajna paramita, meditation paramita, and so forth, and giving paramita have dualistic actions and dualistic forms is like to make realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable have dualistic actions and dualistic forms. Why? Kausika, the fathomless prajna paramita, meditation paramita, and so forth, and giving paramita and realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable are neither dualistic nor separate."

(The Buddha confirmed and praised Sariputra's statement.)

Meanwhile, Heavenly Emperor Indra said to the Buddha again, “World-Honored One, all heavenly beings, human beings, asuras, and so forth of this world should sincerely worship, walk around clockwise, and make offerings to esteem and acclaim the fathomless prajna paramita. Why? It is because all great bodhisattvas have cultivated and learned diligently prajna paramita to attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.

“World-Honored one, as I sit on the Heavenly Emperor’s throne in Virtuous Dharma Hall of the Heaven of Thirty-Three Smaller Heavens and lecture on the correct dharma to heavenly beings, innumerable heavenly sons will come to listen to and make offerings respectfully to esteem and admire me. They will walk around me clockwise with their palms joined together and then leave. If I am not there, they will do the same as if I were there. They will say, ‘This is the place where Heavenly Emperor Indra teaches correct dharma to heavenly beings. We should do as if the heavenly lord were here to pay homage to him, walk around his seat clockwise with our palms joined together and leave.’ World-Honored One, if someone has written, accepted, embraced, read, recited, and extensively disseminated prajna paramita for sentient beings, innumerable and countless heavenly deities, dragons, yaksas, asuras, and so forth from this land and from other boundless worlds of the ten directions will go to gather there. Even if there is no lecturer at that moment, they will also make offerings respectfully, pay homage, and admire, then leave, only because they respect the dharma. Why? All kinds of happiness and benefits gained by the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones, the great bodhisattvas, self-enlightened ones, voice hearers, and sentient beings come out of prajna paramita. The Buddha’s relics are also permeated and cultivated gradually by the merits and virtues of prajna paramita.

“World-Honored One, there is a cause-and-effect relationship between the fathomless prajna paramita and the great bodhisattvas, and so is the relationship between the fathomless prajna paramita and the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, which great bodhisattvas pursue to realize and attain. Great bodhisattvas rely on the fathomless prajna paramita to initiate and develop the aspiration. Therefore, between the relics that fill the entire continent of Jambudvipa and the writing of the fathomless prajna paramita, I prefer the latter one.

(Kausika further explained why he prefer prajna paramita to relics.)

"World-Honored One, as I accept, embrace, read, recite, and stay in a correct mindfulness of the fathomless prajna paramita, my mind will be in accord with the dharma, so I do not see horrible phenomena. Why? The fathomless prajna paramita is without form, shape, and speech. Because prajna paramita is without form, shape, and speech, meditation, diligence, forbearance, pure precept, and giving paramitas, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena are also without form, shape, and speech. World-Honored One, if prajna paramita were not without form, shape, and speech, then the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones would not be able to realize that all dharmas are without form, shape, and speech, nor could attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi and teach their disciples that all dharmas are without form, shape, and speech. World-Honored One, because prajna paramita is without form, shape, and speech, the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones are able to realize that all dharmas are without form, shape, and speech, so they are able to attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi and teach their disciples that all dharmas are without form, shape, and speech.

(Kausika said that prajna paramita is without form, shape, and speech, so are all dharmas.)

"World-Honored One, so prajna paramita is worthy of the offerings of the most wonderful wreaths, perfumes and incenses, and so forth, and lamps made by all heavenly beings, human beings, asuras, and so forth. It is also worthy of their respect and acclamation. World-Honored One, if ones wholeheartedly listen to, accept, embrace, read, recite, diligently cultivate and learn, reasonably reflect on, and extensively disseminate the fathomless prajna paramita, or write and adorn it with various treasures, make offerings respectfully to esteem and admire it, then they will not fall into hells, the realm of animals, the realm of ghosts, or distant isolated borders, nor will they be reborn as shallow-minded people or the people of lower class who know nothing of Buddhism. They will not fall into the stage of voice-hearer or the stage of self-enlightened one. Rather, they certainly will progress toward the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi; they will see the Buddhas and hear correct dharma often, will never stay away from virtuous friends. They will dignify and purify Buddha lands, assist sentient beings to mature, and travel from one Buddha country to the other to make offerings respectfully to esteem and acclaim Buddhas, the World-Honored Ones, and the great bodhisattvas.

(Kausika said that those people who wholeheartedly listen to, read, diligently cultivate and learn, reasonably reflect on, extensively disseminate, and write the fathomless prajna paramita, and further make offerings to it, will gain such exquisite effects in cultivation.)

"Furthermore, World-Honored One, if this large threefold thousand-world are filled with Buddha's relics, and on the other hand, there is the writing of the fathomless prajna paramita, I will rather choose the fathomless prajna paramita. Why? World-Honored One, all the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones and the relics filling entire large threefold thousand-world arise out of prajna paramita. In addition, the relics filling the entire large threefold thousand-world are caused by the powers of gradual permeation and cultivation of the merits and virtues of prajna paramita, so various heavenly deities, human beings, asuras, and so forth will make offerings respectfully to them. That is why as good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth make offerings respectfully to esteem and acclaim the Buddha's relics, they will not fall into the three bad destinies. They will always be reborn in human or heavenly realms in which they will enjoy wealth and happiness. More importantly, they will be able to ride the three vehicles as they wish and ultimately realize and attain nirvana.

(Kausika explained why those who make offerings to relics would also receive great merits and cultivation effects.)

"World-Honored One, the merits and virtues gained by seeing the Thus-Comer, One Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened One and by seeing the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita are equal. Why? It is because the fathomless prajna paramita and the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones, are equal; they are neither dualistic nor separate.

"World-Honored One, as the Thus-Comer, One Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened One teach sentient beings correct dharma with twelve ways through three kinds of demonstration and guidance, namely, the sutra (text), geya (short verses), and so forth, and the discourse (upadesa), their merits and virtues will be equivalent to those gained by the good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth who have accepted, embraced, read, recited, and extensively lectured on the prajna paramita for others. Why? The Thus-Comer, One Worthy of

Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened One, the three kinds of demonstration and guidance, and the twelve ways of teaching all arise out of prajna paramita.

"Furthermore, World-Honored One, if all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones in as many worlds of the ten directions as the sands of the Ganges have taught various sentient beings the correct dharma in twelve ways through the three kinds of demonstration and guidance. And, on the other hand, if the good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth have accepted, embraced, read, recited, and extensively lectured on the prajna paramita for others. Then the merits and virtues of both cases are equal. Why? The Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones in as many worlds of the ten directions as the sands of the Ganges, the three kinds of demonstration, and the twelve ways of teaching all arise from prajna paramita.

"World-Honored One, if good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth have made various most wonderful wreaths, perfumes and incenses, and so forth, and lamps as offerings respectfully to esteem and acclaim the Buddhas, the World-Honored Ones, in as many worlds of the ten directions as the sands of the Ganges; and, on the other hand, if some other good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth have written prajna paramita and made various most wonderful wreaths, perfumes and incenses, and so forth, and lamps as offerings respectfully to esteem and acclaim it, then the merits and virtues gained in these two cases are equal. Why? It is because various Buddhas, the World-Honored Ones, arise from prajna paramita.

"World-Honored One, if good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth have wholeheartedly listened to, accepted, embraced, read, recited, diligently cultivated and learned, reasonably reflected on, explicated, and extensively disseminated prajna paramita to all sentient beings, then they will not fall into hells, the realm of animals, the realm of ghosts, the stage of voice-hearer, or the stage of self-enlightened one. Why? It is because these good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth can dwell in the state of nonregression and stay far away from all kinds of disasters, plagues, decay, troubles, and horrible things. The debtor, fearful of the creditor, seeks to serve the king and build a close relationship with him in hopes of overcoming his fear. World-Honored One, the king is prajna paramita, the debtor is the good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth, who can rely on prajna paramita to overcome his fear. World-

Honored One, like someone who relies on a king for protection and receives offerings, respect, respect, and acclaim, so too are the Buddha's relics. Because of the gradual permeation and cultivation of prajna paramita, the relics also receive offerings, respect, and admiration from various heavenly beings, human beings, asuras, and so forth. World-Honored one, the king is prajna paramita, and the relics are those who rely on the king.

(Kausika used similes to describe the relationship between relics and prajna paramita.)

"World-Honored One, various Buddhas have attained the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge because of prajna paramita. Therefore, between the large threefold thousand-world that is filled with Buddhas' relics and the writing of fathomless prajna paramita, I will choose the latter. Why? The Buddha's relics, notable for their diverse colors and exceptional solidity surpassing diamonds, the thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features, and the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena, are attributed to prajna paramita. The five paramitas, including giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth are called going to the other shore because of prajna paramita. Why? Giving, pure precept, and so forth cannot go to the other shore without prajna paramita.

"Furthermore, World-Honored One, if anyone in a city, village, or area of this large threefold thousand-world or the rest of the worlds accepts, embraces, reads, recites, explicates, and makes offerings respectfully to esteem and acclaim prajna paramita, then all sentient beings there will be protected from harm or annoyance made by humans and nonhumans except by past karma. They will learn to practice correct actions of three vehicles and attain nirvana gradually as they wish.

"World-Honored One, prajna paramita has great supernatural powers. Where there is prajna paramita, there are the Buddhas who undertake Buddhist services to bring great benefits and much happiness to all sentient beings. World-Honored One, like an invaluable big pearl, which has innumerable exquisite powers and virtues. Where there is the pearl, there is no disaster or trouble for all humans and nonhumans. Men or women seized by a ghost will easily get rid of the suffering if they happen to obtain a magical pearl only because it can drive the ghost away. All kinds of illness caused by heat, wind, phlegm or combination can be quickly healed by this

magical pearl. It provides illumination in darkness, reduces excessive heat, and offers warmth during cold weather; it consistently maintains a comfortable temperature for people. Where there is this big pearl, there are no snakes or scorpions. Men and women who have been poisoned and are experiencing pain or unconsciousness can recover promptly due to this magical pearl. The sentient beings who have suffered from leprosy, malignant sore, swelling blebs, dizziness, corneal opacity, and other diseases of the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and limbs will be cured if they carry this pearl with them. If ponds, wells, or springs become contaminated or dry up, throwing the magical pearl into them will restore the water, making it sweet-smelling, pure, transparent, and endowed with the eight virtues. If the magical pearl is wrapped by a piece of cloth in green, yellow, dark red, white, red, violet, fresh green, or a mix of these colors and placed in water, the water will take the color of the cloth. Such an invaluable magical pearl has too many virtues and powers to be described fully. Putting it in a box or suitcase will also make the box or suitcase capable of performing boundless functions. Even after taking the pearl out of the box, the empty box will be valued and loved by people."

Joyfully Celebrating One asked Heavenly Emperor Indra, "Does such a wonderful magical pearl exist only in the heaven, or also exist in human world?"

Heavenly Emperor Indra replied, "There are such pearls both in human world and in heaven. Those in human world are smaller but heavier, while the ones in heaven are larger but lighter. The shape of the human pearls is not perfect while the heavenly ones have perfect round shape, and their virtues and powers are much greater than the ones in human world by numberless times."

Meanwhile, Heavenly Emperor Indra said to the Buddha again, "World-Honored One, so is the fathomless prajna paramita. It is the basis for all virtues and capable of eliminating innumerable not virtuous dharmas. Where there is prajna paramita, pains and worries in body and mind of sentient beings will be totally removed, and no humans and nonhumans can do any harm to them.

"World-Honored One, the great precious magical pearl mentioned above refers to not only the fathomless prajna paramita, but also the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge of the Thus-Comer. It also refers to meditation paramita, diligence paramita, and so forth, and

giving paramita; 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 eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power; realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable; staying in correct mindfulness and dwelling in equanimity at all times; the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena; and all dharani gates and all samadhi gates. It also refers to immeasurable and boundless Buddha dharmas. Why? World-Honored One, all these merits and virtues are activated and manifested by prajna paramita, the great king of divine spells. These merits and virtues are profound, broad, immeasurable, and boundless. Because the relics of the Buddha are caused by a gradual influence and cultivation of various merits and virtues, they are worthy of the offerings made and respect paid by all heavenly beings, human beings, asuras, and so forth of the world after the Buddha enters nirvana.

"Furthermore, World-Honored One, the Buddha's relics are the embodiment of the perfect, most superior, and purest prajna paramita, meditation paramita, and so forth, and giving paramita. They are also the embodiment of the perfect, superior, and purest termination of enduring disposition of vexation and the embodiment of the rest of immeasurable and boundless Buddha dharmas. After the Buddha enters nirvana, his relics are thus worthy of the offerings made and esteem and admiration expressed by all heavenly beings, human beings, asuras, and so forth.

"Furthermore, World-Honored One, because the Buddha's relics are an embodiment of the perfect, superior, and purest pearl of merits and virtues of prajna paramita, and because they are the embodiment of the perfect, superior, and purest paramita that is without contamination and purification, arising and extinction, entry and exit, addition and subtraction, coming and going, movement and rest, and this and that, the Buddha's relics are worthy of the offerings made and esteem and admiration expressed by all heavenly beings, human beings, asuras, and so forth of the world.

"Furthermore, World-Honored One, let us put the large threefold thousand-world that is filled with the Buddhas' relics aside. If the worlds of the ten directions as many as the sands of the Ganges are filled with the Buddhas' relics and on the other hand, there is the writing of the

fathomless prajna paramita. Between these two cases, I will prefer the prajna paramita. Why? World-Honored One, the relics of all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones arise due to the fathomless prajna paramita, the gradual influence and cultivation of the fathomless prajna paramita. They are the embodiment of the fathomless prajna paramita. Therefore, the relics are worthy of the offerings made and esteem and admiration expressed by all heavenly deities, human beings, asuras, and so forth.

"World-Honored One, if good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth make offerings respectfully to esteem and acclaim the Buddhas' relics, they will receive and enjoy various kinds of wealth and pleasures endlessly either in heaven or in human world. The noble family of Ksatriya, family of Brahman, and so forth, and the family of laypersons in the human world and in the Heaven of Four Great Kings, Heaven of Thirty-Three Smaller Heavens, and so forth, and the Heaven of Enjoying Other-Made Changes will be able to cease their suffering because of such superior virtuous roots.

"World-Honored One, if good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth wholeheartedly listen to, accept, embrace, read, recite, write, explicate, and reasonably reflect on prajna paramita, they will fulfill prajna paramita quickly. After fulfilling prajna paramita, they further move on to fulfill meditation paramita, diligence meditation, and so forth, and giving paramita, the thirty-seven aids to enlightenment, and the eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power. From here they will continue to transcend the stage of voice-hearer and the stage of self-enlightened one, enter onto the bodhisattva path of nonarising, and attain the superior supernatural powers of bodhisattva. By riding on these supernatural powers, they will travel through various Buddha lands. When traveling from one Buddha nation to the other, they will make offerings respectfully to various Buddhas, the World-Honored Ones, assist sentient beings to grow and mature, and dignify and purify Buddha lands. At that time, they will not be reluctant to accept various kinds of body in their future lives. They will be reborn as a wheel-turning king, a smaller king, Ksatriya, Brahman, Vaiśravana, heavenly emperor, or Brahma king to bring benefits, peace, and happiness to immeasurable sentient beings. Therefore, World-Honored One, I have always been inclined to believe in and accept relics and love to make offerings respectfully to esteem and acclaim them. But I know that the merits and virtues gained by making offerings to esteem and acclaim the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita will be much

more than that. Because of this cause and condition, I rather choose the fathomless prajna paramita.

"World-Honored One, if good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth make offerings respectfully to esteem and acclaim prajna paramita, they are equally fostering all kinds of Buddha dharma, and they are also absorbing the wealth, happiness, and carefree life in and beyond the world. When they do this, they have already made offerings respectfully to esteem and acclaim the Buddha's relics."

At that time, the Buddha said to Heavenly Emperor Indra, "Yes, it is as you say."

(The Buddha confirmed that Kausika's statements are correct.)

Chapter 8

Accumulation of Blessings

Section 1

(In the Third Assembly)

At that time, Heavenly Emperor Indra said to the Buddha, "World-Honored One, if good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth would like to often see the physical body and the dharma body of all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones in the immeasurable and countless worlds of the ten directions, they should wholeheartedly listen to, accept, embrace, read, recite, diligently cultivate and learn, reasonably reflect on, write, explicate, and extensively disseminate the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita. As they can often see the dharma body and the physical body of all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones in the immeasurable and countless worlds of the ten directions, they will be able to cultivate prajna paramita step by step to fulfill it soon. By that

time, they should cultivate and learn to contemplate the mindfulness in compliance with the Buddha by dharma nature.

"World-Honored One, all dharma natures are briefly divided into two kinds: the conditioned dharma natures and the unconditioned dharma natures. What are the conditioned dharma natures? They are the perfect knowledge of internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature; the perfect knowledge of the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power; the perfect knowledge of the virtuous and the not virtuous dharmas; the perfect knowledge of the morally related and the morally unrelated dharmas; the perfect knowledge of the flawed and the flawless dharmas; the perfect knowledge of the conditioned and the unconditioned dharmas; the perfect knowledge of the guilty and the not guilty dharmas; the perfect knowledge of the dharmas of the world and the dharmas beyond the world; and the perfect knowledge of the contaminated and the purified dharmas. The perfect knowledge of such immeasurable gates is called the conditioned dharma natures. What are the unconditioned dharma natures? That means all dharmas are without arising and extinction, dwelling and change, contamination and purification, increase and decrease, form and action, and nature and self-nature. They are thus called the unconditioned dharma natures. The good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth should adopt these two dharma natures to cultivate the mindfulness in compliance with the Buddha."

At that time, the Buddha said to Heavenly Emperor Indra, "Yes, it is as you say. Kausika, various Buddhas in the past, present, and future attained, are attaining, and will attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi based on prajna paramita. Various voice-hearer disciples of the Buddhas in the past, present, and future attained, are attaining, and will attain the stream-entry effect, once-return effect, nonreturn effect, and arhat effect based on prajna paramita. The self-enlightened ones in the past, present, and future attained, are attaining, and will attain self-enlightenment bodhi based on prajna paramita. Why? It is because in the secret storage of prajna paramita, the dharmas correspondent with the three vehicles are extensively taught. All the teachings contained in it have adopted nonattainment as expediency, nonnature and formlessness as expediency, nonarising and nonextinction as expediency, noncontamination and nonpurification as expediency, nonmaking and nonaction as expediency, nonentering and

nonoutgoing as expediency, nonaddition and nonsubtraction as expediency, and nongrasping and nonrenunciation as expediency. It is in terms of the worldly perspective rather than the ultimate meaning to say so. Why? The fathomless prajna paramita is neither prajna paramita nor not prajna paramita. It is not this shore, other shore, or in between. It is neither the land nor the stream. It is neither high nor low, neither equal nor unequal, neither with form nor without form, neither in the world nor beyond the world, neither flawed nor flawless, neither conditioned nor unconditioned, neither virtuous nor not virtuous, and neither morally related nor morally unrelated. It is not the past, the future, and present.

(The Buddha described the traits of prajna paramita.)

"Kausika, the fathomless prajna paramita is not Buddha dharma, the dharma of bodhisattva, the dharma of self-enlightened one, or the dharma of voice-hearer. It does not turn away from various dharmas of ordinary sentient being."

In the meantime, Heavenly Emperor Indra said to the Buddha again, "The fathomless prajna paramita is the great paramita, the unsurpassed paramita, and the unequaled equal paramita. When cultivating the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas are aware of the different mental images among all sentient beings, but they do not attain the 'I,' the sentient being, and so forth, and the knower or the viewer. They do not attain matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness, and so forth, and the feelings produced by six contacts. They do not attain giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita. And so on, they do not attain the eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power and the rest of immeasurable and boundless Buddha dharmas. Why? Prajna paramita appears in the world not for attaining all dharmas. Why? The fathomless prajna paramita is without self-nature and unattainable. The one who attains and the one to be attained and their natures and phenomena are empty and unattainable."

At that time, the Buddha said to Heavenly Emperor Indra, "Yes, it is as you say. Kausika, great bodhisattvas have adopted nonattainment as expediency to cultivate and learn the fathomless prajna paramita for a very long time, but they cannot attain the bodhi and sattva, let alone the great bodhisattva. If they cannot attain the great bodhisattva, how can they attain the

dharma of the great bodhisattva? If they cannot attain the dharma of the great bodhisattva, how can they attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas?"

In the meantime, Heavenly Emperor Indra asked the Buddha again, "Should great bodhisattvas only cultivate prajna paraita, or should they also cultivate other five paramitas?

The Buddha replied to Heavenly Emperor Indra, "The great bodhisattvas should cultivate the six paramitas simultaneously by adopting nonattainment as expediency. Namely, when cultivating giving, the great bodhisattvas will not attain giving, the almsgiver, and the alms receiver. When cultivating pure precept, they will not attain pure precept, the precept observer, and the violator. When cultivating forbearance, they will not attain forbearance, the one who practices forbearance, and the one who is with anger and hatred. When cultivating diligence, they will not attain diligence, the diligent one, and the lazy and tired one. When cultivating meditation, they will not attain meditation, the one in concentration, and the one with restless mind. When cultivating prajna, they will not attain prajna, the wise one, the wisdom abuser, or the differences among the dharma natures and dharma phenomena as contemplated through prajna.

"Furthermore, Kausika, if great bodhisattvas are illuminated and guided by the fathomless prajna paramita to cultivate all paramitas without attachment, they will fulfill them quickly.

(The Buddha taught how great bodhisattvas cultivate six paramitas simultaneously.)

"Furthermore, Kausika, if great bodhisattvas are illuminated and guided by the fathomless prajna paramita and adopt nonattainment as expediency to contemplate all dharmas without attachment, they will fulfill cultivation and learning quickly. Namely, with the illumination and guidance of the fathomless prajna paramita, they will adopt nonattainment as expediency to contemplate various aggregates, spheres, realms, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena without attachment. Because of this cause and condition, they will fulfill what they are cultivating quickly. Kausika, like the trees in the continent of Jambudvipa, although their branches, stems, flowers, leaves, and fruits differ in shape and color, their shadows are the same. Shadows always possess the great merits and virtues upon which all

sentient beings can rely. Although the first five paramitas are different, they are all absorbed by prajna paramita and are transferred toward the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. Because they all have adopted nonattainment as expediency, their different phenomena disappear and become unattainable, they then possess great merits and virtues upon which all can rely."

(The Buddha further taught that if great bodhisattvas adopt nonattainment as expediency based on prajna paramita to contemplate various dharmas, their cultivation of these dharmas will be fulfilled quickly.)

Meanwhile, Heavenly Emperor Indra said to the Buddha again, "World-Honored One, the fathomless prajna paramita can achieve extensive superior merits and virtues, unique superior merits and virtues, perfect superior merits and virtues, innumerable superior merits and virtues, countless superior merits and virtues, boundless superior merits and virtues, unequaled superior merits and virtues, and endless superior merits and virtues. World-Honored One, some good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth have written the fathomless prajna paramita, adorned and dignified it with various treasures, made innumerable best offerings respectfully to esteem and admire it, and reflected reasonably on it. On the other hand, some other good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth have written the fathomless prajna paramita and given it to others, so they can accept and embrace it, and disseminate it extensively. Who will accumulate more blessings between these two groups of people?"

The Buddha said to Heavenly Emperor Indra, "Let me ask you some questions, and you may answer as you like. Some good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth have courteously requested Buddha's relics from others, stored them in a treasure case, put the case on a high and superior place, and made immeasurable most wonderful wreaths, perfumes and incenses, and so forth, and lamps as offerings to esteem and acclaim them. On the other hand, some good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth have also requested courteously the Buddha's relics from someone else. They shared these relics with others, gave each person a portion as small as a mustard seed, so that these people could store and place them properly as mentioned above. They would further make various best wreaths, perfumes and incenses, and so forth, and lamps as offerings to esteem and acclaim them. What do you think about this? Who will gain more blessings between these two groups of people?"

Heavenly Emperor Indra replied, “If I understand the Buddha correctly, the latter ones will gain more blessings. Why? Various Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones have contemplated sentient beings with great compassion, knowing that they will attain liberation by making offerings respectfully to the Buddhas’ relics. Therefore, before entering nirvana, the Buddhas crushed their own diamond-like solid bodies to numberless mustard-seed like small pieces with their diamond-like powers of samadhi. The Thus-Comers further bestowed blessings on these relics with their supernatural powers of great compassion, allowing those who make offerings respectfully to even one small piece of relic to gain boundless blessings and enjoy great wealth and happiness in heaven and in human world until all their suffering finally end. Therefore, the latter ones will gain more blessings.”

At that time, the Buddha praised Heavenly Emperor Indra, “Excellent, excellent! It is as you say. Kausika. Similar for prajna paramita. Those who disseminate prajna paramita extensively will gain more blessings than the ones who merely accept, embrace, and respectfully make offerings to it. Why? The givers will bring dharma joy to immeasurable and boundless sentient beings.

(The Buddha confirmed Kausika’s statement that the givers with great compassion always receive more blessings.)

“Furthermore, Kausika, the dharma teachers who can accurately explicate the essential meanings of the fathomless prajna paramita for others will gain more blessings than those who merely disseminate prajna paramita by hundreds of thousands of times. To these dharma teachers we should pay respect as we do to the Buddha or offer services as we do to the celibacy practitioner. Why? Kausika, you must know that prajna paramita is the Buddha, and the Buddha is prajna paramita. Prajna paramita is not different from the Buddha, and the Buddha is not different from prajna paramita. Why? The Buddhas acrossing the three phases of time attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi through diligent cultivation and learning of prajna paramita. The celibacy practitioners are the great bodhisattvas dwelling in the stage of nonregression. These great bodhisattvas will also realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi through diligent cultivation and learning of prajna paramita. The practitioners of the voice-hearer vehicle and the self-enlightened one vehicle will attain arhat effect and self-

enlightenment bodhi through diligent cultivation and learning of prajna paramita. The bodhisattva vehicle practitioners also transcend the stage of voice-hearer and the stage of self-enlightened one and enter onto the bodhisattva path of nonarising through diligent cultivation and learning of prajna paramita. After cultivating all bodhisattva actions step by step, they will dwell in the bodhisattva stage of nonregression. Therefore, Kausika, if good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth would like to make various most wonderful wreaths, perfumes and incenses, and so forth, and lamps as offerings respectfully to esteem and acclaim various Buddhas in the present, they should write the fathomless prajna paramita, make various most wonderful wreaths, perfumes and incenses, and so forth, and lamps as offerings to esteem and acclaim it.

(The Buddha explained why Buddha-path practitioners should make offerings to prajna paramita.)

"Kausika, I had contemplated these meanings at the moment when I attained the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal enlightenment. I thought, 'Where should I dwell? Who will be worthy of my offerings and respect?' As I thought, I did not see any heavenly mara, Brahma, human, or nonhuman equals me, let alone superior to me. I continued to consider that I have realized and attained the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi through this dharma, which is so fathomless, subtle, and tranquil. I should remain dwelling in this dharma and keep making offerings respectfully to prajna paramita.

"Kausika, I have become a Buddha, but I am still making offerings respectfully to prajna paramita, let alone all the good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth who are pursuing the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. Why? Kausika, the fathomless prajna paramita can give rise to great bodhisattvas. From great bodhisattvas, various Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones are born. Because of the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones, voice-hearers and self-enlightened ones are born. Therefore, Kausika, all good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth of the bodhisattva vehicle, self-enlightened one vehicle, or voice-hearer vehicle should cultivate and learn prajna paramita diligently. They should make various most wonderful wreaths, perfumes and incenses, and so forth, and lamps as offerings respectfully to esteem and acclaim

prajna paramita. Why? All practitioners of voice-hearer vehicle, self-enlightened one vehicle, and bodhisattva vehicle should diligently and attentively cultivate and fulfill prajna paramita.

(The Buddha said that he has become a Buddha and remains making offerings to prajna paramita, let alone the voice-hearer, self-enlightened one, bodhisattva who pursue Buddha dharma. He also explained why.)

"Furthermore, Kausika, some good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth have taught sentient beings in the continent of Jambudvipa, let them dwell peacefully in the path of the ten virtuous karmas. What do you think about this? Will these good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth be much blessed because of this cause and condition?"

Heavenly Emperor Indra replied, "Yes, very much, World-Honored One; very much, Well-Gone One."

The Buddha said to Kausika, "If some other good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth have written the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita and given the writing to others to let them read, recite, write, and disseminate it extensively, then the blessings accumulated by these good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth will be much more than the former ones. Why? It is because in the secret storage of the fathomless prajna paramita, all flawless dharmas are extensively taught. Various good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth learned, are learning, or will learn them. Some with voice-hearer orientation entered, are entering, or will enter the correct nature of nonarising and thus attained, are attaining, or will attain arhat effect step by step. Some with self-enlightened one orientation entered, are entering, or will enter the correct nature of nonarising and thus attained, are attaining, or will attain the self-enlightenment bodhi step by step. Some with bodhisattva orientation entered, are entering, or will enter the correct nature of nonarising to cultivate great bodhisattva actions and attained, are attaining, or will attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.

"Kausika, the flawless dharmas taught in the secret storage of the fathomless prajna paramita are 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 realm of termination, realm

of getting away, and so forth, and the unconditioned realm; 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 and nine concentrations in sequence; 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 defilement, and so forth, and the stage of dharma cloud; 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; all dharani gates and all samadhi gates; 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. These are all flawless dharmas."

(The Buddha said that in prajna paramita, all flawless dharmas are contained. He also enumerated the flawless dharmas.)

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Chapter 8

Accumulation of Blessings

Section 2

(In the Third Assembly)

"Kausika, if good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth teach a sentient being to dwell in stream-entry effect, they will be more blessed than those who teach all sentient beings in the continent of Jambudvipa to dwell peacefully in the path of the ten virtuous karmas. Why? Kausika, the sentient beings dwelling peacefully in the path of the ten virtuous karmas inevitably will fall into hells, the realm of animals, or the realm of ghosts, while those dwelling peacefully in stream-entry effect will get rid of the three bad perilous destinies forever. Not to mention the blessings gained by the ones who teach sentient beings to dwell peacefully in once-return effect, nonreturn effect, and arhat effect. Kausika, if good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth teach sentient beings in the continent of Jambudvipa to dwell peacefully in stream-entry effect, once-return effect, nonreturn effect, or arhat effect, the blessings thus gained will be less than the blessings gained by those who teach a sentient being to dwell peacefully in self-enlightenment bodhi by hundreds of thousands of times. If good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth teach all sentient beings in the continent of Jambudvipa to dwell peacefully in self-enlightenment bodhi, the blessings thus gained will be much less than teaching a sentient being to aspire to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. Why? Kausika, teaching a sentient being to aspire to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi will make the Buddha eye exist permanently in the world. Why? It is because of the existence of great bodhisattvas, there are stream-entry effect, once-return effect, nonreturn effect, arhat effect, and self-enlightenment bodhi. Because of the existence of the great bodhisattvas, there are the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones who turn the wonderful dharma wheel to deliver innumerable sentient beings. Great bodhisattvas become what they are because of prajna paramita.

(The Buddha taught that prajna paramita leads to bodhisattvas, who in turn bring about voice-hearers, self-enlightened ones, and Thus-Comers.)

"Therefore, Kausika, if good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth write the fathomless prajna paramita, give the writing to others, and encourage them to read, recite, write, and disseminate it extensively, the blessings thus derived will be immeasurable and boundless. Why? Kausika, in this secret and mystic storage of prajna paramita, all superior virtuous dharmas of and beyond the world are comprehensively taught. Because of these superior virtuous dharmas, the noble families of Ksatriya, Brahman, and so forth, and lay believers; the Heaven of Four Great Kings, Heaven of Thirty-Three Smaller Heavens, and so forth, and the Heaven of Nonthinking and Not Nonthinking and the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena are established and become available. It is because of these superior virtuous dharmas, the stream-entry effect, once-return effect, nonreturn effect, arhat effect, self-enlightenment bodhi, all great bodhisattva actions, and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of various Buddhas are established and become available. It is also because of these superior virtuous dharmas that the stream-enterers, once-returners, and so forth, and the Buddhas are present in the world.

(The Buddha said that in the mystic storage of prajna paramita, all superior virtuous dharmas of and beyond the world are comprehensively taught.)

"Furthermore, Kausika, let us put the sentient beings in the continent of Jambudvipa aside at this moment. If good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth teach various sentient beings of the four continents to dwell peacefully in the path of the ten virtuous karmas, the blessings gained by them will be less than giving written fathomless prajna paramita to others and encouraging them to read, recite, write, and extensively disseminate it.

"Furthermore, kausika, let us put the sentient beings of the four continents aside at this moment. If good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth teach the sentient beings in the small thousand-world to dwell peacefully in the path of the ten virtuous karmas, the blessings gained by them will be less than giving the written fathomless prajna paramita to others and encouraging them to read, recite, write, and extensively disseminate it.

“Furthermore, Kausika, let us put the sentient beings in the small thousand-world aside at this moment. If good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth teach sentient beings in the medium thousand-world to dwell peacefully in the path of the ten virtuous karmas, the blessings gained by them will be less than giving the written fathomless prajna paramita to others and encouraging them to read, recite, write, and extensively disseminate it.

“Furthermore, Kausika, let us put the sentient beings in the medium thousand-world aside at this moment. If good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth teach various sentient beings of the large threefold thousand-world to dwell peacefully in the path of the ten virtuous karmas, the blessings gained by them will be less than giving the written fathomless prajna paramita to others and encouraging them to read, recite, write, and extensively disseminate it.

“Furthermore, Kausika, let us put the sentient beings in the large thousand-world aside at this moment. If good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth teach various sentient beings in as many worlds of each direction as the sands of the Ganges to dwell peacefully in the path of the ten virtuous karmas, the blessings gained by them will be less than giving the written fathomless prajna paramita to others and encouraging them to read, recite, write, and extensively disseminate it.

“Furthermore, Kausika, let us put the sentient beings in as many worlds of each direction as the sands of the Ganges aside at this moment. If good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth teach the sentient beings in all worlds of the ten directions to dwell peacefully in the path of the ten virtuous karmas, the blessings gained by them will be less than giving the written fathomless prajna paramita to others and encouraging them to read, recite, write, and extensively disseminate it.

“Furthermore, Kausika, if good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth teach the sentient beings in the continent of Jambudvipa to dwell peacefully in the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, four formless concentrations, and five supernatural powers, what do you think about this? Will these good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth be much blessed because of this cause and condition?”

Heavenly Emperor Indra replied, “Very much, World-Honored One; very much, Well-Gone One.”

The Buddha said to Kausika, “If good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth write the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita, give the writing to others and encourage them to read, recite, write, and extensively disseminate it, then the blessings thus gained will be much more than the former ones. Why? Kausika, in this secret and profound storage of fathomless prajna paramita, all flawless dharmas are comprehensively taught. Good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth learned, are learning, or will learn them. Some with voice-hearer orientation entered, are entering, or will enter onto the path of correct nature of nonarising to attain arhat effect step by step. Some with self-enlightened one orientation entered, are entering, or will enter onto the path of correct nature of nonarising to attain self-enlightenment bodhi step by step. Some others with bodhisattva orientation entered, are entering, or will enter onto the path of correct nature of nonarising to cultivate all great bodhisattva actions step by step and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.

“Kausika, the flawless dharmas taught in the secret and profound storage of the fathomless prajna paramita include giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena, as well as the rest of immeasurable and boundless Buddha dharmas.

“Furthermore, Kausika, the blessings accumulated by the good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth who teach one sentient being to dwell in stream-entry effect are more than those who teach various sentient beings of the continent of Jambudvipa to dwell peacefully in the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, four formless concentrations, and five supernatural powers. Why? All those who dwell peacefully in the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, four formless concentrations, and five supernatural powers will inevitably fall into hells, the realm of animals, or the realm of ghosts, while those dwelling in stream-entry effect are rid of all perilous and negative destinies forever. Not to mention the blessings gained by the ones who teach the sentient beings to dwell peacefully in once-return effect, nonreturn effect, and arhat effect. Kausika, if good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth teach the sentient beings in the continent of Jambudvipa to dwell peacefully in stream-entry effect, once-return effect, nonreturn

effect, and arhat effect, the blessings thus gained will be less than those attained by the ones who teach one sentient being to dwell peacefully in self-enlightenment bodhi. Why? The merits and virtues of self-enlightenment bodhi are much more than those of stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth by hundreds of thousands of times. Kausika, if good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth teach the sentient beings in the continent of Jambudvipa to dwell peacefully in self-enlightenment bodhi, the blessings thus gained will be much less than those gained by teaching one sentient being to aspire to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. Why? To teach sentient beings to aspire to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi will make the Buddha eye never discontinue in this world. Why? Kausika, because the existence of great bodhisattvas, there are stream-entry effect, once-return effect, nonreturn effect, arhat effect, and self-enlightenment bodhi; because the existence of great bodhisattvas, there are the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones who turn the wonderful dharma wheel to deliver various sentient beings. While sentient beings attain great bodhisattva status because of prajna paramita.

(The Buddha taught that all holy effects come from great bodhisattvas, while great bodhisattvas come from prajna paramita.

"Therefore, Kausika, if good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth write the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita, give them to others and encourage them to read, recite, write, and disseminate them extensively, the blessings thus accumulated will be much more than those the former ones gain by immeasurable and boundless times. Why? In the secret and profound storage of the fathomless prajna paramita, the dharmas of and beyond the world are comprehensively taught. Owing to these virtuous dharmas, the noble family of Ksatriya, noble family of Brahman, and so forth, and the Buddhas are established and become available.

"Furthermore, Kausika, let us put the sentient beings in the continent of Jambudvipa aside at this moment. If good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth teach various sentient beings in the four continents to dwell peacefully in the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, four formless concentrations, and five supernatural powers, the blessings thus gained will be much less than giving the written sutras of prajna paramita to others and encouraging them to read, recite, write, and disseminate prajna paramita extensively.

“Furthermore, Kausika, let us put the sentient beings in the four continents aside at this moment. If good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth teach the sentient beings in the small thousand-world to dwell peacefully in the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, four formless concentrations, and five supernatural powers, the blessings thus gained will be much less than giving the written sutras of prajna paramita to others and encouraging them to read, recite, write, and disseminate prajna paramita extensively.

“Furthermore, Kausika, let us put the sentient beings in the small thousand-world aside. If good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth teach the sentient beings in the medium thousand-world to dwell peacefully in the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, four formless concentrations, and five supernatural power, the blessings thus gained will be much less than giving the written sutras of prajna paramita to others and encouraging them to read, recite, write, and disseminate prajna paramita extensively.

“Furthermore, Kausika, let us put the sentient beings in the medium thousand-world aside. If good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth teach the sentient beings in the large threefold thousand-world to dwell peacefully in the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, four formless concentrations, and five supernatural powers, the blessings thus gained will be much less than giving the written sutras of prajna paramita to others and encouraging them to read, recite, write, and disseminate prajna paramita extensively.

“Furthermore, Kausika, let us put the sentient beings in the large threefold thousand-world aside. If good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth teach the sentient beings in as many worlds of each direction as the sands of the Ganges to dwell peacefully in the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, four formless concentrations, and five supernatural powers, the blessings thus gained will be much less than giving the written sutras of prajna paramita to others and encouraging them to read, recite, write, and disseminate prajna paramita extensively.

“Furthermore, Kausika, let us put the sentient beings in as many worlds of each direction as the sands of the Ganges aside. If good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth teach the sentient beings in all the worlds of the ten directions to dwell peacefully in the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, four formless concentrations, and five supernatural powers, the

blessings thus gained will be much less than giving the written sutras of prajna paramita to others and encouraging them to read, recite, write, and disseminate prajna paramita extensively.

"Furthermore, Kausika, if good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth wholeheartedly listen to, accept, embrace, read, recite, diligently cultivate and learn, and reasonably reflect on the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita, the blessings gained by them will be more than teaching the sentient beings in the continent of Jambudvipa to dwell peacefully in the path of the ten virtuous karmas, four meditations, four immeasurable minds, four formless concentrations, and five supernatural powers. The blessings gained by them will also be more than teaching the sentient beings in the small thousand-world, the medium thousand-world, the large threefold thousand-world, as many worlds of each direction as the sands of the Ganges, or all the worlds in the ten directions to dwell peacefully in the path of the ten virtuous karmas, four meditations, four immeasurable minds, four formless concentrations, and five supernatural powers.

"Kausika, reflecting reasonably means to reflect on prajna, meditation, diligence, forbearance, pure precept, and giving paramitas, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of everything, the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena as neither dualistic nor nondualistic when pursuing the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.

(The Buddha explained the meaning of reasonable reflection.)

"Furthermore, Kausika, if good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth teach, unfold, elaborate, manifest, explicate, and analyze the essential meanings of prajna paramita by means of innumerable dharma gates for others to let them easily understand, the blessings thus gained will be more than those gained by listening to, accepting, embracing, reading, reciting, cultivating and learning diligently, and reflecting reasonably on prajna paramita by immeasurable times. Kausika, the essential meanings mean that we should not contemplate all essential meanings of prajna paramita as with or without dual forms. We should contemplate they are neither with nor without forms; they neither enter nor go out; they neither increase nor decrease; they are neither contaminated nor purified; they neither arise nor extinguish; they neither grasp nor renounce; they are neither with nor without attachment; they neither dwell nor do not dwell; they are neither real nor unreal; they are neither correspondent nor not correspondent; they are neither a

small part nor not a small part; they are neither all nor not all; they neither combine nor separate; they are neither the cause and condition nor not the cause and condition; they are neither the dharma nor not the dharma; they are neither realness nor not realness; and they are neither reality nor not reality. There are thus immeasurable gates of essential meanings like these.

"Furthermore, Kausika, if good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth can wholeheartedly listen to, accept, embrace, read, recite, diligently cultivate and learn, and reasonably reflect on the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita themselves, and further lecture extensively, unfold, elaborate, manifest, explicate, and analyze their essential meanings for others to let them easily understand, the blessings thus gained will be more than the former ones by immeasurable and boundless times."

(The Buddha taught the way of practicing prajna paramita, which will bring about the greatest blessings.)

In the meantime, Heavenly Emperor Indra said to the Buddha, "Therefore, good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth should lecture on various subtle and exquisite meanings of the fathomless prajna paramita for others."

The Buddha replied to Heavenly Emperor Indra, "Yes, it is as you say. Good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth should lecture on various subtle and exquisite meanings of the fathomless prajna paramita for others. Kausika, if they can do so, the merits and virtues thus accumulated will be immeasurable, countless, boundless, and inconceivable. Kausika, some good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth have, for the rest of their lives, made immeasurable most wonderful wreaths, perfumes and incenses, and so forth, and lamps as offerings to esteem and acclaim all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones in as many worlds of the ten directions as the sands of the Ganges. On the other hand, some good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth have wholeheartedly listened to, accepted, embraced, read, recited, diligently cultivated and learned, and reasonably reflected on the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita, and have further adopted immeasurable gates to lecture, unfold, elaborate, demonstrate, explicate, and analyze various subtle and exquisite meanings of the texts for others to let them easily understand, the merits and virtues thus gained will be much more than the former ones. Why? It is because the Buddhas of the three phases of time realize

and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi because of cultivating and learning prajna paramita diligently and attentively.

(The Buddha emphasized that the most valuable way of practicing prajna paramita is to wholeheartedly listen to, accept, embrace, read, recite, diligently cultivate and learn, and reasonably reflect on the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita, and further adopt immeasurable gates to lecture, unfold, elaborate, demonstrate, explicate, and analyze various subtle and exquisite meanings of the texts for others to let them easily understand.)

"Furthermore, Kausika, some good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth have adopted attainment as expediency to cultivate and learn giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita for immeasurable, countless, and boundless great kalpas. On the other hand, some good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth have adopted nonattainment as expediency to wholeheartedly listen to, accept, embrace, read, recite, diligently cultivate and learn, and reasonably reflect on the fathomless prajna paramita, and further lecture on, debate, unfold, elaborate, manifest, explicate, and analyze various subtle and exquisite meanings of the texts for others, the blessings thus gained will be much more than the former ones.

"Kausika, to adopt attainment as expediency means when good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth are cultivating giving, pure precept, and so forth, they will think, 'I can give. That person is the receiver. These are the effects of giving, the giving itself, and the things given.' As they cultivate giving this way, what they are doing is named dwelling in giving instead of in giving paramita. When they cultivate pure precept, they will think, 'I can observe precept. I have persevered to protect the precept. These are the effects, and this is the precept that I observe.' As they cultivate precept this way, what they are doing is named dwelling in pure precept instead of in pure-precept paramita. When they cultivate forbearance, they will think, 'I can cultivate forbearance because I have persevered to keep it. These are the effects of forbearance, and this is the self-nature of forbearance.' As they cultivate forbearance this way, what they are doing is named dwelling in forbearance instead of in forbearance paramita. When they cultivate diligence, they will think, 'I have worked diligently to terminate vexations. These are the effects of diligence, and this is the self-nature of diligence.' As they cultivate diligence this way, what they are doing is named dwelling in diligence instead of in diligence paramita. When they

cultivate meditation, they will think, ‘I can cultivate meditation. This is the level of meditation that I have reached. These are the effects of meditation, and this is the self-nature of meditation.’ As they cultivate meditation this way, what they are doing is named dwelling in meditation instead of in meditation paramita. When they cultivate prajna, they will think, ‘I can cultivate wisdom. This is the level of wisdom that I have achieved. These are the effects of wisdom, and this is the self-nature of wisdom.’ As they cultivate wisdom this way, what they are doing is named dwelling in prajna instead of in prajna paramita. Kausika, because these good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth have adopted attainment as expediency, they are unable to fulfill giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna paramitas perfectly.”

(The Buddha said that those who adopt attainment as expediency to cultivate the six paramitas are not cultivating the genuine paramitas.)

Meanwhile, Heavenly Emperor Indra asked the Buddha, “How should great bodhisattvas cultivate to fulfill the six paramitas?”

The Buddha replied to Heavenly Emperor Indra, “When cultivating giving, pure precept, and so forth, and prajna, great bodhisattvas should not attain the giver, the receiver, the effect of practicing giving, giving itself, and the things given, and so forth, and the wise one, the level of wisdom, the effect of practicing prajna, and the self-nature of wisdom. They should adopt nonattainment as expediency to fulfill the six paramitas.

“Kausika, the great bodhisattvas should lecture on prajna paramita, meditation paramita, and so forth, and giving paramita through the wisdom of nonattainment as well as various subtle and exquisite words and meanings. Why? In the generations to come, some good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth may adopt attainment as expediency to teach the fake giving paramita, fake pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and the fake prajna paramita. Novice bodhi pursuers will feel confused upon hearing these misguiding statements and thus get lost and go astray. It is crucial to teach bodhi pursuers of prajna paramita, meditation paramita, and so forth, and giving paramita through the wisdom of nonattainment and various subtle and exquisite words and meanings.”

Meanwhile, Heavenly Emperor Indra asked the Buddha again, “What are the fake prajna, meditation, diligence, forbearance, pure precept, and giving paramitas?”

The Buddha replied to Heavenly Emperor Indra, “If good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth teach the six paramitas based on attainment, they are teaching the fake prajna, meditation, diligence, forbearance, pure precept, and giving paramitas.”

(The Buddha explained the meaning of faked six paramitas.)

In the meantime, Heavenly Emperor Indra asked the Buddha, “How do good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth teach the six paramitas based on attainment?”

The Buddha replied, “Kausika, some good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth have taught the bodhi pursuers that matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena are permanent or impermanent, pleasant or painful, with or without selfness, and pure or impure. They will say, ‘If ones can cultivate prajna, meditation, and so forth, and giving paramitas this way, they indeed practice prajna, meditation, and so forth, and giving paramitas.’ They will further say, ‘Those who cultivate prajna, meditation, and so forth, and giving paramitas should pursue matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena as permanent or impermanent, pleasant or painful, with or without selfness, and pure or impure. If they can cultivate prajna, meditation, and so forth, and giving paramitas this way, they do practice prajna, meditation, and so forth, and giving paramitas.’ Kausika, those pursuing matter, feeling, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena as permanent or impermanent, pleasant or painful, with or without selfness, or pure or impure when cultivating prajna, meditation, and so forth, and giving paramitas are practicing prajna, meditation, and so forth, and giving paramitas based on attainment. Kausika, all the paramitas based on attainment are fake paramitas.

(The Buddha explained how some practitioners adopt attainment as expediency when cultivating faked paramitas.)

“Furthermore, Kausika, some good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth teach bodhi aspirants about prajna, meditation, and so forth, and giving paramitas, saying, ‘Come here, good

gentlemen, I will teach you how to cultivate and learn prajna, meditation, and so forth, and giving paramitas. If you cultivate and learn as I teach you, you will soon dwell peacefully in the first stage, second stage, and so forth, and the tenth stage of bodhisattva.' Kausika, because they teach prajna, meditation, and so forth, and giving paramitas by adopting form and attainment as expediency to set a learning schedule, they are teaching the fake prajna, meditation, and so forth, and giving paramitas.

"Furthermore, Kausika, some good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth teach prajna, meditation, and so forth, and giving paramitas for the aspirants of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi and say, 'Come here, good gentlemen, I will teach you how to cultivate and learn prajna, meditation, and so forth, and giving paramitas. If you can cultivate and learn as I teach you, you will enter onto the bodhisattva path of nonarising quickly. Once you enter onto the bodhisattva path of nonarising, you will attain the dharma forbearance of nonarising. Once you attain the dharma forbearance of nonarising, you will attain the superior and unique supernatural powers of bodhisattva. Once you attain the superior and unique supernatural powers of bodhisattva, you will be able to travel from one Buddha land to the other, make offerings respectfully to esteem and acclaim all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones. Starting from there, you will attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge before long.' Kausika, they are teaching prajna, meditation, and so forth, and giving paramitas by adopting form and attainment as expediency to set a schedule, so they are teaching the fake prajna, meditation, and so forth, and giving paramitas.

"Furthermore, Kausika, some good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth said to the bodhisattva-vehicle practitioners, 'If you wholeheartedly listen to, accept, embrace, read, recite, diligently cultivate and learn, and reasonably reflect on the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita, you certainly will attain immeasurable, countless, and boundless merits and virtues.' Kausika, because they have adopted form and attainment as expediency, they are teaching the fake prajna, meditation, and so forth, and giving paramitas.

"Furthermore, Kausika, some good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth said to the bodhisattva-vehicle practitioners, 'You should joyfully participate in the virtuous roots accumulated by all Thus-Comers, Ones Worth of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally

Enlightened Ones in the past, present, and future since the time first aspiring to the bodhi until attaining the ultimate effect, and transfer the merits and virtues toward the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi for the sake of sentient beings.' Kausika, they have taught this by adopting form and attainment as expediency, so they are teaching the fake prajna, meditation, and so forth, and giving paramitas."

Meanwhile, Heavenly Emperor Indra asked the Buddha, "What is the teaching of the genuine prajna, meditation, and so forth, and giving paramitas?"

The Buddha replied, "Kausika, if good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth lecture on prajna, meditation, and so forth, and giving paramitas by adopting nonattainment as expediency, they indeed lecture on the genuine prajna, meditation, and so forth, and giving paramitas."

(The Buddha explained the meaning of teaching genuine six paramits.)

In the meantime, Heavenly Emperor Indra asked the Buddha again, "How will good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth lecture on prajna, meditation, and so forth, and giving paramitas by adopting nonattainment as expediency?"

The Buddha replied, "Kausika, some good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth have lectured on prajna, meditation, and so forth, and giving paramitas for the aspirants of great-vehicle bodhi, and say, 'Come here, good gentlemen, you should cultivate prajna, meditation, and so forth, and giving paramitas. Cultivating them correctly, you should not contemplate matter, feeling, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena as permanent or impermanent, pleasant or painful, with or without selfness, and pure or impure. Why? Good gentlemen, matter and the self-nature of matter are empty, feeling and the self-nature of feeling are empty, and so forth, the perfect knowledge of all phenomena and its self-nature are empty. The self-nature of matter is not self-nature, the self-nature of feeling is not self-nature, and so forth, and the self-nature of the perfect knowledge of all phenomena is not self-nature. Being without self-nature is prajna paramita, meditation paramita, and so forth, and giving paramita. In prajna paramita, meditation paramita, and so forth, and giving paramita, matter, feeling, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena are unattainable; their permanence or impermanence, pleasure or pain, selfness or selflessness, and purity or impurity are also

unattainable. Why? Within them, matter, feeling, and so forth are unattainable, let alone their permanence or impermanence, pleasure or pain, selfness or selflessness, and purity or impurity. Good gentlemen, if you cultivate prajna, meditation, and so forth, and giving paramitas this way, you indeed cultivate prajna, meditation, and so forth, and giving paramitas.' Kausika, if good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth lecture this way, they indeed lecture on the genuine prajna, meditation, and so forth, and giving paramitas.

(The Buddha described the genuine lecture on six paramitas.)

"Furthermore, Kausika, some good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth lecture on prajna paramita, meditation paramita, and so forth, and giving paramita for great vehicle pursuers, and say, 'Come here, good gentlemen, I will teach you how to cultivate prajna paramita, meditation paramita, and so forth, and giving paramita. When cultivating and learning them, you should not contemplate various dharmas and think that you can dwell in them, transcend, enter, attain, realize, and hear them, or transfer the merits and virtues thus derived and those in which you have joyfully participated toward the bodhi. Why? Good gentlemen, in prajna paramita, meditation paramita, and so forth, and giving paramita, there is no dharma in which you can dwell, or which you can transcend, enter, attain, realize, and hear; no merits and virtues that can be gained; no merits and virtues in which you can take part; and no transference toward the bodhi. Why? It is because the self-natures of all dharmas are empty. Because their self-natures are empty, they are nonexistent. Nonexistence is exactly prajna paramita, meditation paramita, and so forth, and giving paramita. In prajna paramita, meditation paramita, and so forth, and giving paramita, no dharma enters or gets out, arises or extinguishes, discontinues or permanently exists, nor are there sameness or difference and coming or going. All these dharmas are unattainable.' Kausika, if these good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth teach this way, they indeed lecture on the genuine prajna, meditation, and so forth, and giving paramitas.

"Therefore, Kausika, good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth should adopt nonattainment as expediency to wholeheartedly listen to, accept, embrace, read, recite, diligently and attentively cultivate and learn, and reasonably reflect on the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita. They should further teach extensively, unfold, elaborate, manifest, explicate, and

analyze their essential meanings for others by using various subtle and exquisite words and meanings to let them understand easily.

"Kausika, because of this cause and condition, I will say that if good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth adopt nonattainment as expediency to wholeheartedly listen to, accept, embrace, read, recite, diligently and attentively cultivate and learn, and reasonably reflect on the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita, and further teach extensively, unfold, elaborate, manifest, explicate, and analyze their essential meanings for others with various subtle and exquisite words and meanings to let them easily understand, the merits and virtues thus gained will be much more than the former ones.

"Furthermore, Kausika, if good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth have taught various sentient beings in the continent of Jambudvipa, the four continents, the small thousand-world, the medium thousand-world, the large threefold thousand-world, the worlds in each direction as many as the sands of the Ganges, or all the worlds in the ten directions to dwell peacefully in stream-entry effect, once-return effect, nonreturn effect, arhat effect, or the self-enlightenment bodhi, what do you think about this? Will these good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth be much blessed because of this cause and condition?"

Heavenly Emperor Indra replied, "They will be very much blessed, World-Honored One. They will be very much blessed, Well-Gone One."

The Buddha said to Kausika, "If good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth have taught extensively, unfolded, elaborated, manifested, explicated, and analyzed the essential meanings of the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita for others to let them easily understand, and further say, 'Come here, good gentlemen, you should wholeheartedly listen to, accept, embrace, read, recite, thoroughly understand, and reasonably reflect on the fathomless prajna paramita. You should cultivate and learn this dharma gate diligently,' then the merits and virtues gained by these good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth will be much more than the former ones. Why? Kausika, it is because all stream-entry effect, once-return effect, nonreturn effect, arhat effect, and the self-enlightenment bodhi flow out of prajna paramita.

"Furthermore, Kausika, if good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth teach various sentient beings in the continent of Jambudvipa, the four continents, the small thousand-world, the medium thousand-world, the large threefold thousand-world, and as many worlds in ten directions as the sands of the Ganges to aspire to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi or dwell in the bodhisattva stage of nonregression, then what do you think about this? Will these good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth be much blessed because of this cause and condition?"

Heavenly Emperor Indra replied, "They will be very much blessed, World-Honored One. They will be very much blessed, Well-Gone One."

The Buddha said to Kausika, "Some good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth have taught extensively, unfolded, elaborated, manifested, explicated, and analyzed the essential meanings of the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita with subtle and exquisite words and meanings through immeasurable gates for others to let them understand easily, and say, 'Come here, good gentlemen, you should wholeheartedly listen to, accept, embrace, read, recite, thoroughly understand, and reasonably reflect on the fathomless prajna paramita, and develop correct belief and understanding through this dharma gate. If your belief and understanding are correct, you will be able to cultivate and learn the fathomless prajna paramita. If you can cultivate and learn the fathomless prajna paramita, you will be able to realize and attain perfect knowledge of everything. If you can realize and attain the perfect knowledge of everything, you will fulfill the cultivation of prajna paramita. If you can fulfill the cultivation of prajna paramita, you will be able to realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.' Kausika, the merits and virtues gained by these good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth will be much more than the former ones. Why? The novice great bodhisattvas who just begin to aspire to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, the great bodhisattvas who stay in the stage of nonregression, and so forth, and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal enlightenment all flow out of prajna paramita.

"Furthermore, Kausika, suppose that the sentient beings in the continent of Jambudvipa, the four continents, the small thousand-world, the medium thousand-world, the large threefold thousand-world, and as many worlds of ten direction as the sands of the Ganges have aspired to

the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. And on the other hand, some good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth have taught extensively, unfolded, elaborated, manifested, explicated, and analyzed the essential meanings of the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita for others with subtle and exquisite words and meanings through numberless dharma gates to let them easily understand. They further say, 'Good gentlemen, you should wholeheartedly listen to, accept, embrace, read, recite, thoroughly understand, and reasonably reflect on the fathomless prajna paramita. You should develop right belief and understanding through this dharma gate. If you can develop right belief and understanding, you will be able to cultivate and learn the fathomless prajna paramita. If you can cultivate and learn the fathomless prajna paramita, you will be able to realize and attain the perfect knowledge of everything. If you can realize and attain the perfect knowledge of everything, you will be able to fulfill the cultivation of prajna paramita. If you can fulfill the cultivation of prajna paramita, you will be able to realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.' On the other hand, if good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth encountered a great bodhisattva who has stayed in the stage of nonregression and taught comprehensively, unfolded, elaborated, manifested, explicated, and analyzed the essential meanings of the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita for this great bodhisattva, and further say, 'Come here, good gentleman, you should wholeheartedly listen to, accept, embrace, read, recite, thoroughly understand, and reasonably reflect on the fathomless prajna paramita. You should develop right belief and understanding through this dharma gate, and so forth.' Kausika, the merits and virtues thus gained will be much more than the former ones.

"Furthermore, Kausika, suppose that the sentient beings in the continent of Jambudvipa, the four continents, the small thousand-world, the medium thousand-world, the large threefold thousand-world, and as many worlds of ten direction as the sands of the Ganges have all attained nonregression in their pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. On the other hand, some good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth have taught comprehensively, unfolded, elaborated, manifested, explicated, and analyzed the essential meanings of the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita for others so they can easily understand. One among the listeners said, 'I would like to realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly, so I can relieve sentient beings from suffering in birth and death.' To satisfy this person's wish, all these good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth taught comprehensively, unfolded, elaborated,

manifested, explicated, and analyzed the essential meanings of the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita to let this person easily understand. Kausika, the merits and virtues gained by these good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth gain will be much more than the former ones."

At that time, Heavenly Emperor Indra said to the Buddha, "World-Honored One, as great bodhisattvas become closer and closer to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, we should teach and give cautions to them about 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. We should also make various best clothes, food, drinks, bedding, medicines, and other living supplies that they need as offerings to them. World-Honored One, if good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth can make such dharma giving and property giving to these great bodhisattvas, then the merits and virtues gained by them will be much more than the former ones. Why? The dharma giving and property giving will make learners more easily and quickly to realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi."

At that time, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One said to Heavenly Emperor Indra, "Excellent, excellent! You can not only encourage great bodhisattvas, but also absorb, assist, and protect them. You have now done what a Buddha's holy disciple should do. Why? All holy disciples of Thus-Comers, to bring benefits and happiness to sentient beings, have expediently persuaded and encouraged great bodhisattvas to realize and attain quickly the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi that they pursue. They make dharma giving and property giving to assist and protect them, so that they can realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly. Why? All superior things caused by Thus-Comers, voice-hearers, and the self-enlightened ones appear in the world because of great bodhisattvas. Why? Kausika, if great bodhisattvas do not initiate aspiration to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal enlightenment, no great bodhisattva will learn the six paramitas, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena. If great bodhisattva do not learn the six paramitas, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena, no great bodhisattva will realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. If this is the case, no superior things caused by the Thus-Comers, voice-hearers, and the self-enlightened ones will appear in the world.

"Kausika, because great bodhisattvas can initiate and activate the aspiration to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, they can learn the six paramitas, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena. Because great bodhisattvas can learn the six paramitas, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena, they can realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. Because great bodhisattvas can realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi and turn the wonderful dharma wheel, the hells, the realm of animals, and the realm of ghosts will disappear, gang members of asura will diminish, and heavenly beings will increase. Because of this cause and condition, the noble family of Ksatriya, noble family of Brahman, and so forth, and noble family of lay believers; the Heaven of Four Great Kings, Heaven of Thirty-Three Smaller Heavens, and so forth, and the Heaven of Nonthinking and Not Nonthinking; the six paramitas, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena; as well as the voice-hearer vehicle, self-enlightened one vehicle, and the unsurpassed vehicle appear in the world."

(Well-Appearing One admired Heavenly Emperor Indra and also indicated the importance and indispensability of great bodhisattvas.)

Chapter 9

Joyful Participation and Transference

Section 1

(In the Third Assembly)

At that time, Great Bodhisattva Maitreya said to the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One, "Some great bodhisattvas have adopted nonattainment as expediency to joyfully take part in various sentient beings in undertaking the bliss-inviting actions, and further transfer the merits and virtues thus derived along with all sentient beings equally toward the unsurpassed, perfect,

and universal bodhi. On the other hand, some sentient beings have joyfully taken part in various ordinary sentient beings, voice-hearers, and self-enlightened ones in undertaking the bliss-inviting actions of practicing almsgiving, observing precept, and cultivation, or in undertaking the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth. In comparison, the merits and virtues transferred by great bodhisattvas are superior to, nobler, and higher than the blessings gained by the ordinary sentient beings, voice-hearers, and self-enlightened ones. The merits and virtues transferred by the great bodhisattvas are the utmost, subtlest, most exquisite, and the unequaled equal ones of all. Why? It is because the ordinary sentient beings have cultivated for the sake of their own ease, peace, and happiness; the voice-hearers and the self-enlightened ones have cultivated for the sake of their own peace, tranquility, and nirvana; while the great bodhisattvas have cultivated and transferred in order to bring peace, harmony, tranquility and nirvana to all sentient beings."

At that time, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked Bodhisattva Maitreya, "The joyful mind of participation and transference of the great bodhisattvas relate with numberless and boundless worlds of the ten directions because they assembly all virtuous roots and joyfully participate in them. These virtuous roots correspond to the six paramitas and have been accumulated by countless Buddhas across infinite worlds, from the moment they first aspired toward, until they attained unsurpassed, perfect, and universal enlightenment. This process continues even until the Buddhas enter nirvana without remainder, at the time when the correct dharma is about to disappear. They also include the virtuous correspondent with numberless and boundless Buddha dharma shared and not shared by voice-hearers, self-enlightened ones, bodhisattvas, and the rest of sentient beings; the bliss-inviting karmas caused by giving, precept, and cultivation undertaken by Buddhas' lay disciples; the flawless virtuous roots caused by Buddhas' voice-hearer disciples who need more or no more learning; the aggregates of precept, concentration, wisdom, liberation, and the knowledge and view of liberation achieved by various Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones, and the numberless and boundless Buddha dharma of great loving-kindness, great compassion, great joy, and great equanimity achieved by various Thus-Comers attempting to bring benefits and happiness to all sentient beings; and the stream-entry effect, once-return effect, nonreturn effect, arhat effect, and self-enlightenment bodhi, the bodhisattva path of nonarising, and the cultivation

of great bodhisattva actions. The great bodhisattvas will assemble all these virtuous roots and other virtuous roots planted by the rest of sentient beings when Thus-Comers, voice-hearers, bodhisattvas are still present in the world or when they enter nirvana. The great bodhisattvas will joyfully participate in all these virtuous dharmas as mentioned above, and transfer the merits and virtues thus derived along with all sentient beings equally toward the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. They do this with an attempt to elicit all sentient beings and let them aspire to the unsurpassed bodhi. Such joyful participation and transference are the noblest, highest, most exquisite, subtlest, uppermost, and unequaled equal ones; they are superior to all kinds of bliss-inviting karmas. What do you think about this? As the great bodhisattvas initiate such joyful participation and transference, do they attain anything as some others have grasped the phenomena?"

Bodhisattva Maitreya replied to Well-Appearing One, "As the great bodhisattvas initiate such joyful mind of participation and transference, they will not attain anything as other bodhisattvas who have grasped the phenomena."

Meanwhile, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One said to Bodhisattva Maitreya, "If the phenomena are nonexistent and cannot be grasped, then when assembling all virtuous roots of innumerable and boundless Buddhas accumulated since the time aspiring to the bodhi until entering nirvana and all virtuous roots of their disciples, the great bodhisattvas must have adopted phenomena as expediency to joyfully participate in these virtuous roots and transfer the merits and virtues thus derived toward the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. If this is the case, they should have done something upside down, just like mistaking impermanence for permanence, suffering for pleasure, selflessness for selfness, and impurity for purity, all the thoughts, minds, and the views are upside down. So is the action of grasping form in formlessness. If the things related are nonexistent, then the joyful mind of participation and transference should be nonexistent, and the virtuous roots, the unsurpassed bodhi, the six paramitas, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena should be all nonexistent. If this is the case, then what are the things undertaken? What is the joyful mind of participation? What are the virtuous roots? What is the perfect knowledge of all phenomena? And what are the great bodhisattvas who have initiated joyful mind of participation and the transference toward the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi?"

In the meantime, Bodhisattva Maitreya said to the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One, "If the great bodhisattvas have long learned the six paramitas, made offerings to immeasurable Buddhas, and made great vows and planted virtuous roots; if they have been absorbed and influenced by many virtuous friends, and have known well that the particular characteristics of all dharmas are empty, then they will not grasp the phenomena of the dharmas, the joyful mind of participation and transference, the virtuous roots, the unsurpassed bodhi, and the World-Honored Ones. They can initiate a mind of joyful participation and transference toward the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi without grasping the phenomena. Because when undertaking the transference, the great bodhisattvas have not adopted duality or nonduality, form or formlessness, attainment or nonattainment, contamination or purification, and arising or extinction as expediency, and because they do not grasp the phenomena of the results caused, and so forth, and the unsurpassed bodhi, they are not doing things upside down. If the great bodhisattvas have not learned the six paramitas long enough, have not made offerings to immeasurable Buddhas, have not made great vows and planted virtuous roots long enough, have not been absorbed and influenced by many virtuous friends, and have not learned to know well that the particular characteristics of all dharmas are empty, then they will grasp the phenomena caused, the things, the joyful mind of participation and transference, the virtuous roots, the unsurpassed bodhi, the World-Honored Ones, and all dharmas, and then when they take part joyfully in others' virtuous actions and transfer the merits and virtues thus derived toward the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, they will grasp the phenomena. Because of the grasping, their joyful participation and transference will be upside down, so theirs is not the genuine joyful mind of participation and transference.'

(Bodhisattva Maitreya taught how to distinguish the great bodhisattvas who undertake joyful participation and transference correctly from the upside-down ones.)

"Furthermore, great virtuous one, we should not teach novice great-vehicle bodhisattvas or those at earlier stages the meaning that the characteristics of prajna paramita, meditation paramita, and so forth, and giving paramita and the rest of Buddha dharma are empty. Why? These novice great bodhisattvas have just developed immature and weak belief in the dharma, their respect, love, and fondness of the dharma are fragile. Any attempt to let them hear the fathomless meaning will likely frighten them and make them withdraw and even slander the

correct dharma. Only the great bodhisattvas who have reached the stage of nonregression, made offerings to immeasurable Buddhas, made great vows and aspiration long enough, planted many virtuous roots, and have been absorbed and influenced by many virtuous friends can accept the teaching, which is given comprehensively with analysis and explication about the emptiness of the particular characteristics of prajna paramita, meditation paramita, and so forth, and giving paramita and the rest of Buddha dharma. Why? It is because the great bodhisattvas who have reached the stage of nonregression and so forth will not be shocked, frightened, and skeptical, so they will not withdraw from or slander the correct dharma upon hearing it.

"Great virtuous one, great bodhisattvas should joyfully take part in bliss-inviting karmas and transfer the merits and virtues thus derived along with various sentient beings toward the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi this way. At that time, they should think, 'Our mind will finally extinguish, depart, and perish. So do all phenomena and virtuous roots. What is the mind? What are the phenomena and the virtuous roots in the transference toward the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi with a joyful and compliant mind? This mind should not have a joyful transference because two minds cannot arise simultaneously and the self-nature of the mind is empty.' When practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, if great bodhisattvas know that prajna, meditation, diligence, forbearance, pure precept, and giving paramitas, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena are nonexistent, they should be aware that all dharmas are nonexistent. If they know all dharmas are nonexistent when undertaking the transference along with sentient beings toward the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi with a delightful and compliant mind, then their minds will not be upside down because they have adopted nonattainment as expediency. Therefore, they are undertaking a genuine joyful participation and transference toward the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi."

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Chapter 9

Joyful Participation and Transference

Section 2

(In the Third Assembly)

At that time, Heavenly Emperor Indra said to the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One, "As novice bodhisattvas of great-vehicle pursuers hear this dharma, won't they be scared and puzzled? How will they transfer the virtuous roots that they have cultivated toward the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi? How will they transfer the bliss-inviting karmas in which they have joyfully participated and that they have absorbed toward the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi?"

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One replied to Heavenly Emperor Indra, "When cultivating prajna paramita, meditation paramita, and so forth, and giving paramita, the novice bodhisattvas of great-vehicle practitioners should adopt nonattainment and formlessness as expediency to absorb prajna paramita, meditation paramita, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena, so that they can develop definitive superior understanding of the emptiness of the particular characteristics of prajna paramita, meditation paramita, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena. They should be absorbed by virtuous friends and receive their teachings which defend the dharmas correspondent with the fathomless prajna paramita, meditation paramita, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena through numberless gates of skillful and exquisite words and meanings. These virtuous friends will caution and teach them to let them enter onto the bodhisattva path of nonarising. Even if they cannot enter onto the bodhisattva path of nonarising, they will not stay far away from the fathomless prajna paramita, meditation paramita, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena. The virtuous friends will teach novice great-vehicle practitioners about demonic obstacles so that they will not be shocked upon hearing them. Why? The so-called demonic

obstacles do not truly exist, they are unattainable. The virtuous friends teach this to let novice learners always stay with the Buddhas until entering onto the bodhisattva path of nonarising. These novice ones then should plant various virtuous roots at the Buddhas' places. Because of these virtuous roots, they will be privileged to be reborn in the families of bodhisattva and never stay far away from various virtuous roots until attaining the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.

(Well-Appearing One taught how novice practitioners should learn great vehicle based on prajna paramita.)

"Kausika, if the novice learners of great-vehicle can adopt nonattainment and formlessness as expediency to absorb various merits and virtues and develop definitive superior understanding of them, they will always be absorbed by virtuous friends and will not be frightened or skeptical upon hearing this dharma.

"Furthermore, Kausika, the novice great practitioners of great vehicle should adopt nonattainment and formlessness as expediency to cultivate the six paramitas, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena and transfer the merits and virtues thus derived along with sentient beings equally toward the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.

"Furthermore, Kausika, the novice practitioners of great vehicle should assemble the virtuous roots from all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones, who have blocked access to incorrect views of permanent existence and nonsensical arguments, discarded heavy burdens, taken off the thorns of all aggregates, removed various bonds, and have been perfectly equipped with correct knowledge and liberated minds and able to teach the dharma skillfully and ingeniously. The novice bodhisattvas should assemble the virtuous roots from the Buddhas' disciples, who have achieved the aggregates of precept, concentration, wisdom, liberation, and the knowledge and views of liberation as well as other merits and virtues. The novice bodhisattvas should also assemble the virtuous roots from the noble families of Ksatriya, Brahman, elders, and lay believers, and from the Heaven of Four Great Kings, Heaven of Thirty-Three Smaller Heavens, and so forth, and the Heaven of Pure Residence. They will gather all these virtuous roots together, admire and reflect on them, and activate them with a noblest, superior, highest, subtlest, uppermost, and unequaled equal joyful

mind of participation, transfer the merits and virtues caused by bliss-inviting karmas along with all sentient beings equally toward the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi."

At that time, Bodhisattva Maitreya asked the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One, "As the novice practitioners of great vehicle learn to keep in mindfulness of all merits and virtues of the Thus-Comers and their disciples, and the virtuous roots planted by heavenly beings and human beings, further gather all these merits and virtues, admire and reflect on them, and activate them with a superior joyful mind of participation, transfer the merits and virtues thus derived along with all sentient beings equally toward the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, how can they stay away from the upside-down thoughts, minds, and views when they are doing this?"

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One replied, "Great gentleperson, if the novice bodhisattvas do not think of the Buddha, his disciples, and all their merits and virtues when staying in the mindfulness of them; if they do not think of the heavenly beings, human beings, and the virtuous roots planted by them when staying in the mindfulness of them; and if they do not think of the joyful mind of participation and transference toward the great bodhi when undertaking the transference, then these great bodhisattvas will not fall into upside-down thoughts, minds, and views when initiating the joyful mind of participation and transference. If they grasp the phenomena of the merits and virtues of the Buddha and his disciples, the phenomena of heavenly beings, human beings, and the virtuous roots planted by them, and the phenomena of the joyful mind of participation and transference, then they will fall into upside-down thoughts, minds, and views when initiating the joyful mind of participation and transference.

(Well-Appearing One stated how novice ones could avoid upside-down thoughts, minds, and views when they undertake joyful participation and transference.)

"Furthermore, Great Bodhisattva Maitreya, if the novice bodhisattvas stay in the mindfulness of all Buddhas, their disciples, and all their merits and virtues with a correct knowledge that this mind will exhaust, extinguish, get away, and change so it cannot joyfully participate; that the dharmas and their natures will exhaust, extinguish, get away, and change so that no one can participate in them; that the mind of transference and its nature will exhaust,

extinguish, get away, and change, so it cannot do transference; and that the dharma toward which one transfers and its nature also will exhaust, extinguish, get away, and change, so no one can take any dharma as an object of transference. If the bodhisattvas can joyfully participate and transfer this way, they do it correctly. All great bodhisattvas should joyfully participate and transfer this way.

"Furthermore, Great Bodhisattva Maitreya, as the novice bodhisattvas assemble all merits and virtues of the Buddhas, the World-Honored Ones, of the three phases of time produced since the time first aspiring to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi until attaining it, and so forth, and when the dharma is going to disappear; the virtuous roots initiated by the Buddhas' disciples and various voice-hearers based on the Buddha dharma; the virtuous roots planted by ordinary sentient beings upon hearing the Buddhas' teachings; the virtuous roots planted by dragons, deities, asuras, and so forth upon hearing the Buddha's teachings; the virtuous roots planted by the noble families of Ksatriya, Brahman, elders, and lay believers upon hearing the Buddhas' teachings; the virtuous roots planted by the Heaven of Four Great Kings, Heaven of Thirty-Three Smaller Heavens, and so forth, and the Heaven of Ultimate Form upon hearing the Buddhas' teachings; and various bodhisattva actions cultivated diligently by good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth upon hearing the Buddhas' teachings and initiating aspiration to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, then measure them and understand them, initiate a superior joyful mind of participation, and transfer the virtuous roots thus derived along with various sentient beings equally toward the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, and at that time, although they correctly understand that the one who transfers will exhaust, extinguish, get away, and change, and the self-natures of the dharmas transferred are empty, they still transfer the merits and virtues toward the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi; although they know correctly that no dharma can be transferred to any other dharma because the self-natures of all dharmas are empty, and in emptiness, no dharma can transfer or can be transferred, they still joyfully participate and transfer the merits and virtues toward the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi when they cultivate prajna paramita, meditation paramita, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena, then these novice bodhisattvas will not have upside-down thoughts, minds, and views. Why? It is because they are neither attached to the joyful mind of participation and transference nor to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi toward which

they transfer. Because they have no attachment, they will not be upside down. This joyful mind of participation and transference that the novice bodhisattvas initiate is the unsurpassed one, which is far away from all delusions and differentiations.

"Furthermore, Great Bodhisattva Maitreya, when cultivating various bliss-inviting karmas, the novice bodhisattvas should know accurately how to get away from aggregates, spheres, realms, prajna paramita, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena, so that they will be able to correctly and joyfully participate in others' virtuous roots and transfer all merits and virtues thus derived toward the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.

"Furthermore, Great Bodhisattva Maitreya, if the novice bodhisattvas accurately realize that joyfully taking part in bliss-inviting karmas is far away from its self-nature; the Buddhas, the World-Honored Ones, are far away from their self-natures; the merits and virtuous roots are far away from their self-natures; the voice-hearers, self-enlightened ones, and various ordinary sentient beings are far away from their self-natures; the joyful mind of participation and transference toward the great bodhi are far away from their self-natures; the great bodhisattvas, prajna paramita and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena are far away from their self-natures; all great bodhisattva actions are far away from their self-natures; and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of various Buddhas is far away from its self-nature, then they do cultivate the fathomless prajna paramita and can joyfully participate and transference toward the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi in a right way.

"Furthermore, Great Bodhisattva Maitreya, if the novice bodhisattvas would like to joyfully participate in the merits and virtues of all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones and their disciples who have entered nirvana, and cultivate bliss-inviting karmas to transfer the merits and virtues thus derived toward the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, they should think, 'Various Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones and their disciples have entered nirvana, their self-natures are nonexistent, so are the self-natures of the merits and virtues, the self-nature of my mind with which I have initiated joyfully participation and transference is also nonexistent.' After having this realization, they will not give rise to upside-down thoughts, minds, and views when undertaking the participation and the transference toward

the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. If the novice bodhisattvas grasp phenomena to practice the fathomless prajna paramita and joyfully take part in various Buddhas, the World-Honored Ones and their disciples who have entered nirvana, and cultivate bliss-inviting karmas to transfer the merits and virtues toward the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, then they do not undertake the participation and transference in a right way. It is because the merits and virtues of the Buddhas and their disciples in the past are formless. Those intending to grasp the forms when joyfully participating and transferring the merits and virtues toward the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi are not doing right, they will fall into the upside-down thoughts, minds, and views. If they practice prajna paramita, joyfully participate in the blessings of the Buddhas and their disciples who had entered nirvana, and transfer the merits and virtues thus derived toward the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi without grasping forms, then they do undertake the correct participation and transference, and will not fall into the upside-down thoughts, minds, and views."

(Well-Appearing One explained in detail how novice bodhisattvas should refrain from gasping forms and attachment to undertake joyful participation and transference correctly.)

At that time, Bodhisattva Maitreya asked the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One, "How do great bodhisattvas not grasp the forms to joyfully take part in the merits and virtuous roots of various Buddhas and their disciples who had entered nirvana and cultivate bliss-inviting karmas to transfer the merits and virtues thus derived toward the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi?"

Well-Appearing One replied, "The prajna paramita that great bodhisattvas learn has such expedient skillfulness: it allows them to accomplish something without grasping the forms. They cannot correctly initiate joyful participation in bliss-inviting karmas and transfer the merits and virtues toward the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi if they stay away from prajna paramita. Therefore, great bodhisattvas should learn prajna paramita if they would like to accomplish what they pursue."

Great Bodhisattva Maitreya said, "Great virtuous Well-Appearing One, please do not say so. Why? In the fathomless prajna paramita, the Buddhas and their disciples, and all merits and virtuous roots that they have achieved are nonexistent and unattainable. The bliss-inviting

karmas in which the great bodhisattvas have taken part and their joyful minds of participation and transference toward the unsurpassed bodhi are also nonexistent and unattainable. When practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, great bodhisattvas should contemplate this way, ‘The natures of the merits and virtuous roots attained by various Buddhas in the past and their disciples have all extinguished. The natures of various bliss-inviting karmas and the joyful mind of participation and transference initiated have also extinguished. The Buddhas, the World-Honored Ones, will not allow me to grasp and differentiate among the forms of the merits and virtuous roots, the bliss-inviting karmas, and the mind of participation and transference. Why? Grasping and differentiating among the forms of the Buddhas, the World-Honored Ones, and their disciples, and so forth, to undertake joyful participation and transference toward the unsurpassed bodhi is called great attainment.’ Therefore, if great bodhisattvas would like to correctly initiate joyful participation in the merits and the virtuous roots of Thus-Comers and their disciples, and transfer the merits thud derived toward the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, they should not grasp the forms with differentiation. If they do grasp the forms with differentiation, the Buddha will say they cannot gain any great justice and benefits. Why? The mind with delusions and differentiation is poisoned. The delicious food mixed with poisons attracts the fools with its beautiful colors and smell but will torture or kill them later. Some individuals cannot accept, embrace, contemplate, and investigate the sentences and the meanings of the fathomless prajna paramita, nor can read, recite, and thoroughly understand its profound essential meanings well, but say to the great-vehicle oriented practitioners, ‘Come here, good gentlemen, you should assemble all virtuous roots caused by the Buddhas, the World-Honored Ones across the three phases of time since the time first aspiring to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi until attaining it, turning the wonderful dharma wheel, and entering nirvana when the dharma is about to disappear. You should assemble their virtuous roots caused, during this time, by cultivating prajna paramita, meditation paramita, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena, as well as the virtuous roots caused by assisting sentient beings to mature and dignifying and purifying Buddha lands. In addition, you should assemble all aggregates of precept, concentration, wisdom, liberation, and the knowledge and views of liberation as well as the rest of immeasurable and boundless virtuous roots of various Thus-Comers, all flawed and flawless virtuous roots of the Buddhas’ disciples, the merits and virtues of various heavenly beings and human beings as approved by the Thus-Comers, and all virtuous

roots of the good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth caused by joyful participation and transference. You should put all these virtuous roots together, measure them, activate them with joyful participation, and transfer the merits thus derived along with various sentient beings equally toward the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.' As they talk about joyful participation and transference this way, they have grasped and differentiated among the phenomena. Like poisoned food that appears harmless at first but proves dangerous later. Therefore, this is not a good joyful participation and transference. Why? To initiate a joyful mind to take part in others' virtuous roots and transfer the merits thus derived by grasping phenomena and differentiation presupposes the existence of causes, conditions, intentions, and nonsensical arguments, and this is not prajna paramita. As their arguments are polluted, they will slander the Buddha and do things contrary to his teaching. Therefore, the bodhisattva aspirants should be careful and avoid.

(Great Bodhisattva Maitreya cautioned great bodhisattvas to avoid attainment and attachment when undertaking joyful participation and transference.)

"Then, great virtuous one, what do you think about this? How should good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth, dwelling in bodhisattva vehicle, take part joyfully in the merits and virtuous roots of Buddhas and their disciples in the three phases of time in the worlds of the ten directions, and transfer the merits thus derived toward the great bodhi? Namely, how should good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth assemble all virtuous roots of the Buddhas caused by cultivating prajna paramita, meditation paramita, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena since the time first aspiring to the bodhi until entering nirvana when the dharma is going to disappear? How should good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth joyfully participate in the merits and virtues caused by others dwelling in the bodhisattva vehicle to undertake the transference?"

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One replied to Bodhisattva Maitreya, "If good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth, dwelling in bodhisattva vehicle and practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, would like to initiate a joyful participation and transference without slandering the Buddha, they should think, 'As the unsurpassed knowledge of Thus-Comers thoroughly and universally realizes that the merits and virtuous roots have such natures,

phenomena, and dharmas in which we can joyfully take part, so I should joyfully take part this way. As the unsurpassed knowledge of various Thus-Comers thoroughly and universally realizes that we can transfer such bliss-inviting karmas toward the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, so I should transfer this way.' The good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth dwelling in bodhisattva vehicle should joyfully take part in the merits and virtuous roots of various Thus-Comers and their disciples and transfer this way. If they can do this way, they will not slander the Buddha, nor will stay away from the Buddha's dharma teachings. As a result, the joyful mind of participation and transference of the great bodhisattvas will remain pure and unpolluted until attaining the ultimate nirvana.

"Furthermore, Great Bodhisattva Maitreya, when great bodhisattvas practice the fathomless prajna paramita and dwell in bodhisattva vehicle, they should joyfully take part in the merits and virtuous roots of various Thus-Comers and their disciples and transfer this way. As the aggregates of matter, feeling, and so forth do not fall into the three realms nor are they absorbed by the three phases of time, so the joyful mind of participation and transference will not fall into the three realms nor are they absorbed by the three phases of time. And so on, as the perfect knowledge of everything, the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena do not fall into the three realms nor are they absorbed by the three phases of time, so the joyful mind of participation and transference will not fall into the three realms nor are they absorbed by the three phases of time. As the aggregates of precept, concentration, wisdom, liberation, and the knowledge and views of liberation do not fall into the three realms nor are they absorbed by the three phases of time, so the joyful mind of participation and transference will not fall into the three realms nor are they absorbed by the three phases of time. Why? Those dharmas do not fall into the three realms nor are they absorbed by the three phases of time because their self-natures are empty, so is the joyful mind of participation and transference. Various Thus-Comers do not fall into the three realms nor are they absorbed by the three phases of time because their self-natures are empty. The voice-hearers, self-enlightened ones, human beings, and heavenly beings do not fall into the three realms nor are they absorbed by the three phases of time because their self-natures are empty. Al those virtuous roots do not fall into the three realms nor are they absorbed by the three phases of time because their self-natures are empty. Those you admire and delightedly join do not fall into the three realms nor are

they absorbed by the three phases of time because their self-natures are empty. The dharmas toward which transference is made do not fall into the three realms nor are they absorbed by the three phases of time because their self-natures are empty. Ones who can transfer do not fall into the three realms nor are they absorbed by the three phases of time because their self-natures are empty. When practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, if great bodhisattvas know accurately that the five aggregates and so forth do not fall into the three realms nor are they absorbed by the three phases of time, they will not adopt phenomena and attainment as expediency to joyfully participate and undertake the transference toward the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. Why? It is because the dharmas such as the aggregates and so forth do not arise. The dharmas that do not arise are nonexistent, and no nonexistent dharma can joyfully participate and undertake transference toward another nonexistent dharma. If great bodhisattvas can joyfully participate and undertake transference toward the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi this way, they will not be contaminated by poisons until attaining ultimate nirvana. If good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth dwelling in bodhisattva vehicle adopt phenomena and attainment as expediency to joyfully participate in the merits and virtuous roots of various Thus-Comers and their disciples and transfer the merits thus derived toward the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, their minds of participation and transference will not be virtuous, and they will not be admired by various Buddhas, the World-Honored Ones. Because of this reason, they will not be able to fulfill the six paramitas, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena. Because their merits and virtues are not fulfilled, they will not be able to dignify and purify Buddha lands and assist sentient beings to mature. Because they cannot dignify and purify Buddha lands and assist sentient beings to mature, they will not be able to realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. Why? It is because their minds of participation and transference are contaminated; they have grasped the phenomena and are attached to attainment.

(Well-Appearing One elaborated the joyful participation and transference based on nonexistence, formlessness, and freedom from the three realms and three phases of time as the superior one, which is approved by the Buddha.)

"Furthermore, Great Bodhisattva Maitreya, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, great bodhisattvas should think, 'As all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings,

Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones in the ten directions have thoroughly realized that this is the right way for bringing about merits and virtuous roots, and by following it ones can initiate correct mind of participation and transference, so I should also follow this way to initiate joyful mind of participation and undertake transference toward the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.' This is how great bodhisattvas correctly initiate a joyful mind of participation and transference. If they can do this way, they certainly will realize and attain the unsurpassed bodhi and deliver sentient beings for the rest of their lives."

At that time, the World-Honored One admired Well-Appearing One, "Excellent, excellent! You have offered all great bodhisattvas a great Buddhist service, that is, you have lectured on the right way of joyful participation and transference very well. You have adopted formlessness, nonattainment, nonarising, nonextinction, noncontamination, nonpurification, selfless self-nature, and emptiness of particular characteristics as expediency in your lecture. You have also adopted realness, dharma realm, dharma nature, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable as expediency in your talk.

(The Buddha admired Well-Appearing One's statements about the right way of joyful participation and transference adopted by great bodhisattvas.)

"Well-Appearing One, if all sentient beings in the large threefold thousand world have achieved the path of the ten virtuous karmas, four meditations, four immeasurable minds, four formless concentrations, and five supernatural powers, what do you think about this? Will these sentient beings gain many merits and virtues?"

Well-Appearing One replied, "They will gain many merits and virtues, World-Honored One. They will gain many merits and virtues, Well-Gone One."

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, "If good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth have initiated uncontaminated joyful mind to participate in the merits and virtuous roots of various Thus-Comers and their disciples and undertake transference, then the merits and virtues gained by them will be much more than the former ones. You must know, Well-Appearing One, the virtuous roots caused by such a joyful mind of participation and transference as initiated by

these good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth are the best, superior, most venerable, highest, most exquisite, subtlest, unsurpassed, and unequaled equal ones among all virtuous roots.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, suppose that all sentient beings in the large threefold thousand world have attained stream-entry effect, once-return effect, nonreturn effect, arhat effect, and self-enlightenment bodhi. Some good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth have thus made offerings to esteem and acclaim these stream-enterers, once-returners, and so forth, and self-enlightened ones for the rest of their lives. What do you think about this? Will these good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth be much blessed because of this cause and condition?"

Well-Appearing One replied, "They will be much blessed, World-Honored One. They will be much blessed, Well-Gone One."

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, "If good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth initiate an uncontaminated joyful mind to take part in the merits and virtuous roots of various Thus-Comers and their disciples and undertake transference, then the merits and virtues thus gained will be much more than the former ones. You must know, Well-Appearing One, the joyful mind of participation and transference initiated by these good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth will be superior to all other virtuous roots.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, suppose that all sentient beings in the large threefold thousand have aspired to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, and all sentient beings in as many worlds of the ten directions as the sands of the Ganges have made offerings to esteem and acclaim these sentient beings in the large threefold thousand world for as many kalpas as the sands of the Ganges, then what do you think about this? Will these sentient beings in as many worlds of the ten directions as the sands of the Ganges be much blessed because of this cause and condition?"

Well-Appearing One replied, "Very much, World-Honored One; very much, Well-Gone One. If the blessings gained by them were with forms and substances, then they would be too many to be contained in as many worlds as the sands of the Ganges in the ten directions."

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, “Yes, it is as you say. You must know, Well-Appearing One, if good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth initiate an uncontaminated joyful mind of participation in the merits and virtuous roots of various Thus-Comers and their disciples and further undertake transference, then the merits and virtues thus gained will be much more than the former ones. You must know, Well-Appearing One, such a joyful transference and transference as initiated by the good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth is superior to all other virtuous roots. You must know, Well-Appearing One, in comparison, the blessings gained by the former ones will be much fewer than the latter ones by one hundredth, one thousandth, and so forth, and one upanisadam-api. Why? As those sentient beings practice the path of the ten virtuous karmas, the four meditations, and so forth, they have adopted phenomena and attainment as expediency. As other sentient beings make offerings to the stream-enterers, once-returners, and so forth, and the great bodhi aspirants, they have also adopted phenomena and attainment as expediency.”

At that time, the four great heavenly kings and their thirty-two thousand heavenly beings bowed to Buddha’s feet, joined their palms together, and said in respect, “World-Honored One, these great bodhisattvas are able to initiate such broad and great minds of participation and transference, namely, they have adopted formlessness, nonattainment, noncontamination, nonthinking, and nonaction as expediency to initiate a joyful mind to take part in the merits and virtuous roots of various Thus-Comers and their disciples and then undertake a transference without falling into dualistic nor nondualistic dharmas.”

Meanwhile, Heavenly Emperor Indra and the heavenly sons from the Heaven of Yama, Heaven of Tusita, Heaven of Enjoying Self-Made Changes, and the Heaven of Enjoying Other-Made Changes, and numberless hundreds of thousands of heavenly sons carried various heavenly wonderful wreaths, spread fragrances, powdered incenses, clothing, jewel necklaces, treasure banners, canopies, and various rarities, and played beautiful heavenly music as offerings to the Buddha. They bowed down to the ground before the Buddha’s feet, joined their palms together, and said, “These great bodhisattvas are able to initiate such broad and great joyful mind of participation and transference, namely, they have adopted formlessness, nonattainment, noncontamination, nonthinking, and nonaction as expediency to correctly initiate a joyful mind

of taking part in the merits and virtuous roots of various Thus-Comers and their disciples and undertake transference. This initiation will not fall into the dualistic or nondualistic dharmas."

Meanwhile, the great heavenly Brahma king and numberless hundreds of thousands of koti nayuta of heavenly beings from the Heaven of Extremely Great Brightness and Purity, Heaven of Universal Purity, Heaven of Extensive Rewards, and the Heaven of Ultimate Form moved forward to the Buddha's place, bowed down to the Buddha's feet, joined their palms together, and said in respect, "It is very rare and unique! World-Honored One, these great bodhisattvas are absorbed by the expedient skillfulness of prajna paramita, their virtuous roots are superior to those cultivated by the good gentlemen and so forth attached to the phenomena and attainment."

At that time, the Buddha said to the heavenly beings of the Heaven of Four Great Kings, Heaven of Thirty-Three Smaller Heavens, and so forth, and the Heaven of Ultimate Form, "Suppose that all sentient beings in the large threefold thousand world have aspired to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. They have assembled the virtuous roots correspondent with giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena as cultivated by all Thus-Comers in the worlds of the ten directions in the past, future, and present during the period since first aspiring to until dwelling in the dharma. They have also assembled all virtuous roots cultivated by various Buddhas' disciples; all aggregates of precept, concentration, wisdom, liberation, and the knowledge and views of liberation and the rest of immeasurable and boundless Buddha dharma; all correct dharma taught by the Thus-Comers; the three bliss-inviting karmas in giving, precept, and cultivation in accord with the correct dharma; the stream-entry effect, once-return effect, nonreturn effect, arhat effect, self-enlightenment bodhi, and the bodhisattva path of nonarising in accord with the correct dharma; and all virtuous roots initiated by the cultivation of giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna paramitas undertaken by various sentient beings. They then put all these virtuous roots and merits together, measure them, organize them, and joyfully participate in them, and transfer the merits caused by their participation toward the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi by adopting phenomena, attainment, contamination, attachment, reflection, action, and duality and nonduality as expediency.

"On the other hand, suppose that the good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth have aspired to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, so they assemble all virtuous roots correspondent with giving paramita cultivated by all Thus-Comers in the worlds of the ten directions in the past, future, and present during the time since first aspiring to until achieving dharma dwelling, and so forth, and the virtuous roots caused by the cultivation of giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna paramitas by various sentient beings. They further put all these merits and virtues together, reflect on and organize them, joyfully participate in them, and transfer the merits thus derived toward the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi by adopting formlessness, nonattainment, noncontamination, nonreflection, and nonaction as expediency. The virtuous roots gained by these good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth will be superior to other virtuous roots; they are superior to the former ones by one hundred times, one thousand times, and so forth, and one upanisadam times."

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "As the Buddha says, if the good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth can joyfully participate and transfer this way, the virtuous roots gained by them will be superior to all. But why do you so?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "These good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth have neither grasped nor renounced, neither overestimated nor undervalued, and neither attained nor not attained the virtuous roots of all Thus-Comers, voice-hearers, self-enlightened ones, bodhisattvas, and the rest of sentient beings in the worlds of the ten directions. They have thoroughly realized that all dharmas have no arising or extinction, contamination or purification, increase or decrease, going or coming, combination or separation, and entering or getting out, so they will think, 'Like realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable of the dharmas in the three phases of time, I will also joyfully participate in and transfer various virtuous roots by adopting nonattainment as expediency.' Well-Appearing One, because of such participation and transference, I will say that it is superior to the rest of virtuous roots. It is superior to the rest of participations and transferences by one hundred times, one thousand times, and so forth, and one upanisadam times. This is why I have said so.

(The Buddha taught about the great bodhisattvas who can realize that all dharmas have no arising or extinction, contamination or purification, increase or decrease, and so forth when undertaking the transference.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, if good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth dwelling in the bodhisattva-vehicle would like to assemble all virtuous roots correspondent with giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita cultivated by the Thus-Comers in the worlds of the ten directions in the past, future, and present since the time of beginning to aspire to until dwelling in the dharma, and so forth, and the numberless and boundless Buddha dharma, all the merits and virtuous roots caused by various voice-hearers, self-enlightened ones, and bodhisattvas, the bliss-inviting karmas based on precept, concentrations, and cultivation and other virtuous roots made by various sentient beings, then put them all together, measure and organize them, and initiate a correct joyful mind of participation and transference, they should think, 'Matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena is equivalent to liberation. The aggregate of precept, aggregate of concentration, and so forth, and the aggregate of the knowledge and views of liberation are equivalent to liberation. All definitive understandings initiated in all dharmas are equivalent to liberation. Various Buddhas in the past, future, and present are equivalent to liberation. Various dharmas in the past, future, and present are equivalent to liberation. All kinds of joyful participation and transference are equivalent to liberation. The maturation and change of various roots of the Buddhas, their disciples, and various self-enlightened ones are equivalent to liberation. The nirvana attained by the Buddhas, their disciples, and the self-enlightened ones are equivalent to liberation. The dharma natures of the Buddhas, their disciples, self-enlightened ones, and voice-hearers are equivalent to liberation. All sentient beings and all dharmas as well as their dharma natures are also equivalent to liberation. All these dharmas, like dharma nature, are without bondage and relief, contamination and purification, beginning and end, arising and extinction, and grasping and renunciation. I will joyfully participate in these merits and virtues, and transfer the virtuous roots thus derived along with various sentient beings equally toward the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. Such joyful participation and transference cannot undertake participation and transference because joyful participation and transference are nonexistent. Such joyful participation and transference are without changes and resting because

they do not arise and extinguish.' Well-Appearing One, the joyful participation and transference undertaken by the great bodhisattvas are the superior ones of all. If great bodhisattvas can achieve such participation and transference, they will realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi soon.

(The Buddha suggested a right way equivalent to liberation for great bodhisattvas to achieve superior participation and transference for attaining unsurpassed bodhi.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, suppose that some good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth who are aspiring to the great vehicle have adopted phenomena and attainment as expediency to make offerings respectfully to esteem and acclaim the Thus-Comers and their disciples in as many worlds of the ten directions as the sands of the Ganges for the rest of their lives. After the Thus-Comers and their disciples enter nirvana, these good gentlemen and so forth will build magnificent high and wide stupas with seven treasures and place their relics in the stupas. They make various most wonderful wreaths, perfumes and incenses, and so forth, and brilliant lamps as offerings to the relics, worship them day and night, walk around them clockwise, and esteem and acclaim them. They further adopt phenomena and attainment as expediency to cultivate diligently giving, pure precept, and so forth, and prajna and the rest of virtuous roots. On the other hand, some good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth who are aspiring to the great vehicle have adopted formlessness and nonattainment as expediency to cultivate the virtuous roots correspondent with the six paramitas skillfully and expediently. They will also joyfully take part in the virtuous roots and merits of others and transfer the merits thus derived along with various sentient beings equally toward the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. The good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth who have undertaken participation and transference with expedient skillfulness of prajna paramita will gain much more merits and virtues than the former ones by one hundred, one thousand, and so forth, and one upanisadam times. It is said that such joyful mind of participation and transference is the superior one among all.

(The Buddha distinguished the superior way of taking part in others' merits and virtues and do the transference based on nonattainment from the inferior way based on attainment.)

"Therefore, Well-Appearing One, if great bodhisattvas would like to aspire to the great vehicle, they should adopt formlessness and nonattainment as expediency to diligently cultivate the virtuous roots correspondent with giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita. They should correctly initiate a mind of joy and empathy to participate in the merits and virtuous roots of various Thus-Comers and their disciples and then transfer the merits thus derived based on expedient skillfulness of prajna paramita. If great bodhisattvas can undertake the participation and transference based on formlessness and nonattainment, they will be able to realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi soon, and bring benefits and happiness to all sentient beings in the endless future."

(The Buddha concluded the correct way of participation and transference of merits and virtues caused by Buddhas and their disciples, other holy ones, the bodhisattvas themselves and other bodhisattvas.)

Chapter 10

The Hells

Section 1

(In the Third Assembly)

At that time, Sariputra said to the Buddha, "World-Honored One, the fathomless prajna paramita can illuminate all because it is pure in the final analysis. We should pay homage to it because it is without contamination and attachment and various human beings and heavenly beings have esteemed and valued it. It is uncontaminated because no dharma in the world can pollute it. It is far away from all kinds of concealment and dizziness because it can drive the darkness of vexations and incorrect views away. It is the leader of all because it is the most venerable and treasurable one of all factors for enlightenment. It brings us stability and peace

because it can permanently terminate all fears, repressions, disasters, and accidents. It can bring brightness to all sentient beings because it allows them to attain the five eyes. It shows us the middle way because it can guide ones who get lost back on the right track to stay away from two extremes. It can bring about the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge because it permanently eliminates enduring negative disposition of vexations. It is the mother of great bodhisattvas because the Buddha dharma that bodhisattvas cultivate is born from it and because it has no arising and extinction and its self-nature is empty. It is free from birth and death because it is neither permanent nor in decay. Sentient beings can rely upon it because it gives various dharma gems to them. It can fulfill the Thus-Comer's ten abilities because it cannot be defeated by all arguments. It can turn the unsurpassed dharma wheel with twelve forms through three steps because it makes all dharmas remain changeless and not reverse. It manifests all dharmas correctly because in it the emptiness of selfless self-nature is manifested. World-Honored One, how will sentient beings dwell in such prajna paramita?"

At that time, the Buddha replied to Sariputra, "Sentient beings should treat prajna paramita as they do the Buddha. They should make offerings respectfully to esteem and reflect on prajna paramita as they make offerings respectfully to esteem and reflect on the Buddha, the Bhagavat. Why? Sariputra, the Buddha is not different from prajna paramita, and prajna paramita is not different from the Buddha. The Buddha is prajna paramita, and prajna paramita is the Buddha. Why? The Buddhas, bodhisattvas, self-enlightened ones, and voice-hearers appear in the world because of prajna paramita. The path of the ten virtuous karmas, four meditations, four immeasurable minds, four formless concentrations, and five supernatural powers appear in the world because of prajna paramita. All paramitas, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena appear in the world because of prajna paramita."

In the meantime, Heavenly Emperor thought to himself, "Why did Sariputra ask such a question?"

Sariputra could read Heavenly Emperor's mind, so said to him, "Kausika, because great bodhisattvas have been absorbed by prajna paramita, they are able to expediently and skillfully assemble all merits and virtues of various Buddhas in the worlds of the ten directions in the past, future, and present since the time of beginning to aspire to the dharma until dwelling in it, and

also assemble the virtuous roots of the voice-hearers, self-enlightened ones, bodhisattvas, and the rest of sentient beings. They then adopt formlessness and nonattainment as expediency to measure and activate these merits and virtues; with a joyful mind they take part in them and transfer the merits thus derived along with various sentient beings equally toward the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. I asked this question because of this cause and condition.

"Furthermore, Kausika, the prajna paramita that various great bodhisattvas have learned is superior to giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and meditation prajna by boundless times. The hundreds of thousands of blind people need a person with pure sight to guide them. Without the guidance of the sighted person, they cannot walk on correct path, let alone go to the big city far away. The first five paramitas are like the blind people. Without prajna paramita as sighted guide, they cannot walk on the correct path, not to mention they can reach the perfect knowledge of everything.

"Furthermore, Kausika, with prajna paramita, the first five paramitas now have the eyes. Because they are absorbed by prajna paramita, they are also called reaching the other shore."

Heavenly Emperor Indra asked "Can the first five paramitas also take turn as guide to lead the other five paramitas to reach the other shore? Why do you admire prajna paramita only and view it as superior to the other five paramitas?"

Sariputra said, "What the heavenly lord says is not quite reasonable. Why? It is not any of the first five paramitas that can absorb the other paramitas to reach the other shore. It is the great power of the expedient skillfulness of prajna paramita that can absorb the other five paramitas to get rid of attachment and reach the other shore soon. Therefore, prajna paramita is superior to the first five paramitas. Prajna paramita is the noblest, highest, most exquisite, subtlest, unsurpassed, unequaled, and the unequaled equal one."

(Sariputra explained the relationship between prajna paramita and other five paramitas.)

At that time, Sariputra asked the Buddha, "World-Honored One, how should great bodhisattvas elicit prajna paramita?"

The Buddha replied to Sariputra, “Great bodhisattvas should elicit prajna paramita but should not elicit matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena and all dharmas.”

Sariputra asked, “How do great bodhisattvas elicit prajna paramita without eliciting matter, feeling, and so forth, and all dharmas?”

The Buddha replied, “Matter, feeling, and so forth, and all dharmas are without making, arising, attainment, decay, and self-nature, so great bodhisattvas can elicit prajna paramita without eliciting matter, feeling, and so forth, and all dharmas.”

In the meantime, Sariputra asked the Buddha again, “When great bodhisattvas elicit prajna paramita this way, with what dharmas will it combine?”

The Buddha replied to Sariputra, “As great bodhisattvas elicit prajna paramita this way, it will not combine with any dharma. Because it does not combine with any dharma, it is named prajna paramita.”

Sariputra asked again, “Does prajna paramita not combine with all dharmas?”

The World-Honored One replied, “Prajna paramita does not combine with virtuous dharmas or not virtuous dharmas. It does not combine with guilty dharmas or not guilty dharmas. It does not combine with flawed dharmas or flawless dharmas. It does not combine with conditioned dharmas or unconditioned dharmas. It does not combine with polluted dharmas or unpolluted dharmas. It does not combine with the dharmas in the world or the dharmas beyond the world. It does not combine with contaminated dharmas or purified dharmas. It does not combine with the dharmas of birth and death or the dharmas of nirvana either. Why? Sariputra, the fathomless prajna paramita do not attain any dharma, so it does not combine with dharmas.”

(The Buddha described the features of prajna paramita.)

In the meantime, Heavenly emperor Indra asked the Buddha, “Does the fathomless prajna paramita not combine with the perfect knowledge of everything?”

The Buddha replied, “It does not. The fathomless prajna paramita does not combine with the perfect knowledge of everything because it does not attain the perfect knowledge of everything.”

(Prajna paramita does not attain dharmas, so it does not combine with them.)

Heavenly Emperor Indra asked, “How does prajna paramita not combine with the perfect knowledge of everything or attain the perfect knowledge of everything?”

The World-Honored One replied, “The fathomless prajna paramita does not combine with or attain the names, forms, or actions of the perfect knowledge of everything.”

(Prajna paramita does not attain or combine with dharmas means that it does not combine with or attain the names, forms, and actions of dharmas.)

Heavenly Emperor Indra asked, “But how does prajna paramita also combine with and attain the perfect knowledge of everything?”

The World-Honored One replied, “The fathomless prajna paramigta neither receives nor grasps, neither stays nor disconnects with, and neither becomes attached to nor renounces the perfect knowledge of everything, so it combines with but does not combine with, attain but does not attain the perfect knowledge of everything. So is the relationship between prajna paramita and all dharmas. Prajna paramita neither receives nor grasps, neither stays nor disconnects with, and neither becomes attached to nor renounces the names and forms of all dharmas, so it combines with but does not combine with, attain but does not attain all dharmas.”

(The Buddha explained why prajna paramita attains and does not attain the dharmas; it combines with and does not combine with the dharmas.)

Meanwhile, Heavenly Emperor Indra said to the Buddha, “It is very unusual, World-Honored One; it is very rare, Well-Gone One! Such prajna paramita appears in the world because all dharmas are without arising or extinction, making or formation, attainment or destruction, and self-natures. Although it has combination and attainment, it does not combine or attain. The meaning it has manifested is so subtle and unbelievable that only the Buddhas, the World-Honored Ones can realize and speak.”

Meanwhile, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One said to the Buddha, “World-Honored One, if great bodhisattvas practice the fathomless prajna paramita and think, ‘The fathomless prajna paramita combines and does not combine with all dharmas,’ then these great bodhisattvas have already renounced and stayed far away from the fathomless prajna paramita.”

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, “There is another cause and condition to suggest that the great bodhisattvas have renounced and stayed far away from prajna paramita, that is when they think this way, ‘The fathomless prajna paramita is nonexistent, unreal, not solid, and not at ease,’ then these great bodhisattvas have already renounced and stayed far away from prajna paramita.”

(The Buddha suggested the situations within which great bodhisattvas have renounced prajna paramita.)

At that time, Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, “If great bodhisattvas believe in the fathomless prajna paramita, then in what dharmas do they not believe?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “If great bodhisattvas believe in the fathomless prajna paramita, they will not believe in matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of everything, the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena.”

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, “Why do great bodhisattvas not believe in matter, feeling, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena if they believe in the fathomless prajna paramita?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “When practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, great bodhisattvas contemplate matter, feeling, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena as unattainable, so they will not believe in matter, feeling, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena. Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas will not believe in matter, feeling, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena if they believe in the fathomless prajna paramita.”

(The Buddha explained why great bodhisattvas do not believe in various dharmas if they believe in prajna paramita.)

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Chapter 10

The Hells

Section 2

(In the Third Assembly)

At that time, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One said to the Buddha, “World-Honored One, the fathomless prajna paramita is great (maha) paramita.”

The Buddha asked Well-Appearing One, “Based on what meaning do you say that the fathomless prajna paramita is great paramita?”

Well-Appearing One replied, “World-Honored One, the fathomless prajna paramita does not enlarge or diminish matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness, and so forth, and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddha, nor does it enlarge or diminish various Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones. The fathomless prajna paramita does not assemble or disperse matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness, and so forth, and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddha, nor does it assemble or disperse various Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones. The fathomless prajna paramita does not make matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness, and so forth, and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddha limited or numberless, not does it make various Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones limited or numberless. The fathomless prajna paramita does not make matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness, and so forth, and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddha broad or narrow, nor does it make various Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones broad or narrow. The fathomless prajna paramita does not make matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness, and so forth, and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddha powerful or powerless, nor does it make various Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of

Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones powerful or powerless. Based on this meaning, I say that the fathomless prajna paramita is great paramita.

"World-Honored One, if the novice bodhisattvas of great vehicle rely on prajna paramita, meditation paramita, and so forth, and giving paramita and think, 'The fathomless prajna paramita does not enlarge or diminish, assemble or disperse matter, feeling, and so forth, and various Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones, nor does it make matter, feeling, and so forth, and various Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones limited or numberless, broad or narrow, and powerful or powerless,' then these great bodhisattvas do not practice prajna paramita because of this thought.

"World-Honored One, if the novice bodhisattvas of great vehicle initiate such a thought based on prajna paramita, meditation paramita, and so forth, and giving paramita, 'The fathomless prajna paramita enlarges or diminishes, assembles or disperses matter, feeling, and so forth, and various Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones and also makes matter, feeling, and so forth, and various Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones limited or numberless, broad or narrow, and powerful or powerless,' then these great bodhisattvas do not practice prajna paramita because of this thought.

"World-Honored One, if the novice bodhisattvas of great vehicle initiate such a thought not based on prajna paramita, meditation paramita, and so forth, and giving paramita, 'The fathomless prajna paramita does not enlarge or diminish, assemble or disperse matter, feeling, and so forth, and various Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones; it does not make matter, feeling, and so forth, and various Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones limited or numberless, broad or narrow, and powerful or powerless,' then these great bodhisattvas do not practice prajna paramita because of this thought.

"World-Honored One, if the novice bodhisattvas of great vehicle initiate such a thought not based on prajna paramita, meditation paramita, and so forth, and giving paramita, 'The fathomless prajna paramita enlarges or diminishes, assembles or disperses matter, feeling, and so

forth, and various Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones; it also makes matter, feeling, and so forth, and various Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones limited or numberless, broad or narrow, and powerful or powerless,' then these great bodhisattvas do not practice prajna paramita because of this thought.

"Why? World-Honored One, if great bodhisattvas initiate such a thought, 'The fathomless prajna paramita enlarges or does not enlarge, diminishes or does not diminish, assembles or does not assemble, and disperses or does not disperse matter, feeling, and so forth, and various Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones; it makes or does not make matter, feeling, and so forth, and various Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones limited or numberless, broad or narrow, and powerful or powerless,' then these great bodhisattvas are not at the level of prajna paramita.

"World-Honored One, if great bodhisattvas initiate such a thought, 'The fathomless prajna paramita enlarges or does not enlarge, diminishes or does not diminish, assembles or does not assemble, and disperses or does not disperse matter, feeling, and so forth, and various Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones; it makes or does not make matter, feeling, and so forth, and various Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones limited or numberless, broad or narrow, and powerful or powerless,' then these great bodhisattvas do not practice the fathomless prajna paramita. Why? The thought of attainment will allow no one to realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. Why? It is because sentient beings are without arising, self-natures, and existence; they are empty, formless, without aspiration, far away, tranquil, without attainment, inconceivable, without deterioration and decay, without awakening and knowledge, and without the formation of the powers. So is prajna paramita. Matter, feeling, and so forth, and all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones are without arising, self-natures, and attainment; they are empty, formless, without aspiration, far away, tranquil, without attainment, inconceivable, without deterioration and decay, without awakening and knowledge, and without the formation of the powers. So is prajna

paramita. Based on this meaning, I will say that the fathomless prajna paramita is great paramita."

(Well-Appearing One explained why the fathomless prajna paramita is great paramita.)

At that time, Sariputra asked the Buddha, "World-Honored One, if great bodhisattvas have developed deep belief in and understanding of the fathomless prajna paramita, then where are they from before being reborn here? How long have they aspired to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi? How many Buddhas have they stayed close and made offerings to? How long have they cultivated giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita? How can they develop deep belief in and understanding of the fathomless essential meanings of prajna paramita?"

The Buddha replied to Sariputra, "The great bodhisattvas with deep belief in and understanding of the fathomless prajna paramita are reborn here from the dharma assemblies held by various Buddhas in the worlds of the ten directions. They have aspired to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi for numberless, countless, and boundless hundreds of thousands of koti nayuta kalpas. They have stayed close to numberless, countless, boundless, inconceivable, and measureless Bhagavats, and made offerings to them. Since the time beginning to aspire to the great bodhi, they have consistently cultivated giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita for immeasurable and boundless hundreds of thousands of koti nayuta kalpas. If the great bodhisattvas have this thought arise upon seeing and hearing the fathomless prajna paramita, 'I have seen the Buddha and heard what the Buddha says,' then these great bodhisattvas will be able to adopt formlessness, nonduality, and nonattainment as expediency to correctly develop a belief in and understanding of the fathomless essential meanings of prajna paramita."

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "Can the fathomless prajna paramita be seen and heard?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "The fathomless prajna paramita cannot be seen or heard. Why? The fathomless prajna paramita is not the dharma that cannot be seen or heard. You must know, Well-Appearing One, matter cannot be seen and heard because various

dharmas are dull. Feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness cannot be seen and heard because various dharmas are dull. And so on, the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas cannot be seen or heard because various dharmas are dull. All Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones cannot be seen or heard because various dharmas are dull."

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, "Have the great bodhisattvas learned and practiced the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi for a long time before they can diligently cultivate and learn the fathomless prajna paramita?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "Let me explain about this respectively. You must know, Well-Appearing One, since the time beginning to aspire to the bodhi, some great bodhisattvas have cultivated and learned the fathomless prajna paramita, and meditation, diligence, forbearance, pure precept, and giving paramitas. Because of having expedient skillfulness, these great bodhisattvas do not slander various dharmas, nor do they see various dharmas increase or decrease. They have never stayed away from actions correspondent with giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna paramitas, or from various Buddhas and great bodhisattvas. They have traveled from one Buddha country to the other, made best offerings to the Buddhas and great bodhisattvas respectfully, and esteemed and acclaimed them. They have also planted various virtuous roots and fulfilled them quickly there. They can do this freely as they wish. Wherever they are reborn, they will not be given birth through a mother's womb. Their minds are pure and are not contaminated by vexations, nor do they have an intention to pursue the two vehicles. They are never far away from the superior supernatural powers. They often travel through various Buddha countries, assist sentient beings to mature, and dignify and purify Buddha lands. This is how these great bodhisattvas diligently cultivate and learn the fathomless prajna paramita.

(The Buddha described the past achievements of great bodhisattvas to inspire their diligent cultivation of prajna paramita in the present.)

"Some good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth of bodhisattva vehicle have seen hundreds of thousands of Buddhas and cultivated giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligent, meditation, and prajna at various Buddhas' or their disciples' places. They have adopted

attainment as expediency, they cannot cultivate the fathomless prajna paramita, meditation paramita, and so forth, and giving paramita. You must know, Well-Appearing One, these good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth are arrogance, they stand up and leave upon hearing the teaching of the fathomless prajna paramita. As they look down on the fathomless prajna paramita with contempt and self-conceit, they also disdain the Buddha. Because they turn their backs on the fathomless prajna paramita, they also turn their backs on various Buddhas. Today in this assembly, some will leave their seats in disrespect and contempt upon hearing the fathomless prajna paramita. Why? These good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth in their previous lives had once heard the fathomless prajna paramita and left; they will do it again in present life due to the power of habit.

(The Buddha described the arrogant ones who disdain prajna paramita.)

"These good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth, are not in accord with the fathomless prajna paramita in their bodies, speeches, and minds, they thus abuse wisdom and create guilty karmas when their ignorance grows and increases. Because of this reason, when they hear the teaching of the fathomless prajna paramita, they slander, hinder, and turn away from prajna paramita and the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge of various Buddhas in the past, future, and present. With their increased negative karmas caused by damaging correct dharma, they fall into hells for one hundred years, two hundred years, and so forth, and hundreds of thousands of koti nayuta years, suffering from severe tortures and piercing pains. Due to such heavy guilt, they are destined moving from one great hell to the other, experiencing fierce pains before the fire, water, and wind kalpas arise. After these kalpas arise, their negative karmas caused by harming correct dharma remain; they die in this world, being reborn to other worlds, again experiencing similar suffering in hells for one hundred, two hundred years, and so forth, and hundreds of thousands of koti nayuta years. Owing to heavy guilt, they shift from one great hell to the other before another fire, water, and wind kalpas arise. After these kalpas arise, their guilt remains, and they will be transmitted to other worlds, where they continue suffering from violent pains. Thus, they continue going through all great hells in other worlds in the ten directions, in which they always encounter similar severe tortures. After another fire, water, and wind kalpas arise in those worlds, their guilt is not exhausted. So, they repeat drifting in various hells across the worlds of the ten directions.

"Through countless kalpas of reincarnation, the guilt from obstructing and harming the dharma gradually lessens, though it not fully disappears. Now they finally get out of the hells and are reborn as animals. They remain in that realm for one hundred years, two hundred years, and so forth, and hundreds of thousands of koti nayuta years, experiencing all kinds of pains such as repression, killing, and tortures and shifting from one perilous and difficult situation to the other before the kalpas of fire, water, and wind arise. As the three kalpas of disasters arise and the world is decaying, their negative karmas for damaging the dharma continue, so they will be reborn in the similar realm of animals in the worlds of other directions and stay there for one hundred years, two hundred years, and so forth, and hundreds of thousands of koti nayuta years, again suffering from killing, repression, and fear, including in this barely tolerable world as animals.

"Thus, innumerable kalpas have passed and their negative karmas become slighter. They are now rid of the realm of animals and fall into the realm of ghosts and stay for one hundred, two hundred years, and so forth, and hundreds of thousands of koti nayuta years. In that realm, they will suffer from hunger, thirst, and weakness. Because their guilt is not finished, they keep shifting from one country to the other before the arising of the kalpas of fire, water, and wind. As the world is destroyed by three disastrous kalpas, and their negative karmas remain, they will be forced into the world in another direction to suffer hunger and thirst in the similar realm of ghosts for one hundred years, two hundred years, and so forth, and hundreds of thousands of koti nayuta years before the arising of the three disastrous kalpas. If their negative karma caused by destroying the correct dharma does not end when the disastrous three kalpas appear, they will be transmitted to the world in other direction in the similar realms of ghosts to suffer from hunger and thirst for one hundred years, two hundred years, and so forth, and hundreds of thousands of koti nayuta years. Owing to their inexhaustible guilt, they will move from one country to the other and suffer from severe hunger and thirst before the arising of the three disastrous kalpas. It is in this way that they keep drifting through various worlds in ten directions, and in all these realms of ghosts they experience various kinds of suffering mainly caused by hunger and thirst. As the disastrous three kalpas cease while their negative karma continues, they will be reborn again in the realm of ghosts in this barely tolerable world. They will move from one country to the other and suffer greatly from starvation before the arising of the kalpas of fire, water, and

wind. As the disasters of the three kalpas arise and the barely tolerable world ends while their negative karma continues, they will be reborn in other world to experience all kinds of suffering in the realms of ghosts.

"After immeasurable kalpas in reincarnation, their negative karmas resulting from harming correct dharma nearly come to an end. They are then able to get rid of the realm of the hungry ghosts and be reborn as humans in lower classes. They will be reborn in a family of the blind, deaf, Candāla, or Pulkasa; or they will be reborn in a family holding incorrect views or killing animals for profit. They may be born with incomplete bodies, such as without eye, ear, nose, tongue, hand, or foot; blind, deaf, or dumb; with ulcers or scabies; insane, difficult in urination, hunchbacked, short and ugly or with contracted hands and feet. Their physical organs are deficient, and their appearances are dark and yellow. They are poor, haggard, stubborn, and noisy, or lacking common sense and thus whatever they do will be laughed at and be held in contemp. They may be reborn into a place where no names of the Buddha, dharma, sangha, bodhisattva, or self-enlightened one can be heard. They may be reborn in a dark and closed world where there is no light day and night, or in the place full of dangers, defilements, and poisonous thorns. Why? It is because the negative karma they have made is extremely deep-rooted and heavy, and the undesirable painful effects thus derived are too varied and many to be described completely."

At that time, Sariputra asked the Buddha, "World-Honored One, the Thus-Comer often says that the heaviest sins are the five grave sins. Now you are talking about the sixth sin of harming the correct dharma. Is it the sort of the five grave sins?"

The Buddha replied, "Sariputra, harming and destroying correct dharma is the most serious karma, heavier and worse than the five grave sins may cause. When hearing the fathomless prajna paramita, some will not believe in it; rather, they will reject and slander it by saying, 'These words are not taught and elaborated by various Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones. These words are not the dharma, the laws, or the teachings given by the master, so we should not learn them.' Those who slander the dharma also slander prajna paramita; what they do will encourage other sentient beings to slander it. They will not only destroy their own bodies but also teach others to destroy their

bodies. They will not only drink poisons themselves but also encourage others to drink poisons. They will not only lose the enjoyable effect of liberation to be reborn in heaven but also teach others to lose the same enjoyable effect. They will not only walk on the fires of hells themselves but also make others walk on the fires of hells. They will not only avoid believing in and understanding the fathomless prajna paramita themselves, but also make others avoid believing in and understanding the fathomless prajna paramita. They will not only drown themselves in the ocean of suffering but also make others drown in the ocean of suffering.

"Sariputra, I will not allow the slanderers of the correct dharma to hear the name of the fathomless prajna paramita, let alone hear my teaching. Sariputra, I will not allow various good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth dwelling in bodhisattva vehicle to hear the names of the slanderers, let alone see them. I absolutely do not allow those correct dharma slanders to live together with these good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth. Why? Sariputra, those who defame the fathomless prajna paramita are called correct dharma destroyers. They are like snails loving to dig into dark and dirty muds. They will not only pollute themselves but also others. They are like smelly excrement. Those who believe in the destroyers of correct dharma will suffer great pains as mentioned above. Sariputra, all those who try to destroy and harm the fathomless prajna paramita are the species suffering in hells, the realm of animals, and the realm of the hungry ghosts. It is certain that they will suffer from extremely heavy, violent, and boundless pains. Therefore, the wise will not slander the fathomless prajna paramita."

(The Buddha emphasized that slandering correct dharma is a very grave sin.)

Meanwhile, Sariputra asked the Buddha again, "World-Honored One, why do you only say that those who destroy correct dharma will fall into the great hells, the realm of animals, and the realm of hungry ghosts and suffer for a long time, but do not describe their appearances and statures?"

The Buddha said, "Sariputra, stop! We should not describe their appearances and statures. Why? Sariputra, if I say how the destroyers of correct dharma will become in their appearances and statures, those who hear my words will be frightened to spit blood and die. They will be worried and vexed as if they were shot by poisonous arrows. They will wither as grass under the covering of frost and are dying. I fear that they will be frightened to death when

hearing how ugly the appearances and statures of those who destroy the correct dharma will become. It is because of my pity on them that I do not talk about the appearances and statures of the correct dharma destroyers."

Sariputra said, "We wish the Buddha would tell us about the appearances and the statures of correct dharma destroyers so those intending to slander the dharma in the future will be cautious not to commit this sin."

The Buddha said, "Sariputra, what I have said is sufficient for warning them. Good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth in the future will hear what I have said about how correct dharma destroyers will fall into great hells, the realm of the animals, and the realm of the hungry ghosts and how severely they will suffer in those destinies. This will suffice to warm them to refrain from slandering the correct dharma."

In the meantime, Sariputra said to the Buddha, "Yes, World-Honored One. Yes, Well-Gone One. Various good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth will learn the Buddha's cautions as a good lesson about how dharma destroyers will suffer in endless time. They will abide by the warning not to slander the dharma even if they need to sacrifice their lives, so that they will not suffer from violent pains in the future."

At that time, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One said to the Buddha, "World-Honored One, when the wise good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth hear the Buddha's teaching of how the destroyers of correct dharma will suffer, they should take a good care of their own bodies, speeches, and minds and never ever slander or destroy the correct dharma, so they will not suffer in the three negative destinies for a very long time. Instead, they will be able to see the Buddha, hear the correct dharma, meet the monastics, or be reborn in a land where there is the Buddha. If the correct dharma destroyers are reborn in human world, they will be constrained in a very bad, poor, and ugly living situation. Their physical bodies are incomplete and whatever they say will not be believed and accepted."

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One said to the Buddha, "Isn't it because of the bad habit of lying and other negative speeches that nurtures the negative karma of harming the dharma?"

The Buddha said, “Yes, Well-Appearing One. It is because of the negative habit of speech that nurtures the negative karma of damaging the correct dharma. Some foolish monastics who call me grand master will ignore, slander, and destroy the fathomless prajna paramita in my teaching of the correct dharma of precept.

“You must know, Well-Appearing One, as one slandering the fathomless prajna paramita also slanders the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of various Buddhas. Those who slander the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of various Buddhas also slander the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge of various Buddhas in the past, present, and future. Those who slander the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge of various Buddhas in the past, present, and future also slander all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones. Those who slander all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones also slander the triple gem: the Buddha, the dharma, and the sangha. Those who slander the triple gem also slander the correct views of the world. Those who slander the correct views of the world also slander the six paramitas, so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena. Because they slander various accumulations of merits and virtues, they will receive immeasurable, countless, and boundless guilty karmas. Because they receive immeasurable, countless, and boundless guilty karmas, they will also absorb immeasurable, countless, and boundless violent suffering of hells, the realm of the animals, the realm of the hungry ghosts, and human world.”

(The Buddha explained how foolish people slandering Buddha’s teaching of correct dharma also slander various Buddhas, perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, and prajna paramita, and thus accumulate negative karmas.)

At that time, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, “Based on what causes and conditions do those ignorant ones slander the fathomless prajna paramita?”

The Buddha replied, “Well-Appearing One, they slander the fathomless prajna paramita based on four causes and conditions. The first is that these ignorant ones are agitated by evil demons. The second is that they have not deeply believed in and understood the fathomless prajna paramita. The third is that they have indulged in the five aggregates and do not work and learn diligently so they are influenced by evil intellectuals. The fourth is that they always

embrace hatred and anger, love to practice negative dharmas and boast about themselves and look down on others. They slander the fathomless prajna paramita because of these four causes and conditions. They certainly will suffer greatly in the endless future."

(The Buddha analyzed four reasons why ignorant people slander correct dharma.)

At that time, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One said to the Buddha again, "World-Honored One, the ignorant people do not work diligently and are absorbed and influenced by evil intellectuals; they do not plant virtuous roots, instead, they do a lot of bad actions. It is very difficult for these foolish ones to believe in and understand the fathomless prajna paramita."

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

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "Why is it very difficult for these ignorant people to believe in and understand the profound prajna paramita?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "Matter, feeling, and so forth, and consciousness are without bondage and relief. Why? It is because matter, feeling, and so forth, and consciousness have no nature, and this nonnature is the self-nature of matter, feeling, and so forth, and consciousness. And so on, the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena are without bondage or relief. Why? It is because the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena have no nature, and this nonnature is their self-nature.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, matter, feeling, and so forth, and consciousness in the past, future, and present are without bondage or relief. Why? It is because matter, feeling, and so forth, and consciousness in the past, future, and present have no nature, and this nonnature is their self-nature. And so on, the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena in the past, future, and present are without bondage and relief. Why? It is because the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena in the past, future, and present have no nature, and this nonnature is their self-nature."

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One said to the Buddha again, “World-Honored One, if the individuals do not learn and cultivate diligently, do not plant virtuous roots and thus do not possess virtuous roots; if they are absorbed by evil friends or are particularly lazy, act in accord with demons’ powers, work diligently only on trivial and inferior matters, and lose correct mindfulness or stay in evil wisdom, it will be very difficult for them to believe in and understand the fathomless prajna paramita.”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “Yes, it is as you say. Why? Well-Appearing One, as matter is pure, so is its effect; as the effect is pure, so is matter. Why? The purity of matter and the purity of the effect are not dualistic, separate, different, or disconnected. And so on, as the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of various Buddhas is pure, so is its effect; as the effect is pure, so is the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of various Buddhas. Why? The unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi and its effect are not dualistic, separate, different, or disconnected.

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, as matter is pure, so is prajna paramita; as prajna paramita is pure, so is matter. Why? The purity of matter and the purity of prajna paramita are not dualistic, separate, different, or disconnected. And so on, as the perfect knowledge of all phenomena is pure, so is prajna paramita; as prajna paramita is pure, so is the perfect knowledge of all phenomena. Why? The purity of the perfect knowledge of all phenomena and the purity of prajna paramita are not dualistic, separate, different, or disconnected.

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, as matter is pure, so is the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge; as the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge is pure, so is matter. Why? The purity of matter and the purity of the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge are not dualistic, separate, different, or disconnected. And so on, as the perfect knowledge of all phenomena is pure, so is the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge; as the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge is pure, so is the perfect knowledge of all phenomena. Why? The purity of the perfect knowledge of all phenomena and the purity of the perfect knowledge of all phenomena are not dualistic, separate, different, or disconnected.

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, as nonduality is pure, so is matter; as matter is pure, so is nonduality. Why? The purity of nonduality and the purity of matter are not dualistic,

separate, different, or disconnected. And so on, as nonduality is pure, so is the perfect knowledge of all phenomena; as the perfect knowledge of all phenomena is pure, so is nonduality. Why? The purity of nonduality and the purity of the perfect knowledge of all phenomena are not dualistic, separate, different, or disconnected.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, as the 'I,' the sentient being, and so forth, and the viewer are pure, so is matter; as matter is pure, so is the 'I,' the sentient being, and so forth, and the viewer. Why? The purity of the 'I,' the sentient being, and so forth, and the viewer and the purity of matter are not dualistic, separate, different, or disconnected. And so on, as the 'I,' the sentient being, and so forth, and the viewer are pure, so is the perfect knowledge of all phenomena; as the perfect knowledge of all phenomena is pure, so are the 'I,' the sentient being, and so forth, and the viewer. Why? The purity of the 'I,' the sentient being, and so forth, and the viewer and the purity of the perfect knowledge of all phenomena are not dualistic, separate, different, or disconnected.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, as greed, anger, and ignorance are pure, so is matter; as matter is pure, so are greed, anger, and ignorance. Why? The purity of greed, anger, and ignorance and the purity of matter are not dualistic, separate, different, or disconnected. And so on, as greed, anger, and ignorance are pure, so is the perfect knowledge of all phenomena; as the perfect knowledge of all phenomena is pure, so are greed, anger, and ignorance. Why? The purity of greed, anger, and ignorance and the purity of the perfect knowledge of all phenomena are not dualistic, separate, different, or disconnected.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, as matter is pure, so is feeling; as feeling is pure, so is matter. Why? The purity of matter and the purity of feeling are not dualistic, separate, different, or disconnected. As feeling is pure, so is thinking; as thinking is pure, so is feeling. And so on, as the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths is pure, so is the perfect knowledge of all phenomena; as the perfect knowledge of all phenomena is pure, so is the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths. Why? The purity of the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths and the purity of the perfect knowledge of all phenomena are not dualistic, separate, different, or disconnected.

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, as prajna paramita is pure, so is matter; as matter is pure, so is the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. Why? The purity of prajna paramita, the purity of matter, and the purity of the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge are not dualistic, separate, different, or disconnected. And so on, as prajna paramita is pure, so is the perfect knowledge of all phenomena; as the perfect knowledge of all phenomena is pure, so is the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. Why? The purity of prajna paramita, the perfect knowledge of all phenomena, and the purity of the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge are not dualistic, separate, different, or disconnected. And so on, as the perfect knowledge of all phenomena is pure, so is matter; as matter is pure, so is the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. Why? The purity of the perfect knowledge of all phenomena, the purity of matter, and the purity of the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge are not dualistic, separate, different, or disconnected. As the perfect knowledge of all phenomena is pure, so is the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths; as the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths is pure, so is the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. Why? The perfect knowledge of all phenomena, the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge are not dualistic, separate, different, or disconnected.

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, as the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge is pure, so is matter; as matter is pure, so is prajna paramita. Why? The purity of the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, the purity of matter, and the purity of prajna paramita are not dualistic, separate, different, or disconnected. And so on, as the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge is pure, so is the perfect knowledge of all phenomena; as the perfect of all phenomena is pure, so is prajna paramita. Why? The purity of the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, the purity of the perfect knowledge of all phenomena, and the purity of prajna paramita are not dualistic, separate, different, or disconnected. As the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge is pure, so is matter; as matter is pure, so is the perfect knowledge of all phenomena. Why? The purity of the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, the purity of matter, and the purity of the perfect knowledge of all phenomena are not dualistic, separate, different, or disconnected. As the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge is pure, so is the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths; as the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths is pure, so is the perfect knowledge of all phenomena. Why? The purity of the perfect knowledge

of all perfect knowledge, the purity of the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and the purity of the perfect knowledge of all phenomena are not dualistic, separate, different, or disconnected.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, as the conditioned phenomena are pure, so is the unconditioned reality; as the unconditioned reality is pure, so are the conditioned phenomena. Why? The purity of the conditioned phenomena and the purity of the unconditioned reality are not dualistic, separate, different, or disconnected.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, as the past is pure, so are the future and the present; as the future is pure, so are the past and the present; as the present is pure, so are the past and the future. Why? The purity of the past, the purity of the future, and the purity of the present are not dualistic, separate, different, or disconnected."

Chapter 11

Praising the Purity

Section 1

(In the Third Assembly)

At that time, Sariputra said to the Buddha, "World-Honored One, such purity is most profound."

The Buddha said, "It is pure in the final analysis."

Sariputra asked, "Which dharmas are pure in the final analysis so their purity is most profound?"

The Buddha replied to Sariputra, “Matter is pure in the final analysis, so its purity is most profound; feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness are pure in the final analysis, so their purity is most profound. And so on, the perfect knowledge of everything is pure in the final analysis, so its purity is most profound; the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena are pure in the final analysis, so their purity is most profound.”

Meanwhile, Sariputra said to the Buddha again, “Such purity is very clear.”

The Buddha replied, “It is pure in the final analysis.”

Sariputra asked, “Which dharmas are pure in the final analysis, so their purity is very clear?”

The Buddha replied to Sariputra, “Prajna paramita is pure in the final analysis, so its purity is very clear; meditation paramita, diligence paramita, and so forth, and giving paramita are pure in the final analysis, so their purity is very clear. And so on, the perfect knowledge of everything is pure in the final analysis, so its purity is very clear; the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena are pure in the final analysis, so their purity is very clear.”

Meanwhile, Sariputra said to the Buddha again, “Such purity neither turns nor continues.”

The Buddha said, “It is pure in the final analysis.”

Sariputra asked, “Which dharmas are pure in the final analysis, so their purity neither turns nor continues?”

The Buddha replied to Sariputra, “Matter is pure in the final analysis, so its purity neither turns nor continues, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena is pure in the final analysis, so its purity neither turns nor continues.”

In the meantime, Sariputra said to the Buddha again, “Such purity is originally uncontaminated.”

The Buddha replied, “It is pure in the final analysis.”

Sariputra asked, “Which dharmas are pure in the final analysis, so their purity is originally uncontaminated?”

The Buddha replied to Sariputra, “Matter, feeling, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena are pure in the final analysis, so their purity is originally uncontaminated.”

In the meantime, Sariputra said to the Buddha again, “The original nature of such purity is brilliant and clean.”

The Buddha replied, “It is pure in the final analysis.”

Sariputra asked, “Which dharmas are pure in the final analysis, so the original nature of their purity is brilliant and clean?”

The Buddha replied to Sariputra, “Matter, feeling, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena are pure in the final analysis, so the original nature of their purity is brilliant and clean.”

In the meantime, Sariputra said to the Buddha again, “Such purity is without attainment and intuitive contemplation.”

The Buddha replied, “It is pure in the final analysis.”

Sariputra asked, “Which dharmas are pure in the final analysis, so their purity is without attainment and intuitive contemplation?”

The Buddha replied to Sariputra, “The emptiness of the original nature of matter, feeling, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena is pure in the final analysis, so its purity is without attainment and intuitive contemplation.”

In the meantime, Sariputra said to the Buddha again, “Such purity is without arising and appearance.”

The Buddha replied, “It is pure in the final analysis.”

Sariputra asked, “Which dharmas are pure in the final analysis, so their purity is without arising and appearance?”

The Buddha replied to Sariputra, “Matter, feeling, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena are without arising and manifestation and is pure in the final analysis, so their purity is without arising and appearance.”

(The Buddha taught that matter, feeling, and so forth, and the three kinds of perfect knowledge are pure in the final analysis, so their purity is profound, it neither turns nor continues, it is originally uncontaminated, brilliant and clean, without attainment and intuitive contemplation, arising, and appearance.)

In the meantime, Sariputra said to the Buddha again, “Such purity does not give birth to the realm of desire, the realm of form, or the realm of formlessness.”

The Buddha replied, “It is pure in the final analysis.”

Sariputra asked, “Why does such purity not give birth to the realm of desire, the realm of form, or the realm of formlessness?”

The Buddha replied to Sriputra, “The purity does not give birth to the realm of desire, the realm of form, or the realm of formlessness because the self-natures of the three realms are unattainable.”

Meanwhile, Sariputra said to the Buddha again, “The original nature of such purity is without knowledge.”

The Buddha replied, “It is pure in the final analysis.”

Sariputra asked, “Why is the original nature of purity without knowledge?”

The Buddha replied to Sariputra, “The original nature of purity is without knowledge because the original natures of all dharmas are dull.”

Sariputra asked, “Which dharmas’ original natures are without knowledge, so the original nature of purity is without knowledge?”

The Buddha replied to Sariputra, “The original nature of matter, feeling, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena is without knowledge, and the particular characteristics of matter, feeling, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena are empty, so the original nature of purity is without knowledge.”

In the meantime, Sariputra said to the Buddha again, “Because the original natures of all dharmas are pure, it is said that all dharmas are pure.”

The Buddha replied, “All dharmas are pure in the final analysis.”

Sariputra asked, “Why are all dharmas pure because their original natures are pure?”

The Buddha replied to Sariputra, “All dharmas are unattainable, so they are pure as their original natures are pure.”

(All dharmas are unattainable and their original natures are pure, so all dharmas are pure.)

In the meantime, Sariputra said to the Buddha again, “Such prajna paramita does not make the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge increase or decrease.”

The Buddha replied, “It is pure in the final analysis.”

Sariputra asked, “Why does prajna paramita not make the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge increase or decrease?”

The Buddha replied to Sariputra, “Dharma realm is always as it has been, so prajna paramita does not make the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge increase or decrease.”

Meanwhile, Sariputra said to the Buddha again, “The original nature of such prajna paramita is pure, so it does not absorb or receive all dharmas.”

The Buddha replied, “All dharmas are pure in the final analysis.”

Sariputra asked, “Why does prajna paramita not absorb or receive all dharmas because its original nature is pure?”

The Buddha replied to Sariputra, “Dharma realm is calm, transparent, and unmovable, so prajna paramita does not absorb or receive all dharmas as its original nature is pure.”

(The Buddha said that dharma realm is calm, transparent, and unmovable, so prajna paramita does not make perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge increase or decrease, nor does it absorb various dharmas. The original nature of all dharmas is pure.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One also said to the Buddha, “The ‘I’ is pure, so matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness, and so forth, and staying in correct mindfulness and dwelling in equanimity at all times are pure.”

The Buddha replied, “It is pure in the final analysis.”

“World-Honored One, why is it said that the ‘I’ is pure, so matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness, and so forth, and staying in correct mindfulness and dwelling in equanimity at all times are pure in the final analysis?”

“Well-Appearing One, the ‘I’ is nonexistent, so matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness, and so forth, and staying in correct mindfulness and dwelling in equanimity at all times are nonexistent, and this is the purity in the final analysis.”

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One said to the Buddha again, “The ‘I’ is pure, so stream-entry effect, once-return effect, nonreturn effect, arhat effect, self-enlightenment bodhi, all great bodhisattva actions, and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas are pure.”

The Buddha replied, “So it is pure in the final analysis.”

“World-Honored One, why is it said that the ‘I’ is pure, so the purity of stream-entry effect, and so forth, as well as the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas is pure in the final analysis?”

“Well-Appearing One, the particular characteristics of the ‘I’ are empty, so the emptiness of the particular characteristics of stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas is pure in the final analysis.”

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One said: “The ‘I’ is pure, so the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena are pure.”

The Buddha said: “So it is pure in the final analysis.”

“World-Honored One, why is it said that as the ‘I’ is pure, the purity of the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena is pure in the final analysis?”

“Well-Appearing One, as the ‘I’ is without form, attainment, mindfulness, and knowledge, so the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena are also without form, attainment, mindfulness, and knowledge, and this is the purity in the final analysis.”

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One said to the Buddha again, “The duality is pure, so it is without attainment and intuitive contemplation.”

The Buddha said, “So it is pure in the final analysis.”

“World-Honored One, why is it said that because of the purity of duality, the nonexistence of attainment and the nonexistence of intuitive contemplation are pure in the final analysis?”

“Well-Appearing One, because the contamination and purification caused by upside down views are nonexistent, the nonexistence of attainment and the nonexistence of intuitive contemplation are pure in the final analysis.”

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One said to the Buddha again, “Because the ‘I’ is boundless, matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena are also boundless.”

The Buddha said, “So they are pure in the final analysis.”

"World-Honored One, why is it said that because the 'I' is boundless, matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena are also boundless, and this is the purity in the final analysis?"

"Well-Appearing One, they are pure in the final analysis because of emptiness in the final analysis and emptiness of nontemporality."

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One said to the Buddha again, "If great bodhisattvas can be awakened this way, they are with prajna paramita."

The Buddha said, "So it is pure in the final analysis."

"World-Honored One, why is it said that if great bodhisattvas can be awakened this way, they are with prajna paramita, and this is the purity in the final analysis?"

"Well-Appearing One, they will be able to attain the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths if they can be awakened this way."

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One said to the Buddha again, "If great bodhisattvas practice the fathomless prajna paramita without attaining other shore, this shore, and the middle of the river, they are with the fathomless prajna paramita."

The Buddha said, "So it is pure in the final analysis."

"World-Honored One, why is it said that if great bodhisattvas practice the fathomless prajna paramita without attaining other shore, this shore, and the middle of the river, they are with the fathomless prajna paramita, and this is the purity in the final analysis?"

"Well-Appearing One, it is because the dharma natures in the past, future, and present are equal."

(The Buddha taught that great bodhisattvas should practice prajna paramita with the realization that all dharmas are pure in the final analysis, they are without distinction and attainment, they are empty and thus are equal. This is the original nature of all dharmas.)

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Chapter 11

Praising the Purity

Section 2

(In the Third Assembly)

At that time, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One said to the Buddha, “World-Honored One, if good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth dwelling peacefully in the great vehicle do not have expedient skillfulness, they will raise the thought of prajna paramita when they practice prajna paramita. Because of adopting attainment as expediency, they will leave and stay far away from the fathomless prajna paramita.”

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, “Excellent, excellent! It is as you say. Because these good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth are attached to the names and the forms, they will leave the fathomless prajna paramita and stay far away from it.”

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, “World-Honored One, how are the good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth attached to the names and the forms?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “After grasping the names and the forms of the fathomless prajna paramita, these good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth will further indulge in prajna paramita and become arrogant, so they are unable to realize the genuine form of prajna. They will leave the fathomless prajna paramita and stay far away from it.”

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, if good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth have expedient skillfulness, they will not think of the fathomless prajna paramita. Because they have adopted nonattainment as expediency, they will not grasp the names and the forms of the fathomless prajna paramita, nor indulge in the fathomless prajna paramita and become arrogant, so they are able to realize the real form of prajna. These people will not leave and stay far away from the fathomless prajna paramita.”

(The Buddha taught that those who practice prajna paramita with attainment will keep thinking about it and become arrogant and thus cannot really realize prajna paramita.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One said to the Buddha, “You are so unique, World-Honored One. You are very capable of teaching great bodhisattvas about the fathomless prajna paramita and showing them how to tell if one is attached to the phenomena or not.”

Meanwhile, Sariputra asked Well-Appearing One, “How are great bodhisattvas attached or not attached to the phenomena of the fathomless prajna paramita?”

Well-Appearing One replied, “Sariputra, if good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth dwelling in the great vehicle practice the fathomless prajna paramita without expedient skillfulness, they will say that matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness are empty and become attached to the thinking of emptiness. And so on, they will say that the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena are empty and become attached to the thinking of emptiness.

“Furthermore, Sariputra, if good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth dwelling in the great vehicle practice the fathomless prajna paramita without expedient skillfulness, they will say that matter is matter and become attached to the thinking of matter. And so on, they will say that the perfect knowledge of all phenomena is the perfect knowledge of all phenomena and become attached to the thinking of the perfect knowledge of all phenomena. They will also say that the dharmas in the past, future, and the present are the dharmas in the past, future, and the present and become attached to the thinking of the dharmas in the past, future, and present.

“Furthermore, Sariputra, some great bodhisattvas have since the time beginning to aspire to the bodhi been attached to the thinking of practicing giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena by adopting attainment as expediency. Sariputra, these great bodhisattvas have practiced the fathomless prajna paramita without expedient skillfulness; rather, they have adopted attainment as expediency and been attached to various kinds of thinking, so they are called holding attachment to form.

(Well-Appearing One explained to Sariputra why some great bodhisattvas become attached to various dharmas when undertaking the cultivation of prajna paramita.)

"Furthermore, Sariputra, you asked, 'How can great bodhisattvas not become attached to the form when they practice the fathomless prajna paramita?' I will say that if great bodhisattvas practice the fathomless prajna paramita with expedient skillfulness, they will not think whether matter is empty or not empty, nor do they think whether feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness are empty or not empty. And so on, they will not think whether the perfect knowledge of everything is empty or not empty, nor do they think whether the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths or the perfect knowledge of all phenomena is empty or not empty.

"Furthermore, Sariputra, if great bodhisattvas practice the fathomless prajna paramita with expedient skillfulness, they will not have such thoughts, 'I can practice giving; this is the giving I practice; and this is how I practice giving. I can observe the precept; this is the precept I observe; and this is how I observe the precept. I can cultivate forbearance; this is the forbearance I cultivate; and this is how I cultivate forbearance. I can cultivate wisdom; this is the wisdom I cultivate; and this is how I cultivate wisdom. I can plant blessings; these are the blessings I plant; and this is how I plant blessings. I can enter onto the bodhisattva path of nonarising. I can dignify and purify Buddha lands. I can assist sentient beings to mature. I can realize and attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge.' Because these great bodhisattvas practice the fathomless prajna paramita with expedient skillfulness, they will not have such thoughts of differentiation. It is because they have thoroughly understood internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature. Sariputra, this is how great bodhisattvas are not attached to form."

(Well-Appearing One explained how great bodhisattvas practice prajna paramita without attachment to form.)

In the meantime, Heavenly Emperor Indra asked Well-Appearing One, "When the good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth dwelling peacefully in the great vehicle practice the fathomless prajna paramita, how can we tell what forms they are attached to?"

Well-Appearing One replied, "As the great bodhisattvas dwelling peacefully in the great vehicle practice the fathomless prajna paramita by adopting attainment as expediency and have no expedient skillfulness, they will initiate the thinking about their own minds, giving, pure precept, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. They will think of

various Buddhas, the virtuous roots planted by the Buddhas, and think of putting all virtuous roots together, joyfully participating in them, and transferring the merits thus derived along with various sentient beings equally toward the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal enlightenment. Kausika, these are the thoughts to which the good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth dwelling in great vehicle will be attached when they practice the fathomless prajna paramita. Kausika, because of the attachment to form, they are unable to cultivate prajna paramita without attachment, or transfer the merits and virtues thus derived toward the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. Why? Kausika, all matter, feeling, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena cannot be transferred by virtue of their original nature.

"Furthermore, Kausika, if great bodhisattvas would like to demonstrate the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi for other sentient beings and encourage, admire, and celebrate them in the pursuit of it, they should contemplate the real nature of the equality of all dharmas. That is, they should say, 'When practicing giving, you good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth should not differentiate that you can practice giving, pure precept, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena, or you can practice the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of various Buddhas.' Kausika, if great bodhisattvas would like to demonstrate the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi for other sentient beings and encourage, admire, and celebrate them in the cultivation of it, they should do this way. If they can demonstrate the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi for other sentient beings and encourage, admire, and celebrate them in the pursuit of the great bodhi this way, they will not harm themselves or others. Because they have demonstrated for, encouraged, admired, and celebrated sentient beings as the Buddha has allowed them to do. Kausika, if good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth dwelling in the bodhisattva vehicle can demonstrate, encourage, admire, and celebrate this way, they will be far away from all kinds of attachment."

(Well-Appearing One further explained how great bodhisattvas guide others to stay away from differentiation and attachment.)

At that time, the World-Honored One admired Well-Appearing One, "Excellent, excellent! You have said very well for great bodhisattvas about the phenomena of attachment.

Well-Appearing One, there are some other subtle attachments that I am going to teach you, so please listen to me carefully and reflect on them well."

(The Buddha praised Well-Appearing One for skillfully explaining how to avoid attachment. He then went on to teach about other, more subtle forms of attachment.)

Well-Appearing One said, "Yes, we are looking forward to your teaching!"

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, "As good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth dwell in the great vehicle and aspire to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, if they stay in the mindfulness of grasping the phenomena of the Thus-Comer, One Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened One, then they have attachment. If they stay in the mindfulness of grasping the phenomena of the virtuous roots accumulated by all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones in the past, present, and future since the time first pursuing the dharma until finally dwelling in it, and further joyfully take part in their virtuous roots and transfer the merits thus derived toward the unsurpassed bodhi, then they have attachment. If they stay in the mindfulness of grasping the phenomena of the virtuous dharmas cultivated by all Thus-Comers' disciples, and so forth and further joyfully participate in their virtuous roots, and transfer the merits thus derived toward the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, then they have attachment. Why? We should not stay in mindfulness of the merits and virtuous roots of various Thus-Comers and their disciples by grasping the phenomena and with differentiation. All the phenomena are delusive."

At that time, Well-Appearing One said to the Buddha, "So prajna paramita is most fathomless."

The Buddha replied, "Yes. It is because the original nature of all dharmas is far away."

Well-Appearing One said again, "So we should pay homage to prajna paramita."

The Buddha said, "Yes, prajna paramita has many merits and virtues, but it has no making and doing, and no one can realize it."

Well-Appearing One said again, "We cannot realize and become awakened to all dharma natures.

The Buddha said, “We cannot. All dharmas have one nature instead of two. You must know, Well-Appearing One, the one nature of all dharmas is nonnature, and the nonnature of all dharmas is the one nature. The one nature or the nonnature of all dharmas is their original nature. This original nature does not make or act. If great bodhisattvas know accurately that the one nature or the nonnature does not make or act, then they will be able to stay far away from all kinds of attachment.”

(The Buddha instructed great vehicle leaners to realize that the original nature of all dharmas is nonmature, the only one nature, to stay away from attachment.)

Well-Appearing One said again, “Such prajna paramita is very difficult to be awakened to.”

The Buddha said, “Yes. It is because the fathomless prajna paramita cannot be seen, heard, awakened to, or known.”

Well-Appearing One said again, “Such prajna paramita is inconceivable.”

The Buddha said, “Yes. The fathomless prajna paramita cannot be grasped with mind because it is apart from mental images. It cannot be grasped by matter because it is apart from the phenomena of matter. It cannot be grasped by the perfect knowledge of all phenomena because it is apart from the phenomena of the perfect knowledge of all phenomena. It cannot be grasped by all dharmas because it is apart from the phenomena of all dharmas.”

(The Buddha said that prajna paramita is apart from mental images and the phenomena, so it cannot be grasped, awakened to, seen, or known.)

Well-Appearing One said again, “Such prajna paramita does not make or act.”

The Buddha said, “You are right. Well-Appearing One, you must know that matter is unattainable, so the maker is unattainable; feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness are unattainable, so the makers are unattainable. And so on, the perfect knowledge of all phenomena is unattainable, so the maker is unattainable; all dharmas are unattainable, so the makers are unattainable. Because various makers and the dharmas such as matter, feeling, and so forth are unattainable, the fathomless prajna paramita does not make or act.”

(The Buddha explained why prajna paramita does not make or act.)

At that time, Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, “How should great bodhisattvas practice prajna paramita?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “If great bodhisattvas do not practice matter, they do practice prajna paramita; if they do not practice feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness, they do practice prajna paramita. And so on, if they do not practice the perfect knowledge of everything, they do practice prajna paramita; if they do not practice the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena, they do practice prajna paramita.

(The Buddha explained how great bodhisattvas practice prajna paramita.)

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, if great bodhisattvas do not practice matter as permanent or impermanent, pleasant or painful, with or without selfness, pure or impure, far away or not far away, and tranquil or not tranquil, they do practice prajna paramita. And so on, if they do not practice the perfect knowledge of all phenomena as permanent or impermanent, pleasant or painful, with or without selfness, pure or impure, far away or not far away, and tranquil or not tranquil, they do practice prajna paramita. Why? As matter, feeling, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena are nonexistent, how can we say that they are permanent or impermanent, pleasant or painful, and so forth, and tranquil or not tranquil?

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, if great bodhisattvas do not practice matter as perfect or imperfect, they do practice prajna paramita. And so on, if they do not practice the perfect knowledge of all phenomena as perfect or imperfect, they do practice prajna paramita. Why? Whether matter is perfect or imperfect, if great bodhisattvas do not name it matter, nor do they practice matter, then they do practice prajna paramita. And so on, whether the perfect knowledge of all phenomena is perfect or imperfect, if great bodhisattvas do not name it the perfect knowledge of all phenomena, nor do they practice the perfect knowledge of all phenomena, then they do practice prajna paramita.”

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One said to the Buddha, “The Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones are very rare and unique! They teach bodhisattvas about various forms of attachment and nonattachment very well.”

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, “Yes. All Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones are very capable of teaching various forms of attachment and nonattachment for bodhisattvas, so the bodhisattvas are able to learn prajna paramita thoroughly and quickly.

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, if great bodhisattvas do not practice matter with or without attachment to its form, they do practice prajna paramita. If they do not practice feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness with or without attachment to their forms, they do practice prajna paramita. And so on, if they do not practice all bodhisattva actions with or without attachment to their forms, they do practice prajna paramita. If they do not practice the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of various Buddhas with or without attachment to its form, they do practice prajna paramita.

At that time, Well-Appearing One said to the Buddha, “World-Honored One, prajna paramits is very unusual; it neither increases nor decreases whether it is taught or not taught.”

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, “Yes. The fathomless dharma nature is very unusual. It neither increases nor decreases whether it is taught or not. Like empty space that does not increase or decrease whether various Buddhas have admired or reproached it for the rest of their lives, so the fathomless dharma nature does not increase or decrease. Like the transformed beings, who are not happy or unhappy as they are admired or reproached, will not increase or decrease. So, the fathomless dharma nature, which is not happy or unhappy whether it is admired or reproached, will not increase or decrease; it is always as it has been.”

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One said to the Buddha, “World-Honored One, it is not an easy task for great bodhisattvas to cultivate prajna paramita. The fathomless prajna paramita does not increase or decrease whether you cultivate it or not, nor does it have worry or delight, or turn its face toward you or turn its back on you. But those who cultivate and learn prajna paramita diligently will not regress until attaining the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal

bodhi. Why? World-Honored One, as great bodhisattvas cultivate prajna paramita, they should view it as nonexistent as if they were cultivating empty space. World-Honored One, like in empty space there are no matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness, and so forth, and the bodhisattva actions and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of various Buddhas that can be understood, so is the prajna paramita that they cultivate. Namely, in the fathomless prajna paramita, no matter, feeling, and so forth, and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of various Buddhas are attainable. Although no dharma is attainable, various bodhisattvas can diligently cultivate and learn prajna paramita to achieve and stay in nonregression until attaining the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. So, I say it is not an easy task for various great bodhisattvas to cultivate the fathomless prajna paramita."

(The Buddha said that in prajna paramita no dharmas are attainable, but great-vehicle practitioners can diligently cultivate it to achieve nonregression and other merits and virtues.)

At that time, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One said to the Buddha, "World-Honored One, all sentient beings should pay homage to great bodhisattvas because they can wear such an armor of great merits and virtues. World-Honored One, as great bodhisattvas wear the armor of merits and virtues and work diligently for the sake of various sentient beings, it is like wearing the armor of merits and virtues to work diligently for the sake of empty space. As great bodhisattvas wear the armor of merits and virtues and work diligently to relieve sentient beings and assist them to mature, it is like wearing the armor of merits and virtues to work diligently for empty space. As great bodhisattvas wear the armor of merits and virtues and work diligently for the correct dharma, it is like wearing the armor of merits and virtues to work diligently for empty space. As great bodhisattvas wear the armor of merits and virtues and work diligently to relieve sentient beings from the suffering of birth and death, it is like wearing the armor of merits and virtues to work diligently for lifting empty space up to a superior position. World-Honored One, as great bodhisattvas attain powerful and brave strengths of great diligence, it resembles that they aspire to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi to liberate empty-space like sentient beings from birth and death. World-Honored One, as great bodhisattvas attain the inconceivable supernatural powers, it resembles that they wear the armor of merits and virtues and aspire to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi for the sake of empty-space like dharma-nature oceans. World-Honored One, as great bodhisattvas appear as extremely brave and strong, it resembles

that they wear the armor of merits and virtues to diligently pursue the empty-space like unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.

"World-Honored One, it is unusual that great bodhisattvas have cultivated ascetic actions diligently to attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi as to liberate empty-space like sentient beings by bringing them benefits and happiness. Why? World-Honored One, if the large threefold thousand-world is full of Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones as if it were full of bamboos, hemps, reeds, and sugarcanes, and these Thus-Comers will teach correct dharma for sentient beings continually for one kalpa or more when each Thus-Comer will ferry immeasurable and boundless sentient beings to the other shore of nirvana in ultimate peace and happiness, then the realm of the sentient beings will not increase or decrease. Why? It is because all sentient beings are nonexistent and their natures are far away. World-Honored One, suppose that all the worlds in the ten directions are full of Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones as if they were full of bamboos, hemps, reeds, and sugarcanes, and these Thus-Comers will teach correct dharma for sentient beings continually for one kalpa or more when each Thus-Comer will ferry immeasurable and boundless sentient beings to the other shore of nirvana in ultimate peace and happiness, then the realm of the sentient beings will not increase or decrease either. Why? It is because all sentient beings are nonexistent and their natures are far away. World-Honored One, based on this cause and condition, I say that great bodhisattvas are unusual as they cultivate ascetic actions diligently to realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi for the sake of empty-space like sentient beings.

(Well-Appearing One admired great bodhisattvas who diligently cultivate unsurpassed bodhi for relieving sentient beings from birth and death as sentient beings are like empty space.)

At that time, a monk among the assembly thought, "I must pay homage to the fathomless prajna paramita, in which there are no dharmas that arise and extinguish, but there is the establishment for aggregates of precept, concentration, wisdom, liberation, and the knowledge and views of liberation. There is the establishment for stream-entry effect, once-return effect, nonreturn effect, arhat effect, self-enlightenment bodhi, all great bodhisattva actions, and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of various Buddhas. There is also the establishment for

the Buddha gem, dharma gem, sangha gem, and turning the wonderful dharma wheel to deliver sentient beings."

The Buddha could read his mind, so said to him, "Yes, it is as you say. The fathomless prajna paramita is very subtle and fathomless. Although there is no dharma attainable in it, it appears not so.

In the meantime, Heavenly Emperor Indra asked Well-Appearing One, "If great bodhisattvas would like to learn prajna paramita, how should they do?"

Well-Appearing One replied, "They should cultivate and learn diligently as empty space does."

Meanwhile, Heavenly Emperor Indra asked the Buddha again, "If good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth listen wholeheartedly to, accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate and learn diligently and attentively, reflect reasonably on, write, explicate, and disseminate extensively prajna paramita, what should I do to protect them?"

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One said to Heavenly Emperor Indra, "Have you ever seen any dharma that can be protected?"

Heavenly Emperor Indra replied, "No, great virtuous one, I have never seen any dharma that can be protected."

Well-Appearing One said, "As great bodhisattvas dwell peacefully in prajna paramita by following Buddha's teaching, they will be well protected. If good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth dwell peacefully in prajna paramita and never stay far away from it, you must know that no human and nonhuman beings can successfully take advantage to do harm to them. Kausika, trying to protect the good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth dwelling peacefully in prajna paramita is like trying to protect empty space.

(As Kausika asked how to protect great bodhisattvas, Well-Appearing One replied that trying to protect them is like trying to protect empty space. He emphasized that if great bodhisattvas dwell in prajna paramita as taught by the Buddha, no one can do harm to them.)

“Kausika, as great bodhisattvas try to protect the fathomless prajna paramita, they equally try to work diligently to protect empty space. Any effort of the great bodhisattvas attempting to protect the fathomless prajna paramita will turn out in vain.

“Kausika, what do you think about this? Can anyone protect illusions, dreams, echoes, images, shadows, illusory images of water under sunlight, transformed things, and mirages?”

Heavenly Emperor Indra replied, “No, great virtuous one.”

Well-Appearing One said, “Kausika, so any intention to protect the bodhisattvas who are practicing the fathomless prajna paramita will also turn out in vain.

“Kausika, what do you think about this? Can anyone protect transformed things made by the Thus-Comers, the Buddhas?”

Heavenly Emperor Indra replied, “No, great virtuous one.”

Well-Appearing One said, “Kausika, so any attempt to protect the bodhisattvas who are practicing the fathomless prajna paramita will turn out in vain.

“Kausika, what do you think about this? Can anyone protect realness, dharma realm, and so forth, the realm of empty space, and the realm of the inconceivable?”

Heavenly Emperor Indra replied, “No, great virtuous one.”

Well-Appearing One said, “Kausika, so any attempt to protect the bodhisattvas who are practicing the fathomless prajna paramita will turn out in vain.

Meanwhile, Heavenly Emperor Indra asked Well-Appearing One, “How can great bodhisattvas, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, refrain from being attached to dreams, echoes, images, shadows, illusory images of water under sunlight, mirages, and transformed things or attached to the dharmas caused by, belonging to, or relying on illusions, dreams, and so forth, and mirages only because they have realized that various dharmas are like dreams, echoes, and so forth, and transformed things?”

Well-Appearing One replied, “If great bodhisattvas, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, are not attached to matter, feeling, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena or attached to matter, feeling, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena as caused by, belonging to, or relying on dreams, echoes, and so forth, and transformed things, then they will not be attached to dreams, echoes, and so forth, and transformed things or attached to the dharmas as caused by, belonging to, or relying on dreams, echoes, and so forth, and transformed things.”

At that time, due to the Thus-Comer’s dignity and mighty supernatural powers, all heavenly beings in the Heaven of Four Great Kings, Heaven of Thirty-Three Smaller Heavens, and so forth, and the Heaven of Pure Residence in this large threefold thousand-world each presented sandal-incense powders as offerings to the Buddha from afar. They then went to Buddha’s place, bowed down to the ground before Buddha’s feet, and stood to the side. Meanwhile, various heavenly beings, owing to the Buddha’s supernatural powers, could see one thousand Buddhas were teaching prajna paramita in the ten directions. All the chapters, meanings, and titles were the same as those in this land. All the leading monks who conversed with the Buddhas were named Well-Appearing One, and all the leaders of the heavenly beings who asked Well-Appearing One were also named Indra.

At that time, the World-Honored One said to Well-Appearing One, “As Great Bodhisattva Maitreya realizes and attains the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi in the future, he will teach prajna paramita here. Various Buddhas who will appear in the Kalpa of the Sages will also teach prajna paramita here.”

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, “In what manner, form, or way will Great Bodhisattva Maitreya teach prajna paramita when he realizes and attains the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi in the future,”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “When realizing and attaining the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi in the future, Great Bodhisattva Maitreya will teach prajna paramita by viewing matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness as neither permanent nor impermanent, neither pleasant nor painful, neither with nor without selfness, neither pure nor impure, neither far away nor not far away, neither tranquil nor not tranquil,

neither in bondage nor in relief, neither existent nor empty, and neither in the past nor in the future or present. And so on, he will teach prajna paramita by viewing the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena as neither permanent nor impermanent, neither pleasant nor painful, neither with nor without selfness, neither pure nor impure, neither far away nor not far away, neither tranquil nor not tranquil, neither in bondage nor in relief, neither existent nor empty, and neither in the past nor in the future or present."

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, "When attaining the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, which dharmas will Great Bodhisattva Maitreya realize and teach?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "When attaining the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, Great Bodhisattva Maitreya will realize and teach that matter is pure in the final analysis, feeling is pure in the final analysis, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena is pure in the final analysis."

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, "Why is the fathomless prajna paramita pure?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "Matter is pure, so the fathomless prajna paramita is pure. Feeling is pure, so the fathomless prajna paramita is pure. And so on, the perfect knowledge of all phenomena is pure, so the fathomless prajna paramita is pure."

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "Why is the fathomless prajna paramita pure because matter, feeling, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena are pure?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "Matter is without arising, extinction, contamination, and purification, so it is pure. Matter is pure, so the fathomless prajna paramita is pure. And so on, the perfect knowledge of all phenomena is without arising, extinction, contamination, and purification, so it is pure. The perfect knowledge of all phenomena is pure, so the fathomless prajna paramita is pure.

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, empty space is pure, so the fathomless prajna paramita is pure.”

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, “Why is the fathomless prajna paramita pure because empty space is pure?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “Empty space is without arising, extinction, contamination, and purification, so as it is pure. Because empty is pure, the fathomless prajna paramita is pure.

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, matter, feeling, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena are without contamination, so the fathomless prajna paramita is pure.”

“World-Honored One, why is the fathomless prajna paramita pure because matter, feeling, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena are without contamination?”

“Well-Appearing One, matter, feeling, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena cannot be grasped, so they are without contamination. Because matter, feeling, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena are without contamination, the fathomless prajna paramita is pure.

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, empty space is without contamination, so the fathomless prajna paramita is pure.”

“World-Honored One, why is empty space without contamination so the fathomless prajna paramita is pure?”

“Well-Appearing One, empty space cannot be grasped, so it is without contamination; empty space is without contamination, so the fathomless prajna paramita is pure.

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, empty space is a term provisionally established, so the fathomless prajna paramita is pure.”

“World-Honored One, why is the fathomless prajna paramita pure because empty space is a term provisionally established?”

"Well-Appearing One, the pronunciation of empty space is provisionally established, so the fathomless prajna paramita is pure.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, empty space is unspeakable, so the fathomless prajna paramita is pure."

"World-Honored One, why is the fathomless prajna paramita pure because empty space is unspeakable?"

"Well-Appearing One, empty space has nothing to say, so it is unspeakable. Empty space is unspeakable, so the fathomless prajna paramita is pure.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, empty space is unattainable, so the fathomless prajna paramita is pure."

"World-Honored One, why is the fathomless prajna paramita pure because empty space is unattainable?"

"Well-Appearing One, empty space has nothing to be attained, so it is unattainable. Empty space is unattainable, so the fathomless prajna paramita is pure.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, all dharmas are without arising, extinction, contamination, and purification, so the fathomless prajna paramita is pure."

"World-Honored One, why is the fathomless prajna paramita pure because all dharmas are without arising, extinction, contamination, and purification?"

"Well-Appearing One, all dharmas are pure in the final analysis, so they are without arising, extinction, contamination, and purification. All dharmas are without arising, extinction, contamination, and purification, so the fathomless prajna paramita is pure."

(In the conversations between the Buddha and Well-Appearing One, the issue why prajna paramita is pure was discussed.)

Chapter 12

Admiring the Virtues

(In the Third Assembly)

At that time, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One said to the Buddha, "World-Honored One, if good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth wholeheartedly listen to, accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate and learn attentively and diligently, reflect reasonably on, write, explicate, and disseminate extensively prajna paramita, then these good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth will not have diseases of eyes, ears, nose, and tongue; their limbs will have no deficiency; they will not get old quickly or die because of accidents; rather, they will always be surrounded, chased, guarded, and protected by immeasurable hundreds of thousands of heavenly deities. These good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth will in the six fasting days read, recite, and teach the prajna paramita. In those days, all the heavenly beings from the Heaven of Four Great Kings, Heaven of Thirty-Three Smaller Heavens, and so forth, and the Heaven of Ultimate Form will gather in the dharma teachers' places to listen to the teaching of prajna paramita. Because these good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth have appeared in immeasurable large assemblies and read, recited, and lectured on the fathomless prajna paramita, they will attain immeasurable, countless, and boundless inconceivable and immeasurable superior merits and virtues."

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, "Yes, it is as you say. Why? The fathomless prajna paramita is a great treasury, with which immeasurable, countless, and boundless sentient beings will be rid of the suffering in hells, the realm of animals, and realm of ghosts, and the suffering caused by poverty and illness in heaven and human world. As a great storage of treasures, the fathomless prajna paramita will bring wealth, nobility, peace, and happiness to immeasurable, countless, and boundless sentient beings in the Heaven of Four Great Kings, Heaven of Thirty-Three Smaller Heavens, and so forth, and the Heaven of Nonthinking and Not Nonthinking. It will also bring easiness, peace, and happiness of stream-entry effect, once-return effect, nonreturn effect, arhat effect, self-enlightenment bodhi, and the unsurpassed, perfect, and

universal bodhi to immeasurable, countless, and boundless sentient beings. Why? In this treasury, the fathomless prajna paramita, the path of the ten virtuous karmas, the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, four formless concentrations, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena are extensively and comprehensively taught and explained. Immeasurable, countless, and boundless sentient beings will learn and cultivate them and thus will be reborn in the noble family of Ksatriya, noble family of Brahman, noble family of elders, and noble family of lay believers; or they will be reborn in the Heaven of Four Great Kings, Heaven of Thirty-Three Smaller Heavens, and so forth, and the Heaven of Nonthinking and Not Nonthinking; or they will realize and attain stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi; or they will enter onto the bodhisattva path of nonarising to cultivate various bodhisattva actions and finally attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. Because of this cause and condition, none of the merits, virtues, and treasures in or beyond the world does not come out of the fathomless prajna paramita.

"You must know, Well-Appearing One, in this great treasury of prajna paramita, not a little bit of dharma is taught as with arising or extinction, contamination or purification, grasping or renunciation. Why? Well-Appearing One, not a little bit of dharma arises and extinguishes or is contaminated, purified, grasped, and renounced. Well-Appearing One, in such great treasury of prajna paramita, no dharma is taught as virtuous or not virtuous, flawed or flawless, guilty or not guilty, contaminated or purified, in or beyond the world, and conditioned or unconditioned. Well-Appearing One, based on this cause and condition, prajna paramita is called unattainable treasury of dharmas. Well-Appearing One, in this great treasury of prajna paramita, not a little bit of dharma is taught as able to bring about contamination or purification. Why? It is because not a little bit of dharma contaminates or purifies. Because of this cause and condition, such prajna paramita is called great treasury without contamination and purification.

(The Buddha taught why prajna paramita is called great treasury without contamination and purification.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, if great bodhisattvas do not think, differentiate, attain, or give such nonsensical argument, 'I can cultivate the fathomless prajna paramita,' they will cultivate the fathomless prajna paramita as

they should do. They will also stay close to various Buddhas and make offerings respectfully to esteem and acclaim them. They will visit various Buddha countries, assist sentient beings to mature, dignify and purify Buddha lands, and cultivate bodhisattva actions, and will be able to realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi soon.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the fathomless prajna paramita does not stay with or turn away from all dharmas. It does not elicit or cast off, grasp or abandon, give birth to or extinguish, contaminate or purify, and increase or decrease all dharmas. The fathomless prajna paramita is not the past, future, or the present. It does not transcend or dwell in the realm of desire, the realm of form, or the realm of formlessness. It does not stay with or turn away from giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena. It does not stay with or turn away from stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddha. It does not stay with the dharmas of the holy ones or turn away from the dharmas of the ordinary sentient beings; and stay with the dharmas of various Buddhas or turn away from the dharmas of the two vehicles. It does not stay with the unconditioned realm or turn away from the realm of the conditioned realm. Why? Whether the Thus-Comers appear in the world or not, all these dharmas always remain changeless and dwell peacefully in dharma realm. All Thus-Comers with intuitive awakening and intuitive contemplation can teach, explain, and manifest for various sentient beings, let them gain insightful understanding and stay away from the upside-down delusions and differentiations."

(The Buddha described the superior and unique traits of prajna paramita.)

At that time, immeasurable hundreds of thousands of heavenly sons were staying in empty space. They rejoiced and were excited, and spread all kinds of heavenly flowers, such as Utpala (blue lotus), Padma (white lotus), Kumuda (red lotus), Pundarika (snow white lotus), wonderful and subtle sound flowers, and various kinds of powdered fragrance on the Buddha. They celebrated and greeted each other, and all said, "Now we have seen the Buddha's second turning of the wonderful dharma wheel in this continent of Jambudvipa." Among them, immeasurable heavenly sons had realized and attained the forbearance of nonarising at the same time.

At that time, the World-Honored One said to Well-Appearing One, “This is neither the first turning nor the second turning of the dharma wheel. Why? Such fathomless prajna paramita appears in the world not for the turning or re-turning of all dharmas because of the emptiness of selfless self-nature.”

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One said to the Buddha, “World-Honored One, which emptiness of selfless self-nature makes prajna paramita appear in the world not for the turning or returning of all dharmas?”

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, “The fathomless prajna paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and giving paramita and their self-natures are empty; the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena and their self-natures are empty; and the stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas and their self-natures are empty too. You must know, Well-Appearing One, because the selfless self-natures of all dharmas are empty, the fathomless prajna paramita appears in the world not for turning or re-turning of all dharmas.”

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One said to the Buddha again, “The fathomless prajna paramita is the great paramita because it has realized that the self-natures of all dharmas are empty. Although realizing that the self-natures of all dharmas are empty, various great bodhisattvas have realized and attained the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi based on prajna paramita and turned the wonderful dharma wheel to deliver sentient beings. Although realizing and attaining the dharma, they have not truly realized or attained anything; both realization and not realization are unattainable. Although they turn the dharma wheel, they have not truly turned anything; both turning and re-turning are unattainable. World-Honored One, in this great prajna paramita, all things relevant to the turning of the dharma wheel are unattainable, it is because all dharmas never arise, and ones who can turn and ones to be turned are unattainable. Why? In emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration, there are no dharmas that can turn and return. The nature of turning and returning is unattainable.

(No dharmas are really existent, including turning the dharma wheel.)

"World-Honored One, the one who can teach, explain, analyze, and manifest the fathomless prajna paramita and make it understandable is described as capable of teaching prajna paramita in a pure and virtuous way. In this process, the speaker, the receivers, the dharma taught, and the dharma received are nonexistent. As the speaker, receiver, and the dharma are nonexistent, the one who can realize is also nonexistent. Given the fact that the one who can realize is nonexistent, the one who can attain nirvana is also nonexistent. In the wonderful dharma teaching of the fathomless prajna paramita, no field of bliss exists. As the nature of giving, receiving and the things given is empty, the field of bliss is nonexistent and empty; the names and speech used for expression are also unattainable. Therefore, it is called the great paramita."

(Well-Appearing One explained why great paramita is so named.)

At that time, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One said to the Buddha again, "World-Honored One, the fathomless prajna paramita is the boundless paramita."

"Yes, Well-Appearing One, it is as boundless as great empty space."

"World-Honored One, the fathomless prajna paramita is the equal paramita."

"Yes, Well-Appearing One, it is because all dharma natures are equal."

"World-Honored One, the fathomless prajna paramita is the faraway paramita."

"Yes, Well-Appearing One, it is empty in the final analysis."

"World-Honored One, the fathomless prajna paramita is the invincible paramita."

"Yes, Well-Appearing One, it is because all dharmas are unattainable."

"World-Honored One, the fathomless prajna paramita is the paramita without footprints."

"Yes, Well-Appearing One, it is because all dharmas have no reality of names."

"World-Honored One, the fathomless prajna paramita is the empty space paramita."

"Yes, Well-Appearing One, it is because both inhalation and exhalation are unattainable."

“World-Honored One, the fathomless prajna paramita is the unspeakable paramita.”

“Yes, Well-Appearing One, it is because general contemplation and specific investigation are nonexistent.”

“World-Honored One, the fathomless prajna paramita is the paramita without names.”

“Yes, Well-Appearing One, it is because feeling, thinking, and action are unattainable.”

“World-Honored One, the fathomless prajna paramita is the paramita without turning.”

“Yes, Well-Appearing One, it is because all dharmas do not go or come.”

“World-Honored One, the fathomless prajna paramita is the non-elicited paramita.”

“Yes, Well-Appearing One, it is because all dharmas cannot be grasped.”

“World-Honored One, the fathomless prajna paramita is the exhausted paramita.”

“Yes, Well-Appearing One, it is because all dharmas will be exhausted in the final analysis.”

“World-Honored One, the fathomless prajna paramita is the paramita without arising and extinction.”

“Yes, Well-Appearing One, it is because all dharmas are without arising and extinction.”

“World-Honored One, the fathomless prajna paramita is the paramita without making.”

“Yes, Well-Appearing One, it is because the makers are unattainable.”

“World-Honored One, the fathomless prajna paramita is the paramita without knowledge.”

“Yes, Well-Appearing One, it is because the knowers are unattainable.”

“World-Honored One, the fathomless prajna paramita is the unmovable paramita.”

“Yes, Well-Appearing One, it is because the ones born from death are unattainable.”

"World-Honored One, the fathomless prajna paramita is the not tamed paramita."

"Yes, Well-Appearing One, it is because the nature of taming all dharmas is unattainable."

"World-Honored One, the fathomless paramita is the paramita like dreams, echoes, images, illusions, shadows, illusory images of water under sunlight, mirages, and transformed things."

"Yes, Well-Appearing One, it is because all dharmas are like what one sees in dreams, like echoes, and so forth, and transformed things, and all are unattainable."

"World-Honored One, the fathomless prajna paramita is the paramita without contamination and purification."

"Yes, Well-Appearing One, it is because the causes of contamination and purification are unattainable."

"World-Honored One, the fathomless prajna paramita is the unpolluted paramita."

"Yes, Well-Appearing One, it is because the dharmas that it relies on are unattainable."

"World-Honored One, the fathomless prajna paramita is the paramita without nonsensical arguments."

"Yes, Well-Appearing One, it is because various nonsensical arguments are eliminated forever."

"World-Honored One, the fathomless prajna paramita is the paramita without arrogance and attachment."

"Yes, Well-Appearing One, it is because all kinds of arrogance and attachment are destroyed."

"World-Honored One, the fathomless prajna paramita is the paramita without turning and movement."

“Yes, Well-Appearing One, it is because it dwells in dharma realm.”

“World-Honored One, the fathomless prajna paramita is the paramita apart from contamination and attachment.”

“Yes, Well-Appearing One, it is because it realizes and is awakened that all dharmas are not illusory.”

“World-Honored One, the fathomless prajna paramita is the unequaled initiated paramita.”

“Yes, Well-Appearing One, it is because all dharmas are without differentiation.”

“World-Honored One, the fathomless prajna paramita is the tranquil paramita.”

“Yes, Well-Appearing One, it is because various dharma forms are unattainable.”

“World-Honored One, the fathomless prajna paramita is the paramita without greed, anger, and ignorance.”

“Yes, Well-Appearing One, it is because all three poisons are removed.”

“World-Honored One, the fathomless prajna paramita is the paramita without vexations.”

“Yes, Well-Appearing One, it has been liberated from differentiation.”

“World-Honored One, the fathomless prajna paramita is the paramita apart from sentient beings.”

“Yes, Well-Appearing One, it is because it knows that sentient beings are nonexistent.”

“World-Honored One, the fathomless prajna paramita is the paramita without termination and destruction.”

“Yes, Well-Appearing One, it is because it can give rise to all dharmas equally.”

“World-Honored One, the fathomless prajna paramita is the paramita without two extremes.”

“Yes, Well-Appearing One, it is because it is apart from the two extremes.”

“World-Honored One, the fathomless prajna paramita is the paramita without mixture and destruction.”

“Yes, Well-Appearing One, it is because all dharmas are not mixed and destructed.”

“World-Honored One, the fathomless prajna paramita is the paramita without grasping and attachment.”

“Yes, Well-Appearing One, it has gone beyond the stage of voice-hearer and the stage of self-enlightened one.”

“World-Honored One, the fathomless prajna paramita is the paramita without differentiations.”

“Yes, Well-Appearing One, all differentiations are unattainable.”

“World-Honored One, the fathomless prajna paramita is the paramita without quantity and limitation.”

“Yes, Well-Appearing One, the quantity and limitation of all dharmas are unattainable.”

“World-Honored One, the fathomless prajna paramita is the empty-space like paramita.”

“Yes, Well-Appearing One, all dharmas are without stagnation and hindrance.”

“World-Honored One, the fathomless prajna paramita is the paramita with impermanence, suffering, and selflessness.”

“Yes, Well-Appearing One, there is no attachment to the extinction, decay, and the driving force of all dharmas.”

“World-Honored One, the fathomless prajna paramita is the paramita with emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration.”

“Yes, Well-Appearing One, it is because it knows that all dharmas are nonexistent, far away from various forms, and without aspiration.”

"World-Honored One, the fathomless prajna paramita is the paramita with internal emptiness, external emptiness and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature."

"Yes, Well-Appearing One, it knows that no dharmas can be emptied."

"World-Honored One, the fathomless prajna paramita is the paramita with the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power."

"Yes, Well-Appearing One, it knows that the body, feeling, mind, and dharma are unattainable; and that it transcends the dharma of voice-hearer and the dharma of self-enlightened one."

"World-Honored One, the fathomless prajna paramita is the paramita of the Thus-Comer."

"Yes, Well-Appearing One, it can accurately teach all dharmas as they really are."

"World-Honored One, the fathomless prajna paramita is the natural paramita."

"Yes, Well-Appearing One, it can turn all dharmas easily and freely."

"World-Honored One, the fathomless prajna paramita is the paramita of the perfect and universal enlightenment."

"Yes, Well-Appearing One, it can perfectly and universally become awakened to the forms of all dharmas."

(The fathomless prajna paramita is equivalent to all dharmas as the dharmas are purified and liberated from bondage, attainment, and vexations.)

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Chapter 13

The Dharani

Section 1

(In the Third Assembly)

In the meantime, Heavenly Emperor Indra thought to himself, “If good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth are privileged to hear the name of the dharma gate of this fathomless prajna paramita, they must have in the past stayed close to numberless Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones. They must have made grand vows and aspirations, planted various virtuous roots, and been absorbed and influenced by lots of virtuous intellectuals. Not to mention if they can write, accept, embrace, read, recite, reflect reasonably on, and give lectures for others on the fathomless prajna paramita. They must have also cultivated as they were taught by the Thus-Comers. You must know that these persons had in the past stayed in innumerable Buddhas’ places to offer services and make offerings respectively to the Buddhas. They had also planted various virtuous roots there, heard the teachings of prajna paramita, and accepted, embraced, reflected on, read, recited, lectured for others on prajna paramita, and cultivated it as they were taught. They then became capable of giving and answering questions about this sutra. They can do this owing to previous powers of blessings. If good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth have made offerings to immeasurable Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones and thus attain pure merits and virtues, they will not be frightened, scared, or terrified when hearing the fathomless prajna paramita. Rather, they will cultivate by following what they have heard. You must know that these persons had in the past made grand vows at immeasurable hundreds of thousands of koti Buddhas’ places and cultivated giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita. That is why they can do what they are doing now.”

Meanwhile, Sariputra also said to the Buddha, “If good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth are not frightened, scared, and terrified when hearing the essential meanings of the fathomless prajna paramita, rather they will write, accept, embrace, read, recite, reflect reasonably on, lecture for others on, disseminate extensively, and cultivate prajna paramita upon hearing, you must know that they are almost the great bodhisattvas without regression. Why? The essential meanings of prajna paramita are too profound to understand. Those who had not cultivated the six paramitas in previous lives will not be able to believe in and understand the essential meanings of prajna paramita instantly upon first hearing of them. World-Honored One, if good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth slander the profound essential meanings of prajna paramita upon hearing them, they must have done so in previous lives. Why? These foolish persons have no pure minds; besides, they are under the powerful impact of previous habits, so they will not believe in the profound essential meanings of prajna paramita when hearing them; they are not fond of them either. Why? These foolish ones had no relationship with various Buddhas, bodhisattvas, and other sages in past lives, nor did they inquire about the ways of practicing and learning the six paramitas, and so forth, and the eighteen distinctive features of Buddha’s wisdom and power. So it is without doubt that when hearing the teaching of the fathomless prajna paramita, they will not believe in it or like it; they will further slander it because their minds are not pure.

At that time, Heavenly Emperor Indra said to Sariputra, “The essential meanings of prajna paramita are very profound, so it is difficult to believe and understand. It is not unusual that those who have not cultivated the six paramitas, and so forth, and the eighteen distinctive features of Buddha’s wisdom and power and the rest of immeasurable and boundless Buddha dharma long enough will not believe in or understand them when hearing the profound essential meanings of prajna paramita; they probably will slander them. The great virtuous one, now I am paying homage to the fathomless prajna paramita. As I pay homage to the fathomless prajna paramita, I equally pay homage to the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge.”

At that time, the Buddha said to Heavenly Emperor Indra, “Yes, it is as you say. To pay homage to prajna paramita is equivalent to paying homage to the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. Why? Kausika, the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge and the rest of immeasurable and boundless merits and virtues that various Buddhas have attained are

accomplished because of prajna paramita. Kausika, if great bodhisattvas would like to dwell in the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge of the Thus-Comers, they should dwell in prajna paramita. If they would like to activate the perfect knowledge of everything, the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena of the Buddhas, they should learn prajna paramita. If they would like to terminate the enduring negative disposition of vexations and realize the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi and turn the wonderful dharma wheel to deliver sentient beings, they should learn prajna paramita. Kausika, if good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth would like to attain stream-entry effect, once-return effect, nonreturn effect, arhat effect, and self-enlightenment bodhi, they should learn prajna paramita. Kausika, if great bodhisattvas would like to establish the voice-hearer-oriented individuals to dwell in the voice-hearer vehicle, self-enlightenment-oriented individuals to dwell in the self-enlightenment vehicle, and bodhisattva-oriented individuals to dwell in the unsurpassed vehicle, they should learn prajna paramita. Kausika, if great bodhisattvas would like to subjugate various other-paths gangs in the dark, they should learn prajna paramita. Kausika, if great bodhisattvas would like to absorb all monks and tame them well, they should learn prajna paramita."

(The Buddha said that if great bodhisattvas would like to achieve various merits and virtues and accomplish many Buddhist services to help sentient beings, they should learn prajna paramita.)

At that time, Heavenly Emperor Indra asked the Buddha, "World-Honored One, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, how should various great bodhisattvas dwell in matter? How should they dwell in feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness? How should they learn matter? How should they learn feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness? And so on, how should they dwell in and learn the eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power?"

The Buddha replied to Heavenly Emperor Indra, "Excellent, excellent! Now you can ask Thus-Comer about such profound meanings with the support of the Buddha's supernatural powers. I am going to tell you about that. Would all of you please listen to me carefully!

"Kausika, if great bodhisattvas do not dwell in and learn matter when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, then they do dwell in and learn matter. If they do not dwell in and

learn feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness, they do dwell in and learn feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness. And so on, if they do not dwell in and learn the eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power, they do dwell in and learn the eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power. Why? Kausika, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, great bodhisattvas will dwell in and learn the nonattainment of matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness, and so forth, and the eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power.

(In response to Kausika's question, the Buddha taught that great bodhisattvas should dwell in and learn the nonattainment of various dharmas. If they do not dwell in and learn these dharmas, they do dwell in and learn them.)

"Furthermore, Kausika, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, if great bodhisattvas neither dwell in nor not dwell in, and neither learn nor not learn matter, they do dwell in and learn matter. If they neither dwell in nor not dwell in, and neither learn nor not learn feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness, they do dwell in and learn feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness. And so on, if they neither dwell in nor not dwell in, and neither learn nor not learn the eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power, they do dwell in and learn the eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power. Why? Kausika, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, great bodhisattvas should contemplate matter, feeling, and so forth, and the eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power and realize as unattainable in the past, future, and the present."

(The Buddha further taught that if great bodhisattvas should neither dwell in nor not dwell in, and neither learn nor not learn various dharmas, they do dwell in and learn various dharmas. They should contemplate various dharmas in the three phases of time as unattainable.)

At that time, Sariputra said to the Buddha, "World-Honored One, so prajna paramita is very profound."

The Buddha replied, "Yes, the realness of matter is very profound, so prajna paramita is very profound. And so on, the realness of the eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power are very profound, so prajna paramita is very profound."

"World-Honored One, so prajna paramita is measureless."

The Buddha replied, "Yes. The realness of matter is measureless, so prajna paramita is measureless. And so on, the realness of the eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power are measureless, so prajna paramita is measureless."

"World-Honored One, so prajna paramita is numberless."

The Buddha replied, "Yes. The realness of matter is numberless, so prajna paramita is numberless. And so on, the realness of the eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power are numberless, so prajna paramita is numberless.

"Furthermore, Sariputra, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, if great bodhisattvas practice the fathomless nature of matter, they do not practice prajna paramita. And so on, if they practice the fathomless natures of the eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power, they do not practice prajna paramita. Why? Sariputra, the fathomless nature of matter is not matter, and so forth, and the fathomless natures of the eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power are not the eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power.

"Furthermore, Sariputra, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, if great bodhisattvas practice the measureless nature of matter, they do not practice prajna paramita; if they practice the measureless natures of the eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power, they do not practice prajna paramita. Why? Sariputra, the measureless nature of matter is not matter, and so forth, and the measureless natures of the eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power are not the eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power.

"Furthermore, Sariputra, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, if great bodhisattvas practice the numberless nature of matter, they do not practice prajna paramita; if they practice the numberless natures of eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power, they do not practice prajna paramita. Why? Sariputra, the numberless nature of matter is not matter, and so forth, and the numberless natures of the eighteen distinctive features of

Buddha's wisdom and power are not the eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power."

(The Buddha stated that if great bodhisattvas practice the fathomless, measureless, and numberless natures of various dharmas, they do not practice these dharmas. The fathomless, measureless, and numberless dharmas are not the dharmas.)

In the meantime, Sariputra said to the Buddha again, "So prajna paramita is very profound, measureless, and numberless. It is hard for novice great-vehicle learners to learn, believe in, and understand. So, we should not teach them prajna paramita. Why? As they happen to hear it, they will be shocked, frightened, and scared. They will not believe in or understand it; they rather will doubt it and slander it. But we should teach prajna paramita to the great bodhisattvas who have already reached the stage of nonregression. Why? Upon hearing the fathomless prajna paramita, they will not be shocked, frightened, or skeptical, nor will they slander it; instead, they will deeply believe in and understand it."

At that time, Heavenly Emperor Indra asked Sariputra, "What faults will one commit if teaching the fathomless prajna paramita to novice great-vehicle learners?"

Sariputra replied, "Teaching the fathomless prajna paramita to novice great-vehicle learners will not only make them shocked and frightened, but also make them skeptical, then they will slander prajna paramita and create negative karmas, and thus will fall into and suffer severely in the three bad destinies. These new learners will be greatly hindered on the path of realizing and attaining the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. Therefore, we should not teach novice great-vehicle practitioners about the fathomless prajna paramita."

(Sariputra said that we should not teach novice great-vehicle practitioners about the fathomless prajna paramita and explained why.)

Meanwhile, Heavenly Emperor Indra asked the long-lived sage Sariputra, "Are some bodhisattvas who have not been conferred the prophecy of attaining the great bodhi in the future not shocked, frightened, and skeptical when hearing the fathomless prajna paramita? Will they develop deep belief in and understanding of prajna paramita without slandering it?"

Sariputra replied, “Yes, Kausika. These great bodhisattvas will be conferred the prophecy by the Buddha of attaining the great bodhi in the future very soon. Kausika, if great bodhisattvas are not shocked, frightened, and skeptical when hearing the fathomless prajna paramita and can further develop deep belief in and understanding of prajna paramita without slandering it, you must know that they have been conferred by the Buddha the prophecy of attaining the great bodhi. If they have not, they will be conferred the prophecy after visiting with one or two Buddhas’ places.”

At that time, the Buddha said to Sariputra, “Yes, it is as you say. Sariputra, if great bodhisattvas have learned the great vehicle for a long time, made great vows for a long time, practiced the six paramitas and the rest of immeasurable and boundless Buddha dharma for a long time, and made offerings to many Buddhas and offered services to many virtuous friends, then they will not be shocked, frightened, and skeptical upon hearing the fathomless prajna paramita. They rather will develop deep belief in and understanding of, accept, embrace, read, recite, reflect reasonably on, lecture for others on, and write the fathomless prajna paramita and cultivate it as they are taught.”

(The Buddha explained why some great bodhisattvas are not frightened upon hearing the fathomless prajna paramita.)

At that time, Sariputra said to the Buddha, “World-Honored One, I would like to say a few similes. I am begging World-Honored One’s kind and merciful permission.”

The Buddha replied to Sariputra, “Yes, you may say as you like.”

Sariputra said, “Some good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth dwelling in great vehicle dreamed that they were cultivating prajna, meditation, diligence, forbearance, pure precept, and giving paramitas and so forth, and sitting peacefully on the wonderful throne of the bodhi. You must know that they are very close to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. Not to mention the bodhisattvas who have cultivated prajna, meditation, diligence, forbearance, pure precept, and giving paramitas when they are awake. These great bodhisattvas will realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi soon. World-Honored One, they will sit

on the throne of the wonderful bodhi soon; they will attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi and turn the wonderful dharma wheel to deliver the sentient beings before long.

"World-Honored One, if good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth, upon hearing the fathomless prajna paramita, accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate and learn diligently, and reflect reasonably on it, you must know that they have learned great vehicle for a long time, their virtuous roots have matured, and they have made offerings frequently to the Buddhas, served many virtuous friends, and planted various virtuous seeds, so that they can accomplish all these merits. World-Honored One, if good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth, after hearing such fathomless prajna paramita, can accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, learn, teach for others, and reflect reasonably on it, you must know that they either have been conferred the prophecy of attaining the great bodhi or will be conferred soon. World-Honored One, these good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth are like the great bodhisattvas, who have dwelled in the stage of nonregression and will realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi soon. That is why they can, after hearing the fathomless prajna paramita, develop deep belief in and understanding of it, and accept, embrace, read, recite, reflect reasonably on, and cultivate it as they are taught, and further teach it for others.

"World-Honored One, someone wandered in wilderness and walked on perilous roads, going as far as one, two, three, four, or five hundred yojanas. As seeing fields, forests, and shepherds, he anticipated the existence of a city or capital ahead, and thought, 'Now it is not far from the city.' He was relaxed and no longer afraid of fierce beasts, wicked robbers, hunger, and thirst. So are various great bodhisattvas. If they hear the fathomless prajna paramita and joyfully accept, embrace, read, recite, reflect reasonably on, and develop a deep belief in and understanding of it, you must know that they will be soon conferred or have already been conferred the prophecy of attaining the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi in the future. These great bodhisattvas no longer fear falling into the stage of voice-hearer or self-enlightened one. Why? It is because they have seen, heard, and made offerings respectfully to the fathomless prajna paramita, and this is the omen of attaining the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi."

(Sariputra used similes to describe the great-vehicle pursuers who have been or will be conferred the prophecy of attaining the great bodhi.)

At that time, the Buddha said to Sariputra, “Yes, it is as you say. You may say more with the support of the Buddha’s powers.”

In the meantime, Sariputra said to the Buddha, “Someone would like to see the ocean, so walked a long way until seeing no more hills and forests, and thought, ‘I can foresee the sea is not far away. Why? There are no hills and forests around the ocean.’ Although he did not see the ocean, he did see the sign, and that would convince one that the ocean was not far away, so he became very excited and said, ‘I am certain I will see the ocean soon. Isn’t it great that my wish will come true?’ World-Honored One, so do various great bodhisattvas, who have heard the fathomless prajna paramita and decided to accept, embrace, read, recite, reflect reasonably on, and develop a deep belief in and understanding of the fathomless prajna paramita. Although they have not been conferred by the Buddha the prophecy, they will soon receive the message that the Buddha will say, ‘You certainly will realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi in the future after such kalpas,’ Why? These great bodhisattvas have seen and heard the fathomless prajna paramita; they have also made offerings respectfully to, accepted, embraced, read, recited, and reflected reasonably on the fathomless prajna paramita. These are the signs preceding the attainment of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.

“World-Honored One, the flowers and the fruit trees are about to blossom and flourish in spring when dried leaves are falling and branches become moist. Upon seeing the phenomena people will say, ‘New flowers, fruits, and leaves will emerge soon. Why? It is because we have seen the signs.’ Men, women, adults, and children in the continent of Jambudvipa are very excited when seeing the omen. They think, ‘We will be able to see the flowers bloom and fruits flourish very soon.’ World-Honored One, so do various great bodhisattvas. Upon hearing the fathomless prajna paramita, they accept, embrace, read, recite, reflect reasonably on, and deeply believe in and understandd it. Their virtuous roots inherited from previous lives now mature. If they can continue to make offerings to the Buddhas and offer services to virtuous friends, they will soon be conferred the prophecy of attaining the great bodhi. World-Honored One, these great bodhisattvas should have this thought, ‘I must have already had the superior powers of virtuous roots to elicit and activate the pursuit of the unsurpassed, universal, and perfect bodhi. That is why upon seeing and hearing the fathomless prajna paramita, I can make offerings respectfully to it, and further read, recite, accept, embrace, develop deep belief in and

understanding of, reflect reasonably on, and cultivate and learn it as diligently as I can.' World-Honored One, in this assembly, many heavenly sons had once heard the teachings of the dharma given by the Buddhas in the past. Now they discussed joyfully and said agreeably, 'In the past, various great bodhisattvas heard prajna paramita and were immediately conferred the prophecy of attaining the great bodhi. Now the great bodhisattvas are also hearing the fathomless prajna paramita and certainly will be conferred the prophecy soon.'

"World-Honored One, a pregnant woman gains weight and feels discomfort whether active or at rest. She eats, sleeps, and speaks less, loses interest in usual activities, and reduces most of her daily tasks due to pregnancy-related suffering. Another woman witnessed the event and realized that this woman was about to give birth to a baby. World-Honored One, the same is true with great bodhisattvas. They have planted virtuous roots, made offerings respectfully to many Buddhas, and served virtuous friends for a long time, and their virtuous roots mature now, so when hearing the prajna paramita, they are able to accept, embrace, read, recite, reflect reasonably on, develop deep belief in and understanding of, and cultivate prajna paramita as diligently as they can. World-Honored One, because of this cause and condition, these great bodhisattvas will be conferred the prophecy of attaining the great bodhi very soon."

At that time, the Buddha admired Sariputra, "Excellent, excellent! You can say similes about the bodhisattva. You must know that your talent of debate and giving lectures is activated because of the support of the Buddha's mighty supernatural powers."

At that time, Well-Appearing One said to the Buddha, "The Thus-Comers are so unique, they can advise and absorb great bodhisattvas very well."

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "Yes, it is as you say. Why? Great bodhisattvas seek unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi out of compassion to benefit and bring happiness to sentient beings. When cultivating and learning the bodhisattva path diligently and attentively, they have adopted four approaches to absorb and benefit immeasurable hundreds of thousands of sentient beings: unconditioned giving, speaking good and kind words, doing things beneficial for others, and getting along with others in harmony and empathy. These great bodhisattvas have not only dwelled peacefully in the path of the ten virtuous karmas themselves but also persuaded and encouraged others to do so. They have not only practiced the four

meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations themselves but also persuaded and encouraged others to do so. They have not only practiced giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita themselves but also persuaded and encouraged others to do so. Basing their practices on expedient skillfulness of prajna paramita, they teach sentient beings to realize and attain stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi, but they do not realize and attain these effects. These great bodhisattvas will not only cultivate all bodhisattva actions diligently themselves but also encourage others to do so. They not only dwell in the bodhisattva stage of nonregression themselves but also encourage others to do so. They not only dignify and purify diligently Buddha lands and assist sentient beings to mature themselves but also encourage others to do so. They not only activate supernatural powers of bodhisattva themselves but also encourage others to do so. They not only purify diligently the dharani gates and samadhi gates themselves but also encourage others to do so. They not only realize the perfect ability to debate themselves but also encourage others to do so. They not only absorb and fulfill perfect physical features themselves but also encourage others to do so. They not only absorb and fulfill pure child nature themselves but also encourage others to do so. They not only cultivate the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena themselves, but also encourage others to do so. They not only terminate the negative disposition of vexations themselves but also encourage others to do so. They not only realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, turn the wonderful dharma wheel, and deliver sentient beings themselves, but also encourage others to do so."

(The Buddha explained how great bodhisattvas teach sentient beings expediently based on compassion with four approaches, guiding them to practice all bodhisattva actions and thus benefit.)

At that time, Well-Appearing One said to the Buddha, "It is unusual, World-Honored One. It is unique, Well-Gone One. The great bodhisattvas have achieved such great accumulation of merits and virtues. They practice the fathomless prajna paramita, realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi to deliver sentient beings for the rest of their lives with an attempt to bring benefits and happiness to them. World-Honored One, how will great bodhisattvas practice and fulfill the fathomless prajna paramita quickly?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “If great bodhisattvas, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, do not see matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena increase or decrease, they will fulfill prajna paramita quickly.

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, if great bodhisattvas, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, do not see dharma and nondharma; the past, future, and present; the virtuous one, not virtuous one, and morally unrelated one; the unconditioned reality and conditioned phenomena; the realm of desire, the realm of form, and the realm of formlessness; giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita; and the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena, then they will fulfill the fathomless prajna paramita quickly. Why? It is because all dharmas are without nature and operations. They cannot be turned. They are illusory, deceptive, and their nature is not solid and not real. They are not at ease. They are without awakening and feeling. They are apart from the ‘I,’ the sentient being, and so forth, and the viewer.”

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One said to the Buddha again, “What the Thus-Comer says is unbelievable.”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “Yes. What the Thus-Comer says is unbelievable. You must know, Well-Appearing One, because matter is unbelievable, what the Thus-Comer says is unbelievable; because feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness are unbelievable, what the Thus-Comer says is unbelievable. And so on, because the perfect knowledge of everything is unbelievable, what the Thus-Comer says is unbelievable; because the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena are unbelievable, what the Thus-Comer says is unbelievable. If great bodhisattvas, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, know that matter, feeling, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena are unbelievable while they do not think that they are unbelievable, then they will practice and fulfill the fathomless prajna paramita quickly.

(The Buddha taught Well-Appearing One about how great bodhisattvas fulfill the fathomless prajna paramita quickly.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, if great bodhisattvas, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, do not think matter, feeling, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena as unbelievable or not unbelievable, then they will fulfill the fathomless prajna paramita quickly."

At that time, Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "The essential meanings of prajna paramita are very profound, but who can believe in and understand them?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "If great bodhisattvas have cultivated the six paramitas long enough, planted the virtuous roots long enough, and made offerings respectively to the Buddhas and served virtuous friends very often, then they can develop a belief in and understanding of the fathomless prajna paramita."

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked, "How can we identify the great bodhisattvas who have cultivated the six paramitas and planted the virtuous roots long enough, and have made offerings respectfully to the Buddhas and served the virtuous friends very often?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "If great bodhisattvas, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, neither differentiate nor not differentiate among matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena, including their phenomena and natures, then we can tell that these great bodhisattvas have cultivated the six paramitas long enough, planted the virtuous roots long enough, and made offerings to the Buddhas and served the virtuous friends very often."

At that time, Well-Appearing One said to the Buddha, "Such prajna paramita is very profound."

The Buddha replied, "Yes, because matter is very profound, prajna paramita is very profound; because feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness are very profound, prajna paramita is very profound. And so on, because the perfect knowledge of everything is very profound, prajna paramita is very profound; because the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena are very profound, prajna paramita is very profound."

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One said to the Buddha, “Such prajna paramita is a great treasury.”

The Buddha replied, “Yes, because it can give sentient beings the treasures of the merits and virtues. This great treasury can give sentient beings the treasures of the path of the ten virtuous karmas, four meditations, four immeasurable minds, four formless concentrations, and five supernatural powers. It can give sentient beings the treasures of the six paramitas, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena. It can give sentient beings the treasures of stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth and self-enlightenment bodhi. It can give sentient beings the treasures of all bodhisattva actions, the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas, and the turning of the dharma wheel. That is why prajna paramita is called the great treasury.”

(The Buddha explained why prajna paramita is called the great treasury.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One said to the Buddha, “The fathomless prajna paramita is a pure accumulation.”

The Buddha replied, “Yes, it is because all dharmas represent a pure accumulation. You must know, Well-Appearing One, because matter is pure, the fathomless prajna paramita is pure. Because feeling is pure, the fathomless prajna paramita is pure. And so on, because the perfect knowledge of all phenomena is pure, the fathomless prajna paramita is pure.”

At that time, Well-Appearing One said to the Buddha, “It is unusual, World-Honored One. It is unique, Well-Gone One. Because prajna paramita is very profound, it may encounter many hindrances. But as it is extensively taught, no hindrances will arise.”

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, “Yes. The fathomless prajna paramita may encounter many hindrances. Owing to the Buddha’s supernatural powers, although it is extensively taught, hindrances do not arise. Therefore, if good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth, when pursuing the great vehicle, would like to write, accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, learn, reflect on, and lecture for others on the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita, they should do them quickly. Why? As fathomless prajna paramita may encounter many difficulties,

we should not allow difficulties to hinder their writing, reading, reciting, and so forth, and giving lectures.

"You must know, Well-Appearing One, if good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth would like to write the fathomless prajna paramita for one month, two months, three months, or one year, they should stay in that mindfulness during the period to work diligently and attentively without giving up until finish it. If they would like to accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, learn, reflect on, and lecture for others on the fathomless prajna paramita for one month, two months, three months, or one year, they should also concentrate on the task and work diligently and attentively without giving up until finish it. Why? It is because the fathomless prajna paramita is a great magic treasure ball, which may encounter many troubles."

At that time, Well-Appearing One said to the Buddha, "It is unusual, World-Honored One. It is unique, Well-Gone One. The fathomless prajna paramita, namely the great magic treasure ball, may encounter many difficulties and hindrances. But if one keeps writing, accepting, embracing, reading, reciting, cultivating, learning, reflecting on, and lecturing for others on it, no demon can hinder him."

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, "Demons are always anxious to hinder bodhisattvas from writing, reading, reciting, and so forth, and lecturing on the fathomless prajna paramita. But the demons lack the power, thus cannot hinder great bodhisattvas from writing, reading, or lecturing on the fathomless prajna paramita."

Meanwhile, Sariputra asked the Buddha, "Whose supernatural powers make evil demons incapable of hindering the bodhisattvas from writing, reading, and so forth?"

The Buddha replied to Sariputra, "The Buddha's supernatural powers can make evil demons incapable of hindering bodhisattvas from writing, reading, and so forth. Furthermore, Sariputra, the supernatural powers of various Buddhas in the worlds of the ten directions also can make evil demons incapable of hindering bodhisattvas from writing, reading, and so forth. Furthermore, Sariputra, all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones have always kept and protected the bodhisattvas who are practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, and this makes evil demons incapable of hindering good gentlemen,

and so forth of great vehicle from writing, reading, and so forth, and lecturing on the fathomless prajna paramita. Why? Sariputra, various Buddhas, the World-Honored Ones, have protected and kept the virtuous karmas made by the bodhisattvas, the practitioners of the fathomless prajna paramita, in their minds, and this makes evil demons incapable of hindering them.

(The Buddha said that Buddha's supernatural powers can keep bodhisattvas and make demons incapable of hindering bodhisattvas from writing, reading, and so forth, and lecturing on the fathomless prajna paramita.)

"Furthermore, Sariputra, if bodhisattvas can write, accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, learn, reflect on, and lecture on the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita, they naturally will be protected and kept in the minds of all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones who are teaching the dharma in the worlds of the ten directions. If they are protected and kept in the minds of the Buddhas, they naturally will be free from the hindrances of evil demons. Furthermore, Sariputra, if good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth with pure belief can write, accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, learn, reflect on, and lecture on the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita, they should think, 'I can write, read, and so forth, and lecture on the fathomless prajna paramita because I am protected by the supernatural powers of and kept in the minds of the Buddhas, the World-Honored Ones, who are teaching the dharma in the worlds of the ten directions.'"

In the meantime, Sariputra said to the Buddha, "If good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth can write, accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, learn, reflect on, and lecture on the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita, they will all be protected by the supernatural powers of and kept in the minds of the compassionate Buddhas in the ten directions, so that all the superior, virtuous karmas that they are doing will not be hindered by evil demonic armies."

At that time, the Buddha said to Sariputra, "Yes, it is as you say. If good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth can write, accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, learn, reflect on, and lecture on the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita, you must know that they will be kept in the mindfulness of and protected by the supernatural powers of the Buddhas, the World-Honored Ones."

In the meantime, Sariputra said to the Buddha again, “If good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth can write, accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, learn, reflect on, and lecture on the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita, all the Thus-Comers teaching the dharma in the worlds of the ten directions will be aware and pleased to protect and keep them in mind. If good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth can write, accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, learn, reflect on, and lecture on the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita, the Buddhas, the World-Honored Ones who are teaching the dharma in the worlds of the ten directions will watch them with the Buddha eyes, and protect and keep them in mind with compassion and loving-kindness, then all virtuous things that these good gentlemen, gentlewomen and so forth are undertaking will be fulfilled.”

At that time, the Buddha said to Sariputra, “Yes, it is as you say. If good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth can write, accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, learn, reflect on, and lecture on the fathomless prajna paramita, the Buddhas, the World-Honored Ones who are teaching the dharma in the worlds of the ten directions will always watch, recognize, protect, and keep them in mind, so evil demons can do nothing to harass and hinder them, and all virtuous karmas that they are doing will be fulfilled very soon. Furthermore, Sariputra, if good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth dwelling in the bodhisattva vehicle can write, accept, embrace, read, recite, reflect on, and lecture on the fathomless prajna paramita, you must know that they are already very close to the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge and evil demons cannot hinder or disturb them.

“Furthermore, Sariputra, if good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth dwelling peacefully in the great vehicle can write the fathomless prajna paramita, adorn and dignify it, and read and recite it, you must know that they will not only develop deep belief in and understanding of the fathomless prajna paramita, but also make various best wreaths, perfumes and incenses, and so forth, and lamps as offerings respectfully to the fathomless prajna paramita. The Thus-Comers’ Buddha eyes will always watch, recognize, protect, and keep them in mind. Because of this cause and condition, these good gentlemen, and so forth certainly will gain great fortunes, benefits, effects, and rewards.

"Furthermore, Sariputra, if good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth dwelling in the bodhisattva vehicle can write, accept, embrace, read, recite, and make offerings respectfully to the fathomless prajna paramita, they will be able to reach the stage of nonregression because of these virtuous roots. They will not be far away from various Buddhas and bodhisattvas so that they can hear the correct dharma, thus will not fall into the bad destinies; rather, they will be reborn in heaven or human world to enjoy peaceful, happy life. Because of these virtuous roots, these good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth will not be far away from giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna paramitas, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena and the rest of immeasurable and boundless Buddha dharmas. They will realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi soon. Therefore, if good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth would like to attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, they should diligently write, accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, learn, reflect on, and lecture for others on the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita, and make offerings respectfully to prajna paramita at all times without brief interruption."

(The Buddha reiterated how great bodhisattvas should work diligently to attain the unsurpassed bodhi.)

At that time, Sariputra asked the Buddha, "World-Honored One, after the Buddha passes into nirvana, in which directions will the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita flourish?"

The Buddha replied to Sariputra, "The fathomless sutras of prajna paramita will spread and flourish in the southeast after I enter nirvana. Many monks, nuns, laymen, and laywomen dwelling peacefully in the great vehicle in that direction will deeply believe in and love, write, accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, learn, reflect on, and lecture on the fathomless prajna paramita. They will further make various most wonderful wreaths, perfumes and incenses, and so forth, and brilliant lamps as offerings to esteem the fathomless prajna paramita. Because of these virtuous roots, they will not fall into bad destinies. They rather will be reborn in heaven or in human world to enjoy wealth, nobility, and happiness. Owing to these powers, their cultivation of the six paramitas will be fulfilled quickly. They thus will make offerings respectfully to esteem and acclaim various Buddhas, the World-Honored Ones. By following one of the three

vehicles most suitable for them, they will continue to cultivate, learn, and gradually get rid of all defilements and vexations.

"Furthermore, Sariputra, after I enter nirvana, the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita will flourish first in the southeast and then in the south. Like in the southeast, many monks, nuns, laymen, and laywomen will dwell peacefully in the great vehicle in the south. They also will develop deep belief in and fondness of the fathomless prajna paramita and write, accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, learn, reflect on, and lecture on it. They will further make various most wonderful wreaths, perfumes and incenses, and so forth, and brilliant lamps as offerings respectfully to the fathomless prajna paramita. Owing to these virtuous roots, they will not fall into bad destinies; rather, they will be reborn in heaven or human world to enjoy wealth, nobility, and happiness. Because of these powers, they will be able to fulfill cultivation of the six paramita quickly. They thus will make offerings respectfully to esteem and acclaim various Buddhas, the World-Honored Ones. By following one of the three vehicles most suitable for them, they will continue to cultivate, learn, and gradually get rid of all defilements and vexations.

"Furthermore, Sariputra, after I enter nirvana, the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita will spread from the south to the southwest. They will thrive in the southwest, and many monks, nuns, laymen, and laywomen dwelling peacefully in the great vehicle will also develop deep belief in and fondness of the fathomless prajna paramita, and write, accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, learn, reflect on, and lecture on it. They will further make various most wonderful wreaths, perfumes and incenses, and so forth, and brilliant lamps as offerings respectfully to the fathomless prajna paramita. Owing to these virtuous roots, they will not fall into bad destinies; rather, they will be reborn in heaven or human world to enjoy wealth, nobility, and happiness. Because of these powers, they will be able to fulfill the six paramita quickly. They thus will make offerings respectfully to esteem and acclaim various Buddhas, the World-Honored Ones. By following one of the three vehicles most suitable for them, they will continue to cultivate, learn, and gradually get rid of all defilements and vexations.

"Furthermore, Sariputra, after I enter nirvana, the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita will spread from the southwest to the northwest. They will flourish in the northwest, and many monks, nuns, laymen, and laywomen dwelling peacefully in the great vehicle will also develop

deep belief in and fondness of the fathomless prajna paramita, and write, accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, learn, reflect on, and lecture on it. They will further make various most wonderful wreaths, perfumes and incenses, and so forth, and brilliant lamps as offerings respectfully to the fathomless prajna paramita. Because of these virtuous roots, they will not fall into bad destinies; rather, they will be reborn in heaven or human world to enjoy wealth, nobility, and happiness. Owing to these powers, they will be able to fulfill the six paramita quickly. They thus will make offerings respectfully to esteem and acclaim various Buddhas, the World-Honored Ones. By following one of the three vehicles most suitable for them, they will continue to cultivate, learn, and gradually get rid of all defilements and vexations.

"Furthermore, Sariputra, after I enter nirvana, the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita will spread from the northwest to the north. They will flourish in the north, and many monks, nuns, laymen, and laywomen dwelling peacefully in the great vehicle will also develop deep belief in and fondness of the fathomless prajna paramita, and write, accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, learn, reflect on, and lecture on it. They will further make various most wonderful wreaths, perfumes and incenses, and so forth, and brilliant lamps as offerings respectfully to the fathomless prajna paramita. Because of these virtuous roots, they will not fall into bad destinies; rather, they will be reborn in heaven or human world to enjoy wealth, nobility, and happiness. Owing to these powers, they will fulfill the six paramita quickly. They thus will make offerings respectfully to esteem and acclaim various Buddhas, the World-Honored Ones. By following one of the three vehicles most suitable for them, they will continue to cultivate, learn, and gradually get rid of all defilements and vexations.

"Furthermore, Sariputra, after I enter nirvana, the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita will spread from the north to the northeast. They will flourish in the northeast, and many monks, nuns, laymen, and laywomen dwelling peacefully in the great vehicle will also develop deep belief in and fondness of the fathomless prajna paramita, and write, accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, learn, reflect on, and lecture on it. They will further make various most wonderful wreaths, perfumes and incenses, and so forth, and brilliant lamps as offerings respectfully to the fathomless prajna paramita. Because of these virtuous roots, they will not fall into bad destinies; rather, they will be reborn in heaven or human world to enjoy wealth, nobility, and happiness. Owing to these powers, they will be able to fulfill the six paramita quickly. They thus are more

able to make offerings respectfully to esteem and acclaim various Buddhas, the World-Honored Ones. By following one of the three vehicles most suitable for them, they will continue to cultivate, learn, and gradually get rid of all defilements and vexations.

"Furthermore, Sariputra, five hundred years after I enter nirvana, the fathomless prajna paramita will undertake tremendous Buddhist services in the northeast. Why? Sariputra, the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita are greatly esteemed by all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones, and thus are protected by them and kept in their minds. Sariputra, the dharmas and the precepts not obtained by the Buddhas will decline and disappear, while the unsurpassed correct dharma and the precepts realized and attained by the Buddhas are exactly the profound sutras of prajna paramita. Sariputra, if good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth dwelling peacefully in the great vehicle in the northeast can develop deep belief in and great fondness of the fathomless prajna paramita, and further write, accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, learn, reflect on, and lecture on it. I will always protect them and keep them in my mind so they will not be disturbed or annoyed.

"Sariputra, if good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth dwelling in the great vehicle in the northeast can write the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita and make various most wonderful wreaths, perfumes and incenses, and so forth, and brilliant lamps as offerings respectfully to them, I will say that they will not fall into bad destinies because of these virtuous roots. They will rather be reborn in heaven or human world to enjoy wealth and happiness. Owing to these powers, their cultivation of the six paramitas will be fulfilled quickly. They will further be able to make offerings respectfully to esteem and acclaim various Buddhas, the World-Honored Ones. They will then follow the three vehicles to cultivate and learn and gradually attain nirvana. Why? Sariputra, I have watched with my Buddha eyes to testify to, praise, and acclaim the blessings gained by these good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth. All the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones in the ten directions have also watched with the Buddha eyes to testify to, praise, and acclaim the blessings gained by these good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth."

(The Buddha foresaw the spread and flourishment of the fathomless prajna paramita in the future after the Buddha enter nirvana.)

In the meantime, Sariputra asked the Buddha again, “Will the fathomless prajna paramita be extensively disseminated in the northeast five hundred years after the Buddha enters nirvana?”

The Buddha replied to Sariputra, “Yes. Five hundred years after I enter nirvana, the fathomless prajna paramita will be extensively disseminated in the northeast. Furthermore, Sariputra, five hundred years after my entering nirvana, if good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth dwelling peacefully in the grest vehicle in the northeast can hear the fathomless prajna paramita, develop deep belief in and great fondness of, and accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, learn, reflect on, and lecture on it, they must have initiated the aspiration to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal enlightenment long enough, cultivated bodhisattva actions long enough, and made offerings to the Buddhas and served the virtuous friends often enough. They have cultivated bodily precepts and mind wisdom for a long time and all the virtuous roots that they have planted will mature by that time. Because of the powers of the blessings, they will be able to hear and develop deep belief in and fondness of the fathomless prajna paramita; they will further write, accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate and learn diligently, reflect reasonably on, and lecture extensively for sentient beings on the fathomless prajna paramita.”

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Chapter 13

The Dharani

Section 2

(In the Third Assembly)

At that time, Sariputra asked the Buddha, “World-Honored One, five hundred years after the Buddha enters nirvana when the dharma is going to decline, will there be some good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth dwelling peacefully in the great vehicle in the northeast develop deep belief in and adore the prajna paramita upon hearing it, and further write, accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, learn, reflect on, and lecture for others on it?”

The Buddha replied to Sariputra, “Immeasurable good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth will dwell in the great vehicle in the northeast five hundred years after my entering nirvana when the dharma is going to decline, but only very few of them can hear the fathomless prajna paramita and develop a deep belief in and adore it, or write, accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, learn, reflect on, and lecture for others on it.

“Furthermore, Sariputra, if good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth dwelling in the great vehicle hear the fathomless prajna paramita and are not shocked, scared, and frightened, instead they develop a deep belief in, adore, write, accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, learn, reflect on, and lecture on it, then they are the very unusual ones. Why? Sariputra, these good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth dwelling in the great vehicle must have stayed close to, made offerings respectfully to esteem and acclaim immeasurable Thus-Comers and bodhisattvas and have inquired them about the fathomless essential meanings of prajna paramita.

“Moreover, Sariputra, these good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth dwelling in the great vehicle certainly will fulfill giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita before long. They will even fulfill the perfect knowledge of the forms of the

paths and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena, as well as the rest of immeasurable and boundless Buddha dharmas soon.

"Furthermore, Sariputra, it is because these good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth dwelling in the great vehicle have been protected by and kept in the mindfulness of all Thus-Comers, absorbed by numberless virtuous friends, and guided by superior virtuous roots, because they have dedicated themselves to bringing benefits to many sentient beings. They have pursued the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi under the influence of all such positive conditions. Why? Sariputra, I have often taught them about the dharmas correspondent with the perfect knowledge of all phenomena, and the Thus-Comers in the past had also often taught them about the dharmas correspondent with the perfect knowledge of all phenomena. Because of this cause and condition, these good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth, will be able to aspire to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi in their future lives and teach the dharma properly to others so the others will also aspire to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.

"Furthermore, Sariputra, the minds and bodies of these good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth dwelling in the great vehicle are all in peace and at rest. The evil demons and their gang members cannot do anything to change the determination of these good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth in aspiring to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, nor can other evil ones slander prajna paramita and prevent the good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth from pursuing the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.

"Furthermore, Sariputra, the various good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth dwelling in the great vehicle will enjoy expansive and great pleasures of the wonderful dharma when hearing the fathomless prajna paramita; they are also able to establish numberless sentient beings in the superior and virtuous dharmas and allow them to aspire to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.

"Furthermore, Sariputra, the good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth dwelling in the great vehicle have sworn before me, 'We should establish well numberless hundreds of thousands of sentient beings so they will initiate the aspiration to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi and cultivate various great bodhisattva actions. We will also demonstrate to, encourage, admire, and celebrate them so they are able to be conferred the prophecy of achieving

the stage of nonregression in the pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.' I was very pleased to see that. Why? Sariputra, as I contemplated, I saw that these good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth have made the vows in accord with their deepest minds and I am certain that they will be able to establish well numberless hundreds of thousands of sentient beings to let them initiate the aspiration to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi and cultivate various great bodhisattva actions. They will also be able to demonstrate to, encourage, admire, and celebrate the sentient beings so to let them achieve the stage of nonregression. These good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth must have sworn before numberless Buddhas in the past, 'We should establish well numberless hundreds of thousands of sentient beings so they will initiate the aspiration to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi and cultivate various great bodhisattva actions. We will also demonstrate to, encourage, admire, and celebrate them so they will be conferred the prophecy of achieving the stage of nonregression in the pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.' The Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones in the past were very pleased to hear that. Why? The various Buddhas in the past had also contemplated and known that these good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth had took the vows in accord with their deepest minds and would be able to establish well numberless hundreds of thousands of sentient beings to let them initiate the aspiration to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi and cultivate various great bodhisattva actions. They would also be able to demonstrate to, encourage, admire, and celebrate the sentient beings to allow them to achieve the stage of nonregression.

"Furthermore, Sariputra, these good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth dwelling in the great vehicle have possessed broad, great belief and insight and so are able to cultivate broad and great almsgiving based on exquisite sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch. They are further able to plant broad and great virtuous roots and thus absorb broad and great rewards to benefit all sentient beings. For the sake of sentient beings, they will abandon all they possess internally and externally without reluctance. They will transfer all virtuous roots they have planted and are willing to be reborn in various Buddha lands in other directions where the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones are currently teaching the unsurpassed dharma of the fathomless prajna paramita. After hearing such unsurpassed dharma of the fathomless prajna paramita, they will further establish well numberless hundreds of

thousands of sentient beings, allowing them to initiate aspiration to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal enlightenment and cultivate various bodhisattva actions; they will also demonstrate to, encourage, admire, and celebrate numberless sentient beings, letting them achieve the stage of nonregression in the pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi."

(The Buddha foresaw and described the development of the fathomless dharma of prajna paramita in the northeast five hundred years after he entered nirvana.)

In the meantime, Sariputra said to the Buddha, "It is unusual, World-Honored One. It is unique, Well-Gone One. The Buddha has fully realized all dharmas in the past, future, and the present; realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable of all dharmas. The Buddha also has understood the essential meanings and differences of the teachings of all dharmas, the different mental images of sentient beings, and the Buddhas, bodhisattvas, voice-hearers and their Buddha lands in the past, future, and the present. The Buddha has fully known all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones in the worlds of the ten directions and the dharma they teach, as well as all the events relevant to bodhisattva, voice-hearers, and Buddha lands. World-Honored One, if great bodhisattvas keep pursuing the six paramitas bravely, diligently, and tirelessly, can they someday attain the six paramitas?"

The Buddha replied to Sariputra, "If great bodhisattvas keep pursuing the six paramitas bravely, diligently, and tirelessly, they will attain the six paramitas anytime. They will not be restricted by time. Why? Sariputra, as these great bodhisattvas keep pursuing the six paramitas bravely, diligently, tirelessly, and joyfully, all Buddhas will always protect them and keep them in mind."

Sariputra asked, "World-Honored One, how can we say that they have attained the six paramitas if they cannot attain the sutras correspondent with the six paramitas?"

The Buddha replied to Sariputra, "If the great bodhisattvas have deeply believed in and pursued bravely and diligently the six paramitas even without caring for their own bodies and lives, it does not make sense to say that they cannot attain the sutras correspondent with the six paramitas. Why? Sariputra, to pursue the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, these great

bodhisattvas have always demonstrated to, encouraged, admired, and celebrated various sentient beings to let them accept, embrace, read, recite, reflect on, cultivate, and learn the sutras correspondent with the six paramitas. Because of the virtuous roots thus caused, they will always attain the sutras correspondent with the six paramitas wherever they are reborn. They will be able to accept, embrace, read, recite, and diligently and bravely practice them as they are taught, assist sentient beings to mature, and dignify and purify Buddha lands uninterruptedly until realizing and attaining the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi."

Chapter 14

The Demonic Hindrances

(In the Third Assembly)

At that time, Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "World-Honored One, the Buddha has already talked with admiration about the merits and virtues obtained by the bodhisattvas after they have diligently and bravely cultivated the six paramitas, assisted sentient beings to grow and mature, and dignified and purified Buddha lands with an attempt to attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. World-Honored One, how can we identify that the bodhisattvas have encountered demonic hindrances when they undertake cultivations to attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "If the great bodhisattvas love to speak about the essential meanings of the dharma, but cannot speak and debate eloquently, you must know that they are encountering a demonic hindrance of bodhisattva."

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "Why is it said that the great bodhisattvas who love to speak about the essential meanings of the dharma but cannot speak and debate eloquently are encountering a demonic hindrance of bodhisattva?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “If great bodhisattvas, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, can cultivate the fathomless prajna paramita, meditation paramita, and so forth, and giving paramita but cannot fulfill them, they are encountering a demonic hindrance.

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, if great bodhisattvas love to talk about the essential meanings of the dharma, but speak inappropriately, you must know that they are encountering a demonic hindrance.”

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, “Why is it said that if bodhisattvas love to talk about the essential meanings of the dharma but do not speak appropriately, they are encountering a demonic hindrance?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “These great bodhisattvas have cultivated giving, pure precept, and so forth, and prajna paramitas. They love to talk about the essential meanings of the dharma, but they talk abruptly and inappropriately, so they ruin what they have cultivated because they are encountering a demonic hindrance.

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, when accepting, embracing, reading, reciting, reflecting on, cultivating, learning, talking about, and listening to the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita, they frequently stretch and yawn, stop to laugh and joke abruptly, and scorn each other. They disturb each other and feel restless in their bodies and minds. They incorrectly understand and make mistakes by inverting words and sentences. They are confused about the meanings, and cannot enjoy how well they taste, and something suddenly happens to stop them from reading and so forth. We must know that they are encountering demonic hindrances.”

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One said to the Buddha, “When listening to or accepting, embracing, reading, reciting, reflecting on, cultivating, learning, and writing the fathomless prajna paramita, a thought abruptly appears in the minds of the good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth of the bodhisattva vehicle, ‘I found no interest in this sutra, why am I bothering to do this?’ They then discard what they are doing, including accepting, reading, and so forth, and lecturing for others on prajna paramita.”

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, “These good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth of the bodhisattva vehicle had not cultivated the six paramitas long enough in their past lives, so they could not find any interest in the sutras. They do not adore it, so they discard it.

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, if good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth of the bodhisattva vehicle think, ‘I don’t need to be conferred the prophecy of the attainment of the great bodhi by the Buddha, why am I bothering to listen to it?’ Because their minds are not pure, they choose to stand up from the seats and leave without affection. We must know that they are encountering a demonic hindrance.”

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, “Why does the Buddha not confer on them the prophecy and let them leave when learning the fathomless prajna paramita sutras?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “Theses bodhisattvas have not yet entered onto the correct path of nonarising, so they should not be conferred the prophecy. If they are, they will become very arrogant, and that will not be good for them.

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, if good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth hear prajna paramita and think, ‘My name is not mentioned in the sutras, so why am I bothering to listen to them?’ Because their minds are not pure, they choose to stand up from the seats and leave without reluctance. We must know that they are encountering a demonic hindrance.”

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, “Why are the names of these bodhisattvas not mentioned in the fathomless sutras?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “Because these bodhisattvas have not been conferred the prophecy of attaining the great bodhi in the future, their names should not be mentioned in the sutras.

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, if good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth hear prajna paramita and have this thought in mind, ‘The name of the village or city where I was born is not recorded in the sutras, why am I bothering to listen to them?’ Because their minds are not

pure, they choose to stand up from the seats and leave without reluctance. We must know that they are encountering a demonic hindrance."

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "Why are the names of the villages or cities where the bodhisattvas were born not recorded in such fathomless sutras?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "The names of these bodhisattvas are not mentioned in the sutras, so the places where they were born should not be recorded.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, if good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth hear the fathomless sutras and give up and leave because of impure minds, the merits and virtues they have accumulated in many kalpas will decrease, while the crimes of hindering the bodhi will increase. It will depend on how much they have lost so they need to make up. They will have to work more diligently in the pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi to catch up with what they had previously achieved. Therefore, the bodhisattvas should not get bored and give up if they want to attain the unsurpassed bodhi quickly

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, if good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth of the bodhisattva vehicle abandon the fathomless prajna paramita sutras and turn to other sutras, we must know that they are encountering a demonic hindrance. Why? Because what these good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth have abandoned is the fathomless prajna paramita, the foundation of the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, and what they turn to are less essential sutras that are like twigs and leaves of a tree, through which they will not be able to attain the great bodhi of the Buddha."

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "Why will the less essential sutras, like the twigs and leaves of a tree, not initiate and inspire the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge?"

The Buddha replied, "Well-Appearing One, the dharmas correspondent with the two vehicles consist of sutras teaching the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and the noble eightfold path, the three liberation gates, and the four noble truths. If good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth cultivate by following these sutras, they will attain stream-entry effect, once-return effect, nonreturn effect, arhat effect, or self-enlightenment bodhi

instead of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. These are the so-called texts of the twigs and leaves that will not activate the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. The fathomless prajna paramita, on the contrary, is like the root of a tree that possesses great powers and can activate the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. If good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth abandon the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita and turn to other sutras, they certainly cannot attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. Why? Only the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita can give rise to all merits and virtues of the world and beyond the world for all great bodhisattvas, while the rest of the sutras do not. If great bodhisattvas cultivate and learn prajna paramita, they equally cultivate and learn all treasures of merits and virtues of the world and beyond the world.

(The Buddha enumerated the examples of encountering demonic hindrances for bodhisattvas. He also emphasized only prajna paramita could bring about merits and virtues of and beyond the world, which enable fulfillment of the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, a hungry dog did not ask the master for food but turned to the servant looking for something else; so are the good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth of the bodhisattva vehicle in the generations to come who will abandon the foundation of all Buddha dharma, the fathomless prajna paramita, and turn to other sutras in accord with the two vehicles. We must know that they are encountering a demonic hindrance.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, someone is looking for a fragrant elephant. He found one but abandoned it, turned to look for the elephant's footprints. What do you think about this person? Is this an intelligent one?"

Well-Appearing One replied, "No, I don't think so."

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, "So are the good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth in the generations to come, who will abandon the foundation of all Buddha dharma, the fathomless prajna paramita, and turn to the sutras in accord with the two vehicles. We must know that they are encountering a demonic hindrance.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, someone was eager to see the ocean, but when coming close to the coast, the person returned and looked at the ox footprints and thought, 'Is the

ocean deeper and wider than this one?' What do you think of this person? Is this person intelligent?"

Well-Appearing One replied, "No, I don't think so."

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, "So the good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth in the generations to come will abandon the foundation of all Buddha dharma, the fathomless prajna paramita, and turn to learn the sutras in accord with the two vehicles. We must know that this is a demonic hindrance for them."

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, a carpenter and his disciples planned to build a magnificent palace like Heavenly Emperor Indra's one. After seeing the palace, they returned to the sun-moon palace. What do you think about this? Can the carpenter and his disciples build a new palace as magnificent as the Heavenly Emperor's one?"

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

The Buddha asked again, "Well-Appearing One, do you think the carpenter is intelligent?"

Well-Appearing One, "No, he is not."

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, "So are the good gentlemen, and so forth, of the bodhisattva vehicle in the generations to come. They would like to pursue the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, but they will abandon the fathomless prajna paramita and turn to the sutras in accord with the two vehicles. They certainly cannot attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. You must know that this is a demonic hindrance."

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, someone would like to see the wheel-turning holy king. He saw the king, but did not recognize him, and turned to another place. He saw an ordinary king and thought, 'I don't think the appearance and virtuous powers of the holy king are different from this king.' What do you think of this? Is this person intelligent?"

Well-Appearing One replied, "No, I don't think so."

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, “So are the good gentlemen, and so forth, of the great vehicle in the generations to come, who would like to aspire to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, but abandon the fathomless prajna paramita and turn to learn the sutras correspondent with the two vehicles, and say, ‘These sutras are not different from those ones. I don’t think we need those sutras.’ Because of this reason they cannot attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi that they are pursuing. You must know that they are encountering a demonic hindrance.”

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, a hungry person attained hundreds of delicious meals, but he abandoned them and turned to look for two-month-old food. What do you think about this? Is this person intelligent?”

Well-Appearing One replied, “No, he is not.”

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, “So are the good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth of the bodhisattva vehicle in the generations to come, who abandon the fathomless prajna paramita sutras but turn to other sutras in accord with the two vehicles with an attempt to pursue the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. It will turn out that all their effort is in vain. What do you think about this? Are these people intelligent?”

Well-Appearing One replied, “No, they are not.”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “You are right. You must know that they are encountering a demonic hindrance.

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, a poor man acquired a piece of invaluable treasure, but he abandoned it and looked for the crystal. What do you think about this? Is this an intelligent man?”

Well-Appearing One replied, “No, he is not.”

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, “So are the good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth of the bodhisattva vehicle in the generations to come, who abandon the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita but turn to learn the texts in accord with the two vehicles attempting to pursue

the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. All their effort will turn out in vain. What do you think about this? Are these people intelligent?"

Well-Appearing One replied, "No, they are not."

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, "You are right. You must know that they are encountering a demonic hindrance.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, various good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth of the bodhisattva vehicle are writing about the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita, and in the meantime a lot of arguments and debates arise in discussing different dharma gates, so that their writing is compelled to discontinue. You must know that this is a demonic hindrance. What are the dharmas that people love to talk and argue about? They love to talk about the sight, sound, smell, and touch; the six paramitas; the realms of desire, form, and formlessness; the merits and virtues of acceptance, practice, reading, and reciting; taking care of the people who are ill, as well as other positive activities that induce heavenly and worldly happy results. They also love to talk and argue about the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and the factors for enlightenment; various meditations, liberations, samadhi, and samapatti; internal emptiness, and so forth, and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. All these talks are demonic hindrances. Why? In the fathomless prajna paramita, all the forms of arguing about the dharmas are unattainable. Their forms are unattainable because they are without general contemplation and specific investigation. They are inconceivable and without reflection. They are without arising or extinction, contamination or purification, and attentiveness or distraction. They have no verbal expressions, such as names and words, and are unspeakable. Why? In the fathomless prajna paramita, all the dharmas mentioned above are nonexistent and unattainable. When writing the fathomless prajna paramita sutras, if the good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth of the great vehicle are disturbed by these dharmas and cannot finish the writing, you must know that it is also a demonic hindrance."

(The Buddha enumerated more examples of demonic hindrance.)

Meanwhile, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "World-Honored One, can the fathomless prajna paramita be written?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “No, it cannot be written. Why? It is because in the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita, the self-natures of the six paramitas, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena are nonexistent and unattainable. Well-Appearing One, the statement that the self-natures of all dharmas are nonexistent and unattainable means all dharmas are without nature. Being without nature is the fathomless prajna paramita. The dharmas without nature cannot write the dharmas without nature, so the fathomless prajna paramita cannot be written. You must know, Well-Appearing One, being attached to the thought that prajna paramita has no nature is encountering a demonic hindrance.

“Furthermore, World-Honored One, if good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth of the bodhisattva vehicle write the fathomless prajna paramita and think, ‘I am writing prajna paramita,’ because they are attached to the thought that they can write prajna paramita with language, they are encountering a demonic hindrance. Why? In the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita, prajna, meditation, and so forth, and giving paramitas are apart from written language; matter, feeling, and so forth, and consciousness are apart from written language; and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena is apart from written language. Therefore, we should not be attached to the thinking that any written language can write about prajna paramita. But if, on the other hand, the good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth are attached to this thinking, ‘In the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita, prajna, meditation, and so forth, and giving paramitas are without written language; matter, feeling, and so forth, as well as consciousness are without written language; and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena is without written language,’ then you must know that they are also encountering a demonic hindrance.

(Being attached to the thought that various dharmas have nature is a demonic hindrance. Being attached to the thought that various dharmas have no nature and thus cannot be written is also encountering a demonic hindrance.)

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, if good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth, when writing, accepting, embracing, reading, reciting, cultivating, learning, reflecting on, and lecturing on such fathomless sutras of prajna paramita, have a mindfulness of the land, cities, capital, the directions of the places, parents’ teachings, conduct rules, classmates, good and virtuous friends, parents, wife, brothers, sisters, relatives, companions, the king, high-ranking officials, robbers

and thieves, fierce beasts, evil humans, evil ghosts, the parties in which all get together, the play, paying a debt of gratitude, avenging a grievance, or any other things that they are doing, they are encountering the obstacles caused by the demons who hinder the bodhisattvas from fulfilling prajna paramita.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, as good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth of the bodhisattva vehicle decided to write, accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, learn, reflect on, and lecture on such fathomless sutras of prajna paramita to invite great reputation, honor, and offerings from others, including clothing, food, drinks, bedding, medicines, property, and goods, and they became so indulged that forgot what they originally intended to do, you must know that they are encountering a demonic hindrance.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, some good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth of the bodhisattva vehicle decided to write, accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, learn, reflect on, and lecture on the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita, but in the meantime, various demons, pretending to be their relatives and friends, brought different kinds of secular books, treatises, or sutras in accord with the two vehicles to them, in which, secular superior events were extensively spoken, and various aggregates, realms, spheres, realities, dependent origination, thirty-seven aids to the bodhi, three liberation gates, four meditations, and so forth were also extensively spoken. They said that these texts were fathomless in meaning and should be learned and studied diligently, while what they were learning must be thrown away. But the good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth with skillful means are not supposed to be attached to the secular books, treatises, and the texts related to the two vehicles. Why? It is because two-vehicle related texts cannot really inspire one to pursue the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, nor is it the skillful means accessible to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. Well-Appearing One, I have in the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita taught extensively the skillful means of the great bodhisattva path. Diligent and attentive learning of these sutras will enable one to realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly. If good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth abandon the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita and turn to accept and learn secular books and texts related to the two vehicles provided by demons, they will encounter the demonic hindrance.

(The Buddha emphasized the two-vehicle texts without skillful means cannot lead one to the unsurpassed bodhi, so it is demonic hindrance for great bodhisattvas if they are attached to this vehicle.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the dharma listeners love to hear the dharma and write, accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, and learn the fathomless prajna paramita, while the dharma teacher is indulged in pleasures, he is lazy and unwilling to teach the fathomless prajna paramita, we must know that this is a demonic hindrance for bodhisattvas.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the dharma teacher is not attached to pleasures and is not lazy; rather, the teacher loves to teach the fathomless prajna paramita and can skillfully and expediently encourage others to write, accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, and learn, while the dharma listeners are indulged in pleasures, they are lazy and do not like to hear. We must know that this is a demonic hindrance for bodhisattvas.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the dharma listeners love to hear, inquire about, write, accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, and learn the fathomless prajna paramita, while the dharma teacher is not available because he is traveling elsewhere, we must know that this is also a demonic hindrance for bodhisattvas.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the dharma teacher loves to teach and give, and can expediently encourage others to write, accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, and learn the fathomless prajna paramita, but the listeners are not available because they travel elsewhere. We must know that this is also a demonic hindrance for bodhisattvas.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the dharma teacher is greedy and eager to pursue fame, wealth, clothing, food, drinks, bedding, medicines, and other property and goods, while the dharma listener, not covetous and is easily satisfied, has focused on the cultivation of getting away, correct mindfulness, concentration, and wisdom, who is brave and diligent, but dislikes to pursue wealth, offerings, respect, and fame. Because they are so different, the listener is not allowed to speak, hear, write, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, and learn the fathomless prajna paramita. This is a demonic hindrance for bodhisattvas too.

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the dharma teacher, not covetous and is easily satisfied, has focused on the cultivation of getting away, correct mindfulness, concentration, and wisdom, who is brave and diligent, but dislikes to pursue wealth, offerings, respect, and fame. On the other hand, the dharma listener is greedy in pursuing fame, wealth, clothing, food, drinks, bedding, medicines, and other property and goods. Because they are so different, the listener is unable to speak, hear, write, accept, embrace, read, chant, cultivate, and learn the fathomless prajna paramita. This is a demonic hindrance for bodhisattvas.

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the dharma teacher has practiced the twelve ways of ascetic cultivation, including staying in a hermitage in quiet wilderness, begging for food, and so forth, and owning only three pieces of clothes. On the other hand, the dharma listener does not practice the twelve ways of ascetic cultivation. Because they are so different, the listener is unable to speak, hear, write, accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, and learn the fathomless prajna paramita. This is a demonic hindrance for bodhisattvas.

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the dharma listener has practiced the twelve ways of ascetic cultivation, while the dharma teacher does not. Because they are so different, the listener is unable to speak, hear, accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, and learn the fathomless prajna paramita. This is a demonic hindrance for bodhisattvas.

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the dharma teacher owns belief, observes precepts, and loves to expediently teach and encourage others to write, accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, and learn the fathomless prajna paramita, while the dharma listener has no belief, does not observe precepts, and does not enjoy listening to the fathomless prajna paramita. Because they are so different, this listener cannot speak, hear, write, read, recite, cultivate, and learn the fathomless prajna paramita. This is a demonic hindrance for bodhisattvas.

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the dharma listener has belief, observes precepts, and loves to hear, inquire about, write, accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, and learn the fathomless prajna paramita, while the dharma teacher has no belief, does not observe precepts, and is not willing to teach. They are so different that the listener is unable to speak, hear, accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, and learn the fathomless prajna paramita. This is a demonic hindrance for bodhisattvas.

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the dharma teacher is not stingy and can practice giving with no reluctance, while the dharma listener is stingy and unwilling to renounce and give. They are so different that the listener is not privileged to teach, hear, accept, write, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, and learn the fathomless prajna paramita. This is demonic hindrance for bodhisattvas.

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the dharma listener is not stingy and can practice giving with no reluctance, while the dharma teacher is stingy and unwilling to renounce and give. They are so different that the listener cannot teach, hear, accept, write, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, and learn the fathomless prajna paramita. This is a demonic hindrance for bodhisattvas.

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the dharma listener is more than willing to make clothing, food, drinks, bedding, medicines, and other money and goods as offerings to the dharma teacher, but the dharma teacher is very reluctant to receive. Because they are so different, the dharma listener cannot speak, hear, write, accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, and learn the fathomless prajna paramita. This is also a demonic hindrance for bodhisattvas.

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the dharma teacher is more than willing to give clothing, food, drinks, bedding, medicines, money, and goods to the dharma listener, but the dharma listener is very reluctant to receive. Because they are so different, the dharma listener cannot speak, hear, write, accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, and learn the fathomless prajna paramita. This is also a demonic hindrance for bodhisattvas.

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the dharma teacher has obtained the knowledge of expounding different meanings with few words and dislikes giving detailed and extensive explanation, while the dharma listener has obtained the knowledge of elaborating one meaning with many different words but dislikes brief and succinct explanation. Because they are so different, the dharma listener is not privileged to speak, hear, write, accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, and learn the fathomless prajna paramita. This is also a demonic hindrance for bodhisattvas.

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the dharma listener has obtained the knowledge of expounding various meanings with few words and loves only to explain briefly and succinctly, while the dharma teacher has obtained the knowledge of elaborating one meaning with many words and loves only detailed and extensive interpretation. Because they are so different, the dharma listener is not privileged to speak, hear, write, accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, and learn the fathomless prajna paramita. This is also a demonic hindrance for bodhisattvas.

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the dharma teacher is only interested in speaking extensively about the twelve categories of the Buddha’s teaching, namely, the sutras, short verses, and so forth, and the discourses. On the other hand, the dharma listener is not interested in extensive meanings of the twelve categories of the Buddha’s teaching. Because they are so different, the dharma listener is not privileged to speak, hear, write, accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, and learn the fathomless prajna paramita. This is also a demonic hindrance for bodhisattvas.

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the dharma listener is only interested in extensive meanings of the twelve categories of the Buddha’s teaching in sequence, namely, sutras, short verses, and so forth, and the discourses, while the dharma teacher is not interested in the extensive knowledge of the twelve categories of the Buddha’s teaching. Because they are so different, the dharma listener is not privileged to speak, hear, write, accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, and learn the fathomless prajna paramita. This is also a demonic hindrance for bodhisattvas.

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the dharma teacher has fulfilled the six paramitas and thus possesses expedient skillfulness, while the dharma listener has not achieved such virtues. Because they are so different, the dharma listener is not privileged to speak, hear, write, accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, and learn the fathomless prajna paramita. This is also a demonic hindrance for bodhisattvas.

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the dharma listener has fulfilled the six paramitas and thus possesses expedient skillfulness, while the dharma teacher has not achieved such virtues. Because they are so different, the dharma listener is not allowed to speak, hear, write,

accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, and learn the fathomless prajna paramita. This is also a demonic hindrance for bodhisattvas.

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the dharma teacher has attained dharani, while the dharma listener has not yet attained dharani. Because they are so different, the dharma listener is not privileged to speak, hear, write, receive, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, and learn the fathomless prajna paramita. This is a demonic hindrance for bodhisattvas.

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the dharma listener has attained dharani, while the dharma teacher has not yet attained dharani. Because they are so different, the dharma listener cannot speak, hear, write, receive, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, and learn the fathomless prajna paramita. This is a demonic hindrance for bodhisattvas.

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the dharma teacher pushes the listener to respectfully write, accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, and learn the fathomless prajna paramita, while the dharma listener has no motive to respectfully write, accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, and learn the fathomless prajna paramita. Because they are so different, the Dharma listener cannot speak, hear, write, receive, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, and learn the fathomless prajna paramita. This is a demonic hindrance for bodhisattvas.

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the dharma listener wishes to respectfully write, accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, and learn the fathomless prajna paramita, while the dharma teacher has no interest in guiding the listener to respectfully write, accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, and learn the fathomless prajna paramita. Because they are so different, the Dharma listener is unable to speak, hear, write, receive, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, and learn the fathomless prajna paramita. This is a demonic hindrance for bodhisattvas.

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the dharma teacher has been free from stinginess and the five covers (greed, anger, drowsiness, restlessness and remorse, and doubt), while the dharma listener has not yet been free from stinginess and the five covers. Because they are so different, the dharma listener is not privileged to speak, hear, write, receive, embrace, read, chant, cultivate, and learn the fathomless prajna paramita. This is a demonic hindrance for bodhisattvas.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the dharma listener has been free from stinginess and the five covers, while the dharma teacher has not yet been free from stinginess and the five covers. Because they are so different, the dharma listener is not allowed to speak, hear, write, receive, embrace, read, chant, cultivate, and learn the fathomless prajna paramita. This is a demonic hindrance for bodhisattvas.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, when good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth of the great vehicle were working to write, accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, learn, reflect on, or lecture on the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita, someone came up and said, 'You must work diligently to cease suffering and attain nirvana. Why are you still staying in the ocean of birth and death and suffering from hundreds of thousands of painful pains just for pursuing the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi?' Because of these words, these good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth gave up writing, accepting, embracing, reading, reciting, cultivating, learning, reflecting on, or lecturing on the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita. You must know that this is a demonic obstacle for bodhisattvas.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, when good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth of the great vehicle were writing, accepting, embracing, reading, chanting, cultivating, learning, reflecting on, or lecturing on the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita, someone came up and talked about many superior matters about human destination and admired various superior and wonderful things in the Heaven of the Four Great kings, Heaven of Thirty-Three Smaller Heavens, and so forth, and the Heaven of Nonthinking and Not Nonthinking. This person again said, 'Although one may enjoy various happiness of desire in the realm of desire, concentration in the realm of form, and tranquility in the realm of formlessness, these are all impermanent, painful, empty, selfless, impure, and in decay; they are the dharmas that will end, decline, depart, and extinguish. Why don't you cultivate diligently to attain stream-entry effect, once-return effect, nonreturn effect, arhat effect, or self-enlightenment bodhi and enter ultimate happiness and peace of nirvana? Why do you stay for such a long time in the cycle of birth and death and suffer so severely for others in the pursuit of the so-called unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi?' Because of these words, the good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth would give up what they were doing in writing, accepting, embracing, reading, reciting, cultivating, learning,

reflecting on, and lecturing on the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita, and never returned to finish them. You must know that this is a demonic hindrance for bodhisattvas.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the dharma teacher is completely free from other people's burdens and hindrances and has merely concentrated on his or her own cultivation while the dharma listener is tied with the troubles of many people without paying attention to his or her own cultivation. Because they are so different, the dharma listener is unable to speak, hear, write, accept, embrace, read, chant, cultivate, and learn the fathomless prajna paramita. You must know that this is a demonic hindrance for bodhisattvas.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the dharma listener is completely free from others' burdens and has merely concentrated on his or her own cultivation while the dharma teacher is tied with the troubles of many people without paying attention to his or her own cultivation. Because they are so different, the dharma listener is unable to speak, hear, write, accept, embrace, read, chant, cultivate, and learn the fathomless prajna paramita. You must know that this is a demonic hindrance for bodhisattvas.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the dharma teacher does not like to mingle with the noisy crowd, while the dharma listener likes to mingle with the noisy crowd. Because they are so different, the dharma listener cannot speak, hear, write, accept, embrace, read, chant, cultivate, and learn the fathomless prajna paramita. You must know that this is a demonic hindrance for bodhisattvas.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the dharma listener does not like to mingle with the noisy crowd, while the dharma teacher likes to mingle with the noisy crowd. Because they are so different, the dharma listener cannot speak, hear, write, accept, embrace, read, chant, cultivate, and learn the fathomless prajna paramita. You must know that this is a demonic hindrance for bodhisattvas.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the dharma teacher likes the listener to assist him in whatever he does, while the dharma listener does not like to assist the teacher, and that makes the teacher unhappy. Because they are so different, the dharma listener cannot speak, hear, write,

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

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

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the dharma teacher teaches for the sake of reputation and wealth, and with such an intention he demands the listener to write, accept, embrace, read, chant, cultivate, and learn the fathomless prajna paramita, while the dharma listener knows what the teacher thinks and disagrees with him. Because they are so different, the dharma listener cannot speak, hear, write, accept, embrace, read, chant, cultivate, and learn the fathomless prajna paramita. You must know that this is a demonic hindrance for bodhisattvas.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the dharma listener asks the teacher to teach him the fathomless prajna paramita for the sake of gaining wealth and reputation. With such an intention, the listener asks for a favor to write, accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, and learn in a way convenient for him, while the dharma teacher does not like to satisfy this request. Because they are so different, the dharma listener cannot speak, hear, write, accept, embrace, read, chant, cultivate, and learn the fathomless prajna paramita. You must know that this is a demonic hindrance for bodhisattvas.

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

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the dharma listener wants to go to a perilous place far away, while the dharma teacher does not want to risk his life. Because they are so different, the dharma listener cannot speak, hear, write, accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, and learn

the fathomless prajna paramita. You must know that this is a demonic hindrance for bodhisattvas.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the dharma teacher wants to go to a place where there are many thieves and robbers, diseases and plagues, and the drinking water is in shortage, while the dharma listener worries about the difficult life there and do not want to go with the teacher. Because they are so different, the dharma listener cannot speak, hear, write, accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, and learn the fathomless prajna paramita. You must know that this is a demonic hindrance for bodhisattvas.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the dharma listener wants to go to a place where there are many thieves and robbers, diseases and plagues, and the drinking water is in shortage, while the dharma teacher worries about the difficult life there and do not want to go. Because they are so different, the dharma listener cannot speak, hear, write, accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, and learn the fathomless prajna paramita. You must know that this is a demonic hindrance for bodhisattvas.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the dharma teacher wants to go to a peaceful, prosperous, and carefree place, and the dharma listener is ready to go with him, but the teacher says, 'Although you may go, it is uncertain that you will feel comfortable there. Why don't you think about it carefully so you will not regret it?' The dharma listener thinks, 'It is obvious that the teacher does not want me to go with him. If I insist on going, who can guarantee I can hear the dharma?' Because of this disagreement, the dharma listener cannot speak, hear, write, accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, and learn the fathomless prajna paramita. You must know that this is a demonic hindrance for bodhisattvas.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the dharma teacher wants to go somewhere, but the road in wilderness is dangerous; many horrible things caused by robbers, candāla, hunters, wild beasts, and poisonous snakes occur often along the road. The dharma listener is ready to go with him. But the teacher warns him expediently, 'Why do you go to such a dangerous area without specific purpose? You'd better think about it carefully, so you won't regret it.' The dharma listener thinks, 'It is obvious that he does not want me to go. If I insist on going, it is uncertain that I will be able to hear the dharma.' The listener thus decides to stay. Because of this

disagreement, the dharma listener cannot speak, hear, write, accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, and learn the fathomless prajna paramita. You must know that this is a demonic hindrance for bodhisattvas.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the dharma teacher is followed by several lay almsgivers, so he is not available when the dharma listener comes to hear the dharma and is ready to write, accept, embrace, read, recite, and cultivate what he will hear from the teacher. The listener is unhappy with the postponement. Because of this disagreement, the dharma listener cannot speak, hear, write, accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, and learn the fathomless prajna paramita. You must know that this is a demonic hindrance for bodhisattvas.

(The Buddha elaborated to describe more examples of demonic hindrance for bodhisattvas.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, various demons pretended to be monks, came to the bodhisattvas' places, and damaged them expediently. This made the bodhisattvas unable to write, accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, learn, reflect on, and lecture for others on the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita."

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "Why did the demons pretend to be monks, come to the bodhisattvas' places, damage them expediently, and make the bodhisattvas unable to write, accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, learn, reflect on, and lecture for others on the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "The demons pretending to be monks came to the bodhisattvas' places and damaged them expediently to make people disgusted with the fathomless prajna paramita when they said, 'The formless sutras that you are learning and chanting are not the genuine prajna paramita. The sutras with forms that we are learning and chanting are the real prajna paramita.' Some bodhisattvas had not been conferred the prophecy, so they would be skeptical and became confused upon hearing these words. Their disgust was generated, and they ceased to write, accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, learn, reflect on, and lecture for others on the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita. You must know that this is a demonic hindrance for bodhisattvas.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, some demons pretended to be monks and came to the bodhisattvas' places and said, 'The bodhisattvas practicing the fathomless prajna paramita will at most realize the reality that equals stream-entry effect, once-return effect, nonreturn effect, arhat effect, and self-enlightenment bodhi, but it has nothing to do with the unsurpassed Buddha effect. Why are you troubled to do this in vain?' After hearing this, these bodhisattvas stopped to write, accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, learn, reflect on, and lecture on the fathomless prajna paramita. You must know that this is a demonic hindrance for bodhisattvas.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, when writing, reading, and so forth, and lecturing on the fathomless prajna paramita, many various demonic obstacles will occur. The bodhisattvas should be alert and stay away from them."

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "What are the demonic hindrances that bodhisattvas should be alert to and stay away from?"

The Buddha replied, "Well-Appearing One, when writing, reading, and so forth, and lecturing on the fathomless prajna paramita, there will often appear the demonic hindrances, such as the fake prajna, meditation, forbearance, diligence, pure precept, and giving paramitas; the fake internal emptiness, external emptiness, internal-external emptiness, emptiness of emptiness, emptiness of space, emptiness of ultimate truth, emptiness of conditioned phenomena, emptiness of unconditioned reality, emptiness in the final analysis, emptiness of nontemporality, emptiness of nondeconstruction, emptiness of changelessness, emptiness of original nature, emptiness of phenomena, emptiness of all dharmas, emptiness of nonattainment, emptiness of selflessness, emptiness of self-nature, and emptiness of selfless self-nature; and the fake realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable. The bodhisattvas should be alert to and stay away from these obstacles.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, when bodhisattvas write, read, and so forth, and lecture on the fathomless prajna paramita, various demons will do many things to hinder them. For instance, they will pretend to be monks, come to the bodhisattvas' places, and lecture on the dharmas in accord with the two vehicles. They will say, 'This is really taught by the Thus-Comer. To learn this will let one realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly.' Some other demons will pretend to be the monks, come to the bodhisattvas' places, and

lecture on the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth in accord with the two vehicles. They will say, ‘If you cultivate and learn these diligently and attentively, you will attain stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi; you will stay far away from all kinds of birth, old age, illness, and death. So why are you bothered to learn the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi?’ This is a demonic hindrance for the prajna paramita. The bodhisattvas should be alert to and stay far away from it.

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, some demons pretended to be the Buddhas. Their bodies were in pure gold color, with lights shining as high as eight meters, marked with the thirty-two major marks and eighty minor features of the Buddha. As bodhisattvas saw them, they became so fond of and attached to them that their perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge was damaged. They thus lost the opportunity of hearing, writing, accepting, embracing, reading, reciting, cultivating, learning, reflecting on, and lecturing on the fathomless prajna paramita. You must know that this is a demonic hindrance for bodhisattvas.

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, some demons pretended to be the monks with gracious and dignified demeanor. When bodhisattvas saw them, they became imbued with them. Because of this reason, the bodhisattvas’ perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge was damaged and lost the opportunity to hear, write, accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, learn, reflect on, and lecture on the fathomless prajna paramita. You must know that this is a demonic hindrance for bodhisattvas.

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, some demons pretended to be the Buddha and the monks. The Buddha was teaching the essential meanings of the dharma with a group of monks surrounding him. The bodhisattvas saw this and became fond of and attached to them. They then thought, ‘I hope I will become like them in the future.’ Because of this reason, the bodhisattvas lost the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge and the opportunity of hearing, accepting, embracing, reading, reciting, cultivating, learning, reflecting on, and lecturing on the fathomless prajna paramita. You must know that this is a demonic hindrance for bodhisattvas.

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, some demons pretended to be as many as hundreds, thousands, or numberless bodhisattvas, who were practicing giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramitas. The bodhisattvas saw these faked bodhisattvas and

became fond of and attached to them. Because of this reason, the bodhisattvas lost the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge and the opportunity of hearing, accepting, embracing, reading, reciting, cultivating, learning, reflecting on, and lecturing on the fathomless prajna paramita. You must know that this is a demonic hindrance for bodhisattvas.

(The Buddha warned that demons would pretend to be Buddha, monks, or great bodhisattvas to misguide and harm prajna paramita practitioners.)

"Why? Well-Appearing One, in the fathomless teachings of prajna paramita, matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness, and so forth, and all bodhisattva actions and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi are nonexistent. If in the fathomless prajna paramita, matter, feeling, and so forth, and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi are nonexistent, then in it, all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones and various bodhisattvas, self-enlightened one, and voice-hearers are also nonexistent. Why? It is because the self-natures of all dharmas are empty.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, as good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth of the bodhisattva vehicle hear, write, accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, learn, reflect on, and lecture for others on the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita, they often encounter demonic obstacles, and these hindrances will make the less blessed ones more difficult to fulfill their purposes. Like various treasures in the continent of Jambudvipa, such as the blue green gem, and so forth, and gold, that are stolen and damaged by thieves and robbers often, the less blessed ones cannot acquire them. So are the less blessed ones often hindered by various demonic obstacles when hearing and inquiring about the priceless magic pearl, the fathomless prajna paramita."

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One said to the Buddha, "Yes, World-Honored One. Yes, Well-Gone One. The fathomless prajna paramita cannot be attained by less blessed ones, just like the various treasures in the continent of Jambudvipa that often encounter harmful incidents. If good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth of the bodhisattva vehicle have only very few merits, they inevitably will confront many obstacles when hearing, reading, and so forth, and writing the fathomless sutras. When things like these happen, motivation is not sufficient for people to fulfill their purposes. Why? Some ignorant ones are driven by demons to

hinder the good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth of the bodhisattva vehicle once they make up their minds to hear, write, accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, learn, reflect on, and lecture for others on the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita. World-Honored One, those ignorant ones have weak and inferior wisdom in awakening, so they cannot imagine how great and magnificent the Buddha dharma is. They cannot hear, write, accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, learn, reflect on, and lecture on the fathomless prajna paramita themselves, but they can hinder others from doing so."

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, "Yes, it is as you say. These ignorant people are driven by the demons. They themselves have not planted virtuous roots. Their wisdom and merits are weak and inferior. They have not made great vows at Buddha's place. They are not absorbed by good and virtuous friends. They do not hear, read, and so forth, and lecture on the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita. Even worse, they hinder various novice great-vehicle learners from hearing, writing, and so forth, and lecturing for others on the fathomless prajna paramita. Well-Appearing One, in the generations to come, there will be some people with weak and inferior wisdom and awakening. They are not interested in the extensive merits of various Buddhas and, unsurprisingly, do not like to hear, read, and so forth, and lecture on the fathomless prajna paramita. The worst is that they love to hinder others and make them unable to hear, read, and so forth, and lecture on the fathomless prajna paramita. They will commit numberless sins.

(Well-Appearing One talked with the Buddha about the inferior, weak minded, and ignorant people, who hinder great-vehicle practitioners from cultivating prajna paramita.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, when good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth of the bodhisattva vehicle hear, write, accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, learn, reflect on, and lecture for others on the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita, they will often confront demonic obstacles, so they are unable to accomplish what they have intended to do, thus they cannot fulfill prajna paramita, meditation paramita, and so forth, and giving paramita. They cannot fulfill the perfect knowledge of all phenomena either. On the other hand, some good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth of the great vehicle have also heard, written, accepted, embraced, read, recited, cultivated, learned, reflected on, and lectured for others on the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita. Because they do not encounter any demonic hindrance, they are able to fulfill

prajna, meditation, diligence, forbearance, pure precept, and giving paramitas, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena. They are fortunate that the demonic armies cannot hinder them because they are protected and guided by the supernatural powers of the loving-kind and compassionate Thus-Comers. They are also under the protection of the supernatural powers of the present Thus-Comers in the worlds of the ten directions and the bodhisattvas of nonregression. It is also because of the powers of their own virtuous roots."

(The Buddha taught that the supernatural powers of Thus-Comers and the great bodhisattvas who have achieved nonregression, and the great bodhisattvas' own virtuous roots will protect them from demonic hindrance.)

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Chapter 15

The World

(In the Third Assembly)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, a woman gave birth to five, ten, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, one hundred, or one thousand sons. The mother became very ill one day, all her sons sought the best medical treatments for their mother and thought, 'How can I heal my mother so she will live a very long life in peace and happiness without physical pains and psychological worries?' Various sons tried their best to protect their mother's body from being harassed or harmed by mosquitoes, snakes, wind, heat, hunger, or thirst. They further made various most wonderful entertainments to please their mother and said, 'My mother gave birth to me and raised me with loving-kindness and compassion; she has taught me many things about the world. Shouldn't I repay her the favor?'

"Well-Appearing One, so is the Thus-Comer, One Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened One, who always uses his Buddha eye in various expedient ways to watch, protect, and keep the fathomless prajna paramita. Why? The fathomless prajna paramita can give birth to all Buddha dharmas and manifest the real phenomena of all dharmas in the world. All Thus-Comers teaching the dharma currently in the worlds of the ten directions have also always watched, protected, and kept the fathomless prajna paramita with the Buddha eye. Why? The fathomless prajna paramita can give birth to all merits and virtues of the Thus-Comers and manifest the real phenomena of all dharmas in the world. Because of this cause and condition, all Buddhas always use the Buddha eye to watch, protect, and keep the fathomless prajna paramita to repay the favor with gratitude. Why? All meditation paramita, diligence paramita, and so forth, and giving paramita and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena arise because of this fathomless prajna paramita. All stream-entry effect, once-return effect, nonreturn

effect, arhat effect, and self-enlightenment bodhi arise because of the fathomless prajna paramita. All bodhisattva actions and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas also arise because of the fathomless prajna paramita. All stream-enterers, once-returners, and so forth, and Buddhas appear because of the fathomless prajna paramita. It is also because of the fathomless prajna paramita that all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones in the past, future, and present attained, will attain, and are attaining the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. Because of this cause and condition, the fathomless parjna paramita has helped Thus-Comers a lot, so the Buddhas always watch, protect, and keep it with the Buddha eye.

(The Buddha said that the fathomless prajna paramita can give birth to all merits and virtues of the Thus-Comers and manifest the real phenomena of all dharmas in the world. It also gives rise to all superior virtuous dharmas, holy effects, and holy ones. Therefore, the Buddhas always use Buddha eye to watch, protect, and keep the fathomless prajna paramita to return the favor.)

"You must know, Well-Appearing One, if good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth can hear, write, accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, learn, reflect on, and lecture on the fathomless prajna paramita, all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones will always watch, protect, and keep them with the Buddha eye to let them live in peace and happiness in bodies and minds, and all virtuous karmas they are cultivating will not encounter obstacles. Well-Appearing One, you must know that if good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth can hear, write, accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, learn, reflect on, and lecture for others on prajna paramita, all the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones in the worlds of the ten directions will protect and keep them so they will be able to achieve the stage of nonregression in the pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi."

(The Buddhas will also protect and keep the great bodhisattvas who learn and practice prajna paramita diligently and attentively.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "As the World-Honored One says, the fathomless prajna paramita can give birth to Buddhas and manifest the real phenomena of all dharmas in the world. World-Honored One, how does the fathomless prajna

paramita give birth to Buddhas and manifest the real phenomena of all dharmas in the world? How are the Buddhas born from prajna? Why do the Thus-Comers teach about the phenomena of the world?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "The fathomless prajna paramita can give birth to the Buddhas' ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena. All such immeasurable and boundless merits and virtues arise and grow because of prajna paramita. So, I say that the fathomless prajna paramita can give birth to the Buddhas, and the Buddhas arise from prajna paramita. You must know, Well-Appearing One, as I say the fathomless prajna paramita can manifest the real phenomena of all dharmas in the world, I mean that it can manifest the real phenomena of the five aggregates in the world. All Thus-Comers teach about the real phenomena of the five aggregates in the world."

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "How does the fathomless prajna paramita of the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones teach about and manifest the real phenomena of the five aggregates in the world?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "The fathomless prajna paramita of all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones teaches and manifests that the five aggregates do not have formation or decay, arising or extinction, contamination or purification, addition or subtraction, or entering or getting out; the five aggregates do not have the past, future, and present; the five aggregates are not virtuous, not virtuous, and neutral; and the five aggregates are not tied up with the realm of desire, the realm of form, or the realm of formlessness. Why? The empty dharmas, formless dharmas, and the dharmas without aspiration do not have formation or decay, arising or extinction. The dharmas without making, doing, birth, death, and nature do not have formation or decay, arising or extinction either. The fathomless prajna paramita of all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones manifests the real phenomena of the five aggregates this way. The phenomena of the five aggregates are exactly the phenomena of the world. Therefore, the world does not have the phenomena of formation, decay, arising, and extinction.

(The Buddha taught how prajna paramita manifested the real phenomena of the world.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones rely on prajna paramita to realize the different mental images of immeasurable, countless, and boundless sentient beings. But in the fathomless meanings of prajna paramita, the sentient beings and their establishment are unattainable; matter and its establishment are unattainable; feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness and their establishment are unattainable; and the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena and their establishment are also unattainable. The fathomless prajna paramita of all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones has taught and manifested the phenomena of the world this way.

(The Buddha taught that sentient beings and their establishment and various dharmas in the world and their establishment are unattainable.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the fathomless prajna paramita does not manifest matter, feeling, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena. Why? As in the very profound meanings of prajna paramita, the fathomless prajna paramita itself is nonexistent and unattainable, how can we say that matter, feeling, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena are attainable and can be manifested?

(But by virtue of ultimate meaning, prajna paramita cannot manifest the phenomena of the world because all dharmas are unattainable and thus are not manifestable.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, all sentient beings have used languages to establish the visible and the invisible dharmas, and the dharmas with thinking, without thinking, and neither with nor without thinking. They have also established the sentient beings who have absorbent minds and who have distracted minds in this world and in other worlds of the ten directions. All Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones know all phenomena as they really are based on the fathomless prajna paramita."

"World-Honored One, how do the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones know accurately the absorbent minds and the distracted minds of various sentient beings based on the fathomless prajna paramita?"

“Well-Appearing One, it is because all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones rely on the fathomless prajna paramita to know accurately the absorbent minds and the distracted minds of various sentient beings through dharma nature.”

“World-Honored One, how do the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones rely on the fathomless prajna paramita to accurately know the absorbent minds and the distracted minds of various sentient beings through dharma nature?”

“Well-Appearing One, all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones rely on the fathomless prajna paramita to accurately know that dharma nature is nonexistent and unattainable. Given this truth, how can we say that the absorbent minds and the distracted minds of various sentient beings are existent and attainable? This is how the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones rely on the fathomless prajna paramita to accurately know the absorbent minds and the distracted minds of various sentient beings as they really are through dharma nature.”

(The Buddha explained how Thus-Comers rely on prajna paramita to know the minds of sentient beings through dharma nature.)

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones rely on the fathomless prajna paramita to accurately know the absorbent minds and the distracted minds of various sentient beings through exhaustion, the freedom from contamination, extinction, termination, tranquility, and getting far away.”

“World-Honored One, how do the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones rely on the fathomless prajna paramita to accurately know the absorbent minds and the distracted minds of various sentient beings through exhaustion, freedom from contamination, extinction, termination, tranquility, and getting far away?”

“Well-Appearing One, all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones rely on the fathomless prajna paramita to accurately know that in exhaustion, freedom from contamination, extinction, termination, tranquility, and getting far

away, the natures of exhaustion, freedom from contamination, and so forth are nonexistent and unattainable. Given this truth, how can we say that the absorbent and the distracted minds of various sentient beings are existent and attainable? This is how the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones rely on the fathomless prajna paramita to accurately know the absorbent minds and the distracted minds of various sentient beings through exhaustion, freedom from contamination, extinction, termination, tranquility, and getting far away.

(The Buddha explained how Thus-Comers rely on prajna paramita to know the minds of sentient beings through exhaustion, freedom from contamination, extinction, termination, tranquility, and getting far away.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones rely on the fathomless prajna paramita to accurately know that various sentient beings have the minds of greed, hatred, and ignorance and the minds free from greed, hatred, and ignorance."

"World-Honored One, how do the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones rely on the fathomless prajna paramita to accurately know that various sentient beings have the minds of greed, hatred, and ignorance and the minds free from greed, hatred, and ignorance?"

"Well-Appearing One, all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones rely on the fathomless prajna paramita to accurately know that the sentient beings possess the real nature of the minds of greed, hatred, and ignorance. The real nature of the minds of greed, hatred, and ignorance is not the minds with greed, hatred, and ignorance, nor is the minds apart from greed, hatred, and ignorance. Why? In real nature, the minds and the associated images are nonexistent and unattainable. How can we say that the minds of greed, hatred, and ignorance and the minds apart from greed, hatred, and ignorance are existent and attainable? Furthermore, all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones rely on the fathomless prajna paramita to accurately know that the sentient beings possess the real nature of the minds free from greed, hatred, and ignorance. The real nature of the minds free from greed, hatred, and ignorance is not the minds apart from greed,

hatred, and ignorance, nor is the minds with greed, hatred, and ignorance. Why? In real nature, the minds and the associated images are nonexistent and unattainable. How can we say that the minds free from greed, hatred, and ignorance and the minds with greed, hatred, and ignorance are existent and attainable? This is how the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones rely on the fathomless prajna paramita to accurately know that the sentient beings have the minds with greed, hatred, and ignorance or the minds free from greed, hatred, and ignorance.

(The Buddha taught that Thus-Comers accurately know the real nature of the minds of sentient beings, whether with or free from greed, hatred, and ignorance, as nonexistent and unattainable.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones rely on the fathomless prajna paramita to accurately know that various sentient beings have the minds of greed, hatred, and ignorance, which are neither with nor free from greed, hatred, and ignorance. Why? It is because two minds cannot combine. All Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones rely on the fathomless prajna paramita to accurately know various sentient beings have the minds free from greed, hatred, and ignorance, which are neither free from nor with greed, hatred, and ignorance. Why? It is because two minds cannot combine. This is how the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones rely on the fathomless prajna paramita to accurately know that various sentient beings have the minds with greed, greed, and ignorance and the minds free from greed, hatred, and ignorance.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Ones rely on the fathomless prajna paramita to accurately know all broad minds of various sentient beings as they really are."

"World-Honored One, how do the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Ones rely on the fathomless prajna paramita to accurately know all broad minds of sentient beings as they really are?"

"Well-Appearing One, all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Ones rely on the fathomless prajna paramita to accurately know that all broad minds

of sentient beings as they really are. The broad minds are neither broad nor narrow. They neither increase nor decrease, and neither go nor come. Why? The self-nature of the mind is far away in the final analysis; it is nonexistent and unattainable. So, whose mind is broad and whose mind is narrow? Whose mind increases and whose mind decreases? Whose mind goes and whose mind comes? This is how the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones accurately know all broad minds of sentient beings as they really are based on the fathomless prajna paramita."

(The Buddha taught that Thus-Comers accurately know all broad minds of sentient beings based on prajna paramita.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones rely on the fathomless prajna paramita to accurately know all great minds of sentient beings as they really are."

"World-Honored One, how do all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones rely on the fathomless prajna paramita to accurately know all great minds of sentient beings as they really are?"

"Well-Appearing One, all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones rely on the fathomless prajna paramita to accurately know that all great minds of various sentient beings are neither great nor small; they neither go nor come, neither arise nor extinguish, neither stay nor change, and are neither contaminated nor purified. Why? It is because the self-nature of the mind is far away in the final analysis; it is nonexistent and unattainable. So, whose mind is great and whose mind is small? Whose mind goes and whose mind comes? Whose mind arises and whose mind extinguishes? Whose mind stays and whose mind changes? Whose mind is contaminated and whose mind is purified? This is how the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones rely on the fathomless prajna paramita to accurately know all great minds of sentient beings as they really are."

(The Thus-Comers rely on prajna paramita to know all great minds of sentient beings as neither great nor small, and so forth, and neither contaminated or purified because the self-nature of mind is nonexistent and unattainable.)

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

"World-Honored One, how do all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones rely on the fathomless prajna paramita to accurately know the immeasurable minds of sentient beings?"

"Well-Appearing One, all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones rely on the fathomless prajna paramita to accurately know the immeasurable minds of the sentient beings as neither measurable nor immeasurable, neither dwell nor not dwell, and neither go nor not go. Why? The self-nature of the mind is far away in the final analysis, so it is flawless and it relies on nothing. Given this truth, how can we say that the minds are measurable or immeasurable, they dwell or do not dwell and go or do not go? This is how the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones rely on the fathomless prajna paramita to accurately know all immeasurable minds of sentient beings as they really are.

(The Thus-Comers know accurately all immeasurable minds of sentient beings.)

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

"World-Honored One, how do Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones rely on the fathomless prajna paramita to accurately know all invisible and unsubstantial minds of sentient beings as they really are?"

"Well-Appearing One, all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones know that all invisible and unsubstantial minds of sentient beings

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

(The Buddha further said that all Thus-Comers can accurately know the invisible and unsubstantial minds of sentient beings as without mental images because the characteristics of all minds are empty.)

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

"World-Honored One, how do Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones rely on the fathomless prajna paramita to accurately know all immaterial and invisible minds of sentient beings as they really are?"

"Well-Appearing One, all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones know that the five eyes of various Buddhas cannot see the immaterial and invisible minds of sentient beings. Why? It is because the self-natures of all minds are empty. Well-Appearing One, this is how the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones rely on the fathomless prajna paramita to accurately know all immaterial and invisible minds of sentient beings as they really are.

(The Thus-Comers understand that their five eyes cannot see the immaterial and invisible minds of sentient beings because the self-natures of all minds are empty.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, all Thus-Cheomers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones rely on the fathomless prajna paramita to accurately know the minds and the associated images of sentient beings as emerge or sink, bend or stretch."

"World-Honored One, how do the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones rely on the fathomless prajna paramita to accurately know the minds and the associated images of the sentient beings as emerge or sink, bend or stretch?"

"Well-Appearing One, all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones rely on the fathomless prajna paramita to accurately know that the emerging, sinking, bending, and stretching minds and the associated images of sentient beings arise based on matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness. Thus, the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones can rely on the fathomless prajna paramita to accurately know that the emerging, sinking, bending, and stretching minds and the associated images of the sentient beings are attached to the 'I' and the world as permanent or impermanent, permanent and impermanent, and neither permanent nor impermanent based on matter, feeling, and so forth, and consciousness. The sentient being will further assert that this is the only truth while the statements other than this one are delusive. The Thus-Comers also know accurately that the emerging, sinking, bending, and stretching minds and the associated images of the sentient beings are attached to the 'I' and the world as limited or limitless in space, limited and limitless in space, and neither limited nor limitless in space based on matter, feeling, and so forth, and consciousness. The sentient being will further assert that this is the only truth while the statements other than this one are delusive. The Thus-Comers also know accurately that the emerging, sinking, bending, and stretching minds and the associated images of the sentient beings are attached to the Thus-Comer as existent or nonexistent, existent and nonexistent, and neither existent nor nonexistent after Thus-Comer passes away based on matter, feeling, and so forth, and consciousness. The sentient being will further assert that this is the only truth while the statements other than this one are delusive. The Thus-Comers also know accurately that the emerging, sinking, bending, and stretching minds and the associated images of the sentient beings are attached to the living one as with the same body or a different body. The sentient being will further assert that this is the only truth while the statements other than this one are delusive.

(The Thus-Comers know the bending and stretching minds of sentient beings are caused by attachment and the delusions ensue.)

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

"World-Honored One, how do all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Universally and Perfectly Enlightened Ones know matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness as they really are based on the fathomless prajna paramita?"

"Well-Appearing One, all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones rely on the fathomless prajna paramita to accurately know that matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness are like realness that is changeless, without differentiation, without form and shape, without awakening, without nonsensical arguments, and unattainable. The Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones, based on the fathomless prajna paramita, also accurately know that the emerging, sinking, bending, and stretching minds and the associated images of the sentient beings are like realness that is changeless, without differentiation, without form and shape, without awakening, without nonsensical arguments, and unattainable.

(The Thus-Comers know accurately that the minds of sentient beings are emerging, sinking, and so forth because they are like realness, which is changeless and without differentiation and so forth.)

"You must know, Well-Appearing One, the realness of the emerging, sinking, bending, and stretching minds and the associated images of the sentient beings is the realness of the five aggregates. The realness of the five aggregates is the realness of the twelve spheres. The realness of the twelve spheres is the realness of the eighteen realms. The realness of the eighteen realms is the realness of all dharmas. The realness of all dharmas is the realness of the six paramitas. The realness of the six paramitas is the realness of the thirty-seven aids to enlightenment. The realness of the thirty-seven aids to enlightenment is the realness of the sixteen kinds of emptiness. The realness of the sixteen kinds of emptiness is the realness of the eight liberations. The realness of the eight liberations is the realness of the nine concentrations in sequence. The realness of the nine concentrations in sequence is the realness of the three liberation gates. The realness of the three liberation gates is the realness of the Buddha's ten abilities. The realness of the Buddha's ten abilities is the realness of the four kinds of fearlessness. The realness of the four kinds of fearlessness is the realness of the four unhindered understandings. The realness of the four unhindered understandings is the realness of great loving-kindness, great compassion,

great joy, and great equanimity. The realness of great loving-kindness, great compassion, great joy, and great equanimity is the realness of the eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power. The realness of the eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power is the realness of the perfect knowledge of everything. The realness of the perfect knowledge of everything is the realness of the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths. The realness of the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths is the realness of the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. The realness of the perfect knowledge of all phenomena is the realness of the virtuous, not virtuous, and neutral dharmas. The realness of the virtuous, not virtuous, and neutral dharmas is the realness of the flawed and flawless dharmas. The realness of the flawed and flawless dharmas is the realness of the guilty and not guilty dharmas. The realness of the guilty and not guilty dharmas is the realness of the contaminated and purified dharmas. The realness of the contaminated and purified dharmas is the realness of the conditioned and unconditioned dharmas. The realness of the conditioned and unconditioned dharmas is the realness of the three phases of time. The realness of the three phases of time is the realness of the three realms. The realness of the three realms is the realness of stream-entry effect, once-return effect, nonreturn effect, and arhat effect. The realness of stream-entry effect, once-return effect, nonreturn effect, and arhat effect is the realness of self-enlightenment bodhi. The realness of self-enlightenment bodhi is the realness of all bodhisattva actions. The realness of all bodhisattva actions is the realness of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas. The realness of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas is the realness of all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones. The realness of all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones is the realness of all sentient beings.

(The Buddha stated that the minds of sentient beings and Thus-Comers, all virtuous dharmas, and other dharmas share the same realness.)

"Well-Appearing One, the realness of all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones, the realness of all sentient beings, and the realness of all dharmas are not apart. Because they are not apart, they are inexhaustible, nondualistic, and cannot be differentiated.

"You must know, Well-Appearing One, as all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones, based on the fathomless prajna paramita, realize and attain the ultimate realness of all dharmas, they will attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. Because of this reason, we say that the fathomless prajna paramita can give birth to various Buddhas and is the mother of various Buddhas; it can demonstrate the real phenomena of the world to various Buddhas.

"You must know, Well-Appearing One, the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones thus, based on the fathomless prajna paramita, can be awakened to and accurately aware of the nature of nonillusion and the nature of changelessness of the realness of all dharmas. Because they can be awakened to the forms of realness as they really are, they are named the Thus-Comer, One Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened One."

(The Buddha said that all Thus-Comers rely on the fathomless prajna paramita to realize the ultimate meaning of the realness of all dharmas and become a Buddha.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One said to the Buddha, "The real forms of the realness of all dharmas that the fathomless prajna paramita realizes are extremely profound and difficult for one to be awakened to and see. All Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones have adopted the real forms of the realness of all dharmas to demonstrate and manifest the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas. But who can believe in and understand such extremely profound and most wonderful realness? Only the great bodhisattvas dwelling in the stage of nonregression and the flawless arhats possessing correct views can believe in and understand such profound realness when they hear it. The Thus-Comers have demonstrated the forms of the realness they realize to these great bodhisattvas and arhats."

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, "Yes, it is as you say. Why? The realness is inexhaustible and very profound. Only the Thus-Comers can realize insightfully the inexhaustible realness."

"World-Honored One, through which dharma does the Buddha realize insightfully the inexhaustible realness?"

"Well-Appearing One, the Buddha can realize insightfully the inexhaustible realness through realness."

"World-Honored One, which dharmas will the Thus-Comer realizes insightfully as inexhaustible realness?"

"Well-Appearing One, the Buddha can realize insightfully all dharmas as inexhaustible realness."

"World-Honored One, why is the realness of all dharmas inexhaustible?"

"Well-Appearing One, it is because all dharmas are inexhaustible. All Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones are named the ones who always tell the truth because they have realized insightfully the inexhaustible realness of all dharmas, and thus they are able to attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi and demonstrate the real forms of the realness of all dharmas for sentient beings."

(Because the Buddha can realize insightfully all dharmas as inexhaustible realness, they are able to attain the unsurpassed bodhi and demonstrate the real forms of the realness of all dharmas for sentient beings.)

At that time, all heavenly sons in the realm of desire and the realm of form in this large threefold thousand-world made various wonderful heavenly flowers as offerings to spread around the World-Honored One from far away. They then came to the Buddha's place, bowed down to the ground before the Buddha's feet to pay homage to him, and stood to the side. They asked, "What are the forms adopted by the fathomless prajna paramita that the Buddha is teaching?"

At that time, the Buddha replied to various heavenly sons, "You must know, heavenly sons, the fathomless prajna paramita adopts emptiness, formlessness, and non-aspiration as its forms. The fathomless prajna paramita adopts non-making and non-doing, non-arising and non-extinction, non-contamination and non-purification, non-nature and formlessness, non-

discontinuation and non-continuation of life, non-sameness and non-difference, non-coming and non-going, and empty space as its forms. The fathomless prajna paramita has such numberless forms. Heavenly sons, you must know that the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones have taught these various forms in terms of the worldly perspective instead of ultimate meanings.

(The Buddha explained the various forms of prajna paramita for heavenly sons.)

"You must know, heavenly sons, all these various forms of the fathomless prajna paramita cannot be changed or destroyed by heavenly beings, human beings, asuras, and so forth in the world. Why? All heavenly beings, human beings, asuras, and so forth in the world also have the same forms. You must know, heavenly sons, the form cannot destroy the form or know the form; the form cannot destroy formlessness or know formlessness; and formlessness cannot destroy the form or know the form. Why? The forms, the formlessness, and the formless form are nonexistent. Those who can destroy or know and those that can be destroyed and known are unattainable.

"You must know, heavenly sons, these various forms are not made by matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of everything, the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena. You must know, heavenly sons, these various forms are not made by the heavens, nonheavens, humans, or nonhumans. They are not flawed or flawless, in or beyond the world, and conditioned or unconditioned. They are not tied with or belong to anything. They are unspeakable.

"You must know, heavenly sons, the fathomless prajna paramita is far apart from various forms. So, we should not ask what forms are adopted by the fathomless prajna paramita. What do you think about this? If someone asks what forms empty space adopts, is it a right question?"

(The Buddha continued to describe various forms of prajna paramita. But prajna paramita is apart from forms. We should not ask what forms it adopts.)

The heavenly sons replied, "No, World-Honored One. No, Well-Gone One. The empty space has no body, form, or action, so this question is not a right one."

The Buddha said to the heavenly sons, “Similarly, it is not appropriate to ask what forms the fathomless prajna paramita adopts. Whether the Buddha is present in the world or not, the forms of all dharmas remain the same. Because the Buddha is awakened to and aware of these forms as they really are, they are named the Thus-Comer, One Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened One.”

Meanwhile, the heavenly sons said to the Buddha again, “The various forms that the Thus-Comers are awakened to and aware of are extremely profound. It is very difficult to see and become awakened to. The Thus-Comers have become awakened to these forms and turned all dharmas with unhindered knowledge. All Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones have dwelled in these forms and demonstrated and explained the fathomless prajna paramita to sentient beings in an expedient way, so the sentient beings can attain unhindered knowledge of prajna paramita.

“It is unusual, World-Honored One. The fathomless prajna paramita is where various Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones practice. Because the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones practice the fathomless prajna paramita, they are able to realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, and demonstrate and explain the forms of all dharmas to various sentient beings respectively. They demonstrate and explain respectively the forms of matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness, and so forth, and the forms of the perfect knowledge of everything, the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena.”

At that time, the Buddha said to the heavenly sons, “Yes, it is as you say. You must know, heavenly sons, what the Thus-Comers are awakened to and realize is that the forms of all dharmas are formless. Namely, the form of matter is the substances in change, the form of feeling is reception, the form of thinking is taking images, the form of action is doing, and the form of consciousness is cognition. The Thus-Comers have realized accurately that all these forms are formless. Furthermore, the form of the aggregates is the accumulation of vexations, the form of the spheres is the gate of arising and growth, and the form of the realms is many harmful poisons. The Thus-Comers have accurately realized that all these forms as formless. The form of

giving is generosity, the form of pure precept is the elimination of vexations, the form of forbearance is no anger and hatred, the form of diligence is invincibleness, the form of meditation is freedom from restlessness, and the form of prajna is nonattachment. The Thus-Comers have realized accurately that all these forms are formless. The form of internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth is nonexistence; the form of realness, dharma realm, and so forth is without inversion; and the form of the four noble truths is freedom from illusion. The Thus-Comers have realized accurately that all these forms are formless. The form of the four meditations is no disturbance, the form of the four immeasurable minds is no limitation and hindrance, and the form of the four formless concentrations is no noise and mixture. The Thus-Comers have accurately realized that all these forms are formless. The form of the eight liberations is no bondage, the form of the nine concentrations in sequence is no distraction and restlessness, and the form of the thirty-seven aids to enlightenment is getting away. The Thus-Comers have realized accurately that all these forms are formless. The form of the liberation gate of emptiness is getting far away, the form of the liberation gate of formlessness is no grasping and attachment, and the form of the liberation gate of nonaspiration is the disgust with all kinds of suffering. The Thus-Comers have realized accurately that all these forms are formless. The form of the ten stages in the three vehicles is absorbing pure states, and the ten stages of the bodhisattva is approaching the great bodhi. The Thus-Comers have realized accurately that these forms are formless. The form of the five eyes is enabling one to contemplate and illuminate, and the form of the six supernatural powers is no stagnation and hindrance. The Thus-Comers have accurately realized that these forms are formless. The form of the Buddha's ten abilities is never being subjugated, the form of the four kinds of fearlessness is no withdrawal and fear, the form of the four unhindered understandings is no interruption, the form of great loving-kindness is bringing benefits and happiness, the form of great compassion is the removal of decay and suffering, the form of great joy is joyful celebration, the form of great equanimity is the freedom from mixture and noise, and the form of the eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power ensure one cannot be overpowered. The Thus-Comers have realized accurately that these forms are formless. The form of the perfect major marks is being well adorned and dignified, the form of staying in correct mindfulness is being able to remember and keep in mindfulness, and the form of dwelling in equanimity at all times is no attachment. The Thus-Comers have realized accurately that these forms are formless. The form of all dharani gates is

comprehensive retention, and the form of all samadhi gates is universal absorption. The Thus-Comers have realized accurately that these forms are formless. The form of the voice-hearer vehicle is receiving teaching well, the form of the self-enlightenment bodhi is self-awakening to the truth, the form of the great bodhisattva actions is aspiration to grand effect, and the form of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas is bringing about broad and great usage. The Thus-Comers have realized accurately that these forms are formless. The form of perfect knowledge of everything is the perfect and universal enlightenment, the form of perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths is extremely good and thorough understanding, and the form of perfect knowledge of all phenomena is the perfect enlightenment of characteristics. The Thus-Comers have realized accurately that these forms are formless.

(The Buddha explained each of the forms of various superior holy dharmas and stated that the forms of all dharmas are formless.)

"You must know, heavenly sons, all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones can accurately realize that the forms of all dharmas are formless. Because of this cause and condition, I will say that the Buddhas are incomparable."

At that time, the Buddha said to the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One, "The fathomless prajna paramita is the mother of Buddhas. It can reveal the real forms of the dharmas in the world. Therefore, the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones always dwell in this dharma and make offerings respectfully to esteem and acclaim this dharma; absorb, protect, and keep this dharma in which they dwell and on which they rely. This dharma is the fathomless prajna paramita. All Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones have dwelled in, relied on, made offerings respectfully to esteem, acclaim, absorb, protect, and keep the fathomless prajna paramita. Why? The fathomless prajna paramita can give birth to Buddhas. The fathomless prajna paramita serves as a basis, where the Buddhas can dwell and rely. The fathomless prajna paramita reveal the real forms of the dharmas in the world.

(The Buddha said that various Buddhas dwell in and rely on the fathomless prajna paramita to become awakened to the real forms of the world and realize the unsurpassed bodhi. The Buddhas have always made offerings to esteem and acclaim this fathomless dharma.)

"You must know, Well-Appearing One, all Thus-comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones always know that they are indebted to someone and would like to pay a debt of gratitude. If one asks who is most grateful and eager repay the favor, the answer is the Buddha. Why? No one in the world knows better and does better than the Buddha who has always felt indebted in gratitude and strived to repay the givers."

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "How do the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones recognize that they are indebted to someone and should express their gratitude?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "All Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones have ridden on such a vehicle and walked on such a path to achieve the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. After attaining the bodhi, they continue to make offerings respectfully to always esteem, acclaim, absorb, protect, and keep this vehicle and this path without interruption. This vehicle or this path is the fathomless prajna paramita. This is how the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones recognize that they are indebted to someone and should repay the favor.

(The Buddha explained how Thus-Comers recognize that they are indebted to someone and should express their gratitude.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones have relied on the fathomless prajna paramita to intuitively realize that all dharmas, including the dharmas with forms and without forms, do not have real operations because the makers are nonexistent. All Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones have relied on the fathomless prajna paramita to intuitively realize that all dharmas, with or without forms, do not have operations and cannot accomplish anything because their forms and characteristics are unattainable. Because of this reason, the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones have always made offerings respectfully to esteem, acclaim, absorb, protect, and keep the fathomless prajna paramita. The Thus-Comers are really the most grateful ones, who recognize that they are indebted to prajna paramita and should repay the favors granted by it.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones have relied on the fathomless prajna paramita to understand that all dharmas have no actions, accomplishments, and arising. They also realize the cause and condition of nonarising. Therefore, you must know that the fathomless prajna paramita can give birth to Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones; it also can reveal the phenomena of the world as they really are."

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "The Thus-Comer always says that all dharma natures have no arising, initiation, knowledge, and views. Given this truth, how can the fathomless prajna paramita give birth to the Buddhas, and thus is called the mother of the Buddhas? How can it also reveal the phenomena of the world?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "It is as you say. All dharmas have no arising, initiation, knowledge, or views. It is in terms of the worldly perspective to say that the fathomless prajna paramita can give birth to the Buddhas; it is the mother of the Buddhas; and it can accurately reveal the phenomena of the world."

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "Why do all dharmas have no arising, initiation, knowledge, and views?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "All dharmas are empty, nonexistent, not at ease, illusory, and not solid, so all dharmas have no arising, initiation, knowledge, and views. Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, all dharma natures have no abode in which all dharmas can stay or to which they belong. Because of this cause and condition, they have no arising, initiation, knowledge, or views. Well-Appearing One, you must know that although the fathomless prajna paramita can give birth to the Buddhas and show the phenomena of the world, it neither gives birth nor shows.

(The Buddha explained that it is in terms of the worldly perspective to say the fathomless prajna paramita can give birth to Thus-Comers and reveal the phenomena of the world. In terms of ultimate meaning, prajna paramita can neither give birth to Thus-Comers nor reveal the phenomena of the world.)

"You must know, Well-Appearing One, the fathomless prajna paramita does not see matter, so it shows the phenomena of matter; it does not see feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness, so it reveals the phenomena of feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness. And so on, the fathomless prajna paramita does not see the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena, so it reveals the phenomena of the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena. You must know, Well-Appearing One, based on these meanings, the fathomless prajna paramita can reveal the real phenomena of the dharmas in the world and can give birth to the Buddhas, so it is named the mother of the Buddhas."

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "Why does the fathomless prajna paramita not see matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness so it manifests the phenomena of matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness? Why does the fathomless prajna paramita not see the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena so it manifests the phenomena of the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "The fathomless prajna paramita does not perceive matter, feeling, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena. It manifests matter, feeling, and so forth, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena without perceiving them. The fathomless prajna paramita can reveal the real phenomena of all dharmas in the world this way to various Buddhas, and gives birth to Buddhas, therefore, it is named the mother of the Buddhas.

(Prajna paramita reveals the phenomena of all dharmas of the world without perceiving all dharmas. This is the way it manifests the phenomena of world to various Buddhas.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the fathomless prajna paramita can manifest the emptiness of the world to the Buddhas, so it is called the mother of the Buddha. It can reveal the real phenomena of the world to the Buddhas."

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, “How does the prajna paramita manifest the emptiness of the world to the Buddhas?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “The fathomless prajna paramita can reveal the emptiness of five aggregates, the emptiness of twelve spheres, the emptiness of eighteen realms, the emptiness of six contacts, the emptiness of six feelings, the emptiness of six realms, the emptiness of four conditions, the emptiness of twelve links of dependent origination, the emptiness of sixty-two incorrect view of selfness, and the emptiness of the path of the ten virtuous karmas of the world to various Buddhas. The fathomless prajna paramita can also reveal the emptiness of the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations; the emptiness of the six paramitas; the emptiness of internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature; 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 thirty-seven aids to enlightenment; the emptiness of the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations; the emptiness of the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration; the emptiness of the ten stages of the three vehicles; the emptiness of the ten bodhisattva stages; 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, four unhindered understandings, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha’s wisdom and power; the emptiness of great loving-kindness, great compassion, great joy, and great equanimity; the emptiness of the thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguished minor features; the emptiness of staying in correct mindfulness and dwelling in equanimity at all times; the emptiness of stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi; the emptiness of all bodhisattva actions and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas; and the emptiness of the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena in the world to various Buddhas. Well-Appearing One, the fathomless prajna paramita thus can manifest the emptiness of the world, the real phenomena of the world to the Buddhas, so it is named the mother of the Buddhas.

(The Buddha said that because prajna paramita can reveal the emptiness of the world, the real phenomena of the world, to various Buddhas, it is called the mother of the Buddhas.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, due to prajna paramita, the Buddha can reveal empty matter, feeling, and so forth, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena in the world to sentient beings in various worlds, allowing them to feel the emptiness of the world, think of the emptiness of the world, reflect on the emptiness of the world, and perceive the emptiness of the world. Well-Appearing One, the fathomless prajna paramita thus can manifest for various Buddhas the emptiness of the world, so it is named the mother of the Buddha. Prajna paramita can reveal the real phenomena of the world to various Buddhas.

(The Buddha said that the fathomless prajna paramita can reveal the real phenomena of the world to various Buddhas.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the fathomless prajna paramita can manifest the empty phenomena of the world to various Buddhas. How does it do that? It will allow the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones to see the empty matter, feeling, and so forth, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena in the world. Well-Appearing One, the fathomless prajna paramita thus can show various Buddhas the empty phenomena of the world.

(The fathomless prajna paramita can reveal the empty phenomena of the world to various Buddhas.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the fathomless prajna paramita can manifest the inconceivable phenomena of the world. How does it do that? It will allow the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones to see the inconceivable matter, feeling, and so forth, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena in the world. Well-Appearing One, the fathomless prajna paramita thus can show various Buddhas the inconceivable phenomena of the world.

(The fathomless prajna paramita can reveal the inconceivable phenomena of the world to various Buddhas.)

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the fathomless prajna paramita can manifest the faraway phenomena of the world to various Buddhas. How does it do that? It will allow the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones to see the faraway matter, feeling, and so forth, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena in the world. Well-Appearing One, the fathomless prajna paramita thus can show various Buddhas the faraway phenomena of the world.

(The fathomless prajna paramita can reveal the faraway phenomena of the world to various Buddhas.)

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the fathomless prajna paramita can manifest the tranquil phenomena of of the world to various Buddhas. How does it do that? It will allow the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones to see the tranquil matter, feeling, and so forth, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena in the world. Well-Appearing One, the fathomless prajna paramita thus can show various Buddhas the tranquil phenomena of the world.

(The fathomless prajna paramita can reveal the tranquil phenomena of the world to various Buddhas.)

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the fathomless prajna paramita can manifest the phenomena of emptiness in the final analysis of the world to various Buddhas. How does it do that? It will allow the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones to see the emptiness in the final analysis of matter, feeling, and so forth, and the emptiness in the final analysis of the perfect knowledge of all phenomena in the world. Well-Appearing One, the fathomless prajna paramita thus can show various Buddhas the phenomena of emptiness in the final analysis of the world.

(The fathomless prajna paramita can reveal the phenomena of emptiness in the final analysis of the world to various Buddhas.)

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the fathomless prajna paramita can manifest the phenomena of empty selflessness of the world to various Buddhas. How does it do that? It will allow the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones

to see the empty selflessness of matter, feeling, and so forth, and the empty selflessness of the perfect knowledge of all phenomena in the world. Well-Appearing One, the fathomless prajna paramita thus can show various Buddhas the phenomena of empty selflessness of the world.

(The fathomless prajna paramita can reveal the phenomena of empty selflessness of the world to various Buddhas.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the fathomless prajna paramita can manifest the phenomena of empty self-nature of the world to various Buddhas. How does it do that? It will allow the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones to see the empty self-nature of matter, feeling, and so forth, and the empty self-nature of the perfect knowledge of all phenomena in the world. Well-Appearing One, the fathomless prajna paramita thus can show various Buddhas the phenomena of empty self-nature of the world.

(The fathomless prajna paramita can reveal the phenomena of empty self-nature of the world to various Buddhas.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the fathomless prajna paramita can manifest the phenomena of empty selfless self-nature of the world to various Buddhas. How does it do that? It will allow the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones to see the empty selfless self-nature of matter, feeling, and so forth, and the empty selfless self-nature of the perfect knowledge of all phenomena in the world. Well-Appearing One, the fathomless prajna paramita thus can show various Buddhas the phenomena of empty selfless self-nature of the world.

(The fathomless prajna paramita can reveal the phenomena of empty selfless self-nature of the world to various Buddhas.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the fathomless prajna paramita can manifest the phenomena of pure emptiness of the world to various Buddhas. How does it do that? It will allow the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones to see the pure empty matter, feeling, and so forth, and the pure empty perfect knowledge of all phenomena in the world. Well-Appearing One, the fathomless prajna paramita thus can show various Buddhas the phenomena of pure emptiness of the world.

(The fathomless prajna paramita can reveal the phenomena of pure emptiness of the world to various Buddhas.)

"You must know, Well-Appearing One, because of these reasons, the fathomless prajna paramita can manifest the real phenomena of the world to various Buddhas.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, 'The fathomless prajna paramita can show various Buddhas the phenomena of the world' means that the fathomless prajna paramita will not allow a thought of this world or a thought of another world to arise. Why? It is because no dharma can allow the thought of this world or the thought of another world to arise."

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Chapter 16

The Inconceivable

(In the Third Assembly)

At that time, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One said to the Buddha again, “World-Honored One, the fathomless prajna paramita appears in the world for the sake of one great event. It appears in the world for the sake of inconceivable, immeasurable, countless events. It appears in the world for the sake of one unequaled equal event.”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “Yes, it is as you say. Well-Appearing One, why does the fathomless prajna paramita appear in the world for the sake of one great event? The Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones have consistently worked to bring relief to all sentient beings uninterruptedly, and that is a great task. The fathomless prajna paramita appears in the world for the sake of this great event.

“Well-Appearing One, why does the fathomless prajna paramita appear in the world for the sake of the inconceivable events? All Buddha nature, Thus-Comer nature, natural enlightenment nature, and the nature of the perfect knowledge of everything of the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones are inconceivable, and the fathomless prajna paramita appears in the world for the sake of these events.

“Well-Appearing One, why does the fathomless prajna paramita appear in the world for the sake of immeasurable events? All Buddha nature, Thus-Comer nature, natural enlightenment nature, and the nature of the perfect knowledge of everything of the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones are so immeasurable that no sentient being can measure. The fathomless prajna paramita appears in the world for the sake of these events.

“Well-Appearing One, why does the fathomless prajna paramita appear in the world for the sake of countless events? All Buddha nature, Thus-Comer nature, natural enlightenment nature, and the nature of the perfect knowledge of everything of the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones are so countless that no one can accurately know their quantity. The fathomless prajna paramita appears in the world for the sake of these events.

“Well-Appearing One, why does the fathomless prajna paramita appear in the world for the sake of unequaled equal events? All Buddha nature, Thus-Comer nature, natural enlightenment nature, and the nature of the perfect knowledge of everything of the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones are unequaled equal and unsurpassed. The fathomless prajna paramita appears in the world for the sake of these events.”

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, “Are only the Buddha nature, Thus-Comer nature, natural enlightenment nature, and the nature of the perfect knowledge of everything of the Thus-comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones inconceivable, immeasurable, countless, and unequaled equal, or are any other dharmas also inconceivable, immeasurable, countless, and unequaled equal?

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “Not only the Buddha nature, Thus Comer nature, natural enlightenment nature, and the nature of the perfect knowledge of everything of the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones are inconceivable, immeasurable, countless, and unequaled equal, but other dharmas are also inconceivable, immeasurable, countless, and unequaled equal. Well-Appearing One, matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena are also inconceivable, immeasurable, countless, and unequaled equal. Well-Appearing One, all dharmas are inconceivable, immeasurable, countless, and unequaled equal. Well-Appearing One, in the real dharma natures, the mind and the associated images are unattainable. Matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena cannot be established, so they are inconceivable, immeasurable, countless, and unequaled equal.”

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, “Why are matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena inconceivable, immeasurable, countless, and unequaled equal because they cannot be established?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “Matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena are without self-nature, so they cannot be established. Because they cannot be established, they are inconceivable, immeasurable, countless, and unequaled equal.”

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, “Why are matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena without self-nature?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “It is because the nature of conceivability, measurement, quantity, equality, and inequality of matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena is unattainable.”

(The Buddha said that not only the Buddha nature, Thus-Comer nature, natural enlightenment nature, and the nature of the perfect knowledge of everything are inconceivable, immeasurable, countless, and unequaled equal, but other dharmas, such as matter, feeling, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena are also inconceivable, immeasurable, countless, and unequaled equal. It is because all these dharmas are without self-nature and cannot be established. Why? The nature of conceivability, measurement, quantity, equality, and inequality is unattainable.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, “Why is the nature of conceivability, measurement, quantity, equality, and inequality of matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena unattainable?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “The nature of conceivability, measurement, quantity, equality, and inequality of matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness, and so

forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena is unattainable because their self-nature is empty.

(The Buddha said that not only the Buddha nature, Thus-Comer nature, natural enlightenment nature, and the nature of the perfect knowledge of everything are inconceivable, immeasurable, countless, and unequaled equal, but other dharmas, such as matter, feeling, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena are also inconceivable, immeasurable, countless, and unequaled equal. It is because all these dharmas are without self-nature and cannot be established. Why? The nature of conceivability, measurement, quantity, equality, and inequality is unattainable due to the emptiness of their self-nature.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, because matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena are unattainable, they are inconceivable, immeasurable, countless, and unequaled equal."

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "Why are matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena inconceivable, immeasurable, countless, and unequaled equal because they are unattainable?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "Because matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena are limitless in quantity, they are unattainable. Because they are unattainable, they are inconceivable, immeasurable, countless, and unequaled equal."

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "Why are matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena unattainable because they are limitless in quantity?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "Matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena are inconceivable, immeasurable, countless, and unequaled equal, so they are limitless in quantity. Because they are limitless in quantity, they are unattainable.

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, what do you think about this? In inconceivability, immeasurability, countless quantity, and unequaled equality of matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena, are matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena attainable?”

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

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, “You are right. Because of this cause and condition, all dharmas are inconceivable, immeasurable, countless, and unequaled equal.

“You must know, Well-Appearing One, because all dharmas are inconceivable, immeasurable, countless, and unequaled equal, all the Buddha dharma, Thus-Comer dharma, natural enlightenment dharma, and the dharma of the perfect knowledge of everything of all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones are also inconceivable, immeasurable, countless, and unequaled equal. You must know, Well-Appearing One, all the Buddha dharma, Thus-Comer dharma, natural enlightenment dharma, and the dharma of the perfect knowledge of everything of all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones are inconceivable because the conceivability has extinguished. They are immeasurable because the measurability has extinguished. They are countless because the countable quantity has extinguished. They are unequaled equal because equality has extinguished. Because of this cause and condition, all dharmas are also inconceivable, immeasurable, countless, and unequaled equal. You must know, Well-Appearing One, all the Buddha dharma, Thus-Comer dharma, natural enlightenment dharma, and the dharma of the perfect knowledge of everything of all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones are inconceivable because they surpass the conceivability. They are immeasurable because they surpass the measurability. They are countless because they surpass the countable quantity. They are unequaled equal because they surpass equality. Because of this cause and condition, all dharmas are also inconceivable, immeasurable, countless, and unequaled equal.

(The Buddha explained why all dharmas are inconceivable, immeasurable, countless, and unequaled equal.)

"You must know, Well-Appearing One, the inconceivable dharma has nothing other than the designated name of inconceivability. The immeasurable dharma has nothing other than the designated name of immeasurability. The countless dharma has nothing other than the designated name of innumerability. The unequaled equal dharma has nothing other than the designated name of unequaled equality. Because of this cause and condition, all the Buddha dharma, Thus-Comer dharma, natural enlightenment dharma, and the dharma of the perfect knowledge of everything of all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones are inconceivable, immeasurable, countless, and unequaled equal. You must know, Well-Appearing One, the inconceivable dharma, immeasurable dharma, countless dharma, and unequaled equal dharma are like empty space that is inconceivable, immeasurable, countless, and unequaled equal. Because of this cause and condition, all the Buddha dharma, Thus-Comer dharma, natural enlightenment dharma, and the dharma of the perfect knowledge of everything of all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones are inconceivable, immeasurable, countless, and unequaled equal.

(The designated names are provisionally established to represent individual existents, so they are changing and nonexistent. This paragraph implies that the nature of the inconceivable dharma, immeasurable dharma, and so forth is empty.)

"You must know, Well-Appearing One, all the Buddha dharma, Thus-Comer dharma, natural enlightenment dharma, and the dharma of the perfect knowledge of everything of all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones cannot be conceived, measured, counted, or equaled by the voice-hearers, self-enlightened ones, the world, heavenly beings, human beings, asuras, and so forth. Because of this cause and condition, it is said that all the Buddha dharma, Thus-Comer dharma, natural enlightenment dharma, and the dharma of the perfect knowledge of everything of all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones are inconceivable, immeasurable, countless, and unequaled equal."

As the Buddha was teaching the inconceivable, immeasurable, countless, and unequaled equal dharma, five hundred monks in the assembly attained mentally liberation and became free from all flaws. Two thousand nuns in the assembly also attained mentally liberation and became

free from all flaws. Sixty thousand laymen stayed far away from various defilements of the dharmas and attained the pure dharma eye. Thirty thousand laywomen also stayed far away from various defilements of the dharmas and attained the pure dharma eye. Two thousand bodhisattvas attained the dharma forbearance of nonarising; they were conferred the prophecy of becoming a Buddha by the Buddha in the Kalpa of the Sages.

Chapter 17

Similes

(In the Third Assembly)

At that time, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One said to the Buddha, "World-Honored One, the fathomless prajna paramita appears in the world for the sake of one great event, the inconceivable events, the immeasurable events, the countless events, and the unequaled equal events."

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "Yes, it is as you say. Why? The fathomless prajna paramita can accomplish 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 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 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 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 defilement, 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; great loving-kindness, great compassion, great joy, and great equanimity; the thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features; staying in correct mindfulness and dwelling in equanimity at all times; stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi; all great bodhisattva actions; the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas; and the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena.

(The Buddha said that the fathomless prajna paramita appears in the world for the sake of inconceivable events, which include accomplishing various superior holy dharmas.)

"Well-Appearing One, like Ksatriya King, One Baptizing by Pouring Water on the Head, who could subjugate all with his virtues, powers, and self-easiness and ruled the country without doing anything but entrusting all to his high ranking officials while he himself lived a peaceful and happy life, so does the Thus-Comer, who is a great dharma king and can subjugate all with his virtues, powers, and self-easiness, and entrusts the dharma of voice-hearer, the dharma of self-enlightened one, the dharma of bodhisattva, and the dharma of the Buddhas to the fathomless prajna paramita. Because of this fathomless prajna paramita, all can be fulfilled. Therefore, Well-Appearing One, the fathomless prajna paramita has appeared in the world for the sake of one great thing, the inconceivable things, and so forth, and the unequaled equal things. Why? Because the fathomless prajna paramita neither grasps nor is attached to matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness, it can appear in the world to fulfill a lot of things. And so on, because it neither grasps nor is attached to the perfect knowledge of everything, the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena, it can appear in the world to do a lot of things. Because it neither grasps nor is attached to stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas, it can appear in the world to accomplish a lot of things."

(The fathomless prajna paramita is not attached to all dharmas so that it can accomplish many inconceivable events.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, “How does such fathomless prajna paramita accomplish many events as it appears in the world because it neither grasps nor is attached to matter, feeling, and so forth, and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas?”

The Buddha said, “What do you think about this? Have you ever seen that matter, feeling, and so forth, and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi can be grasped or attached?”

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

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, “Excellent, excellent! I have not seen that matter, feeling, and so forth, and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi can be grasped or attached either. Because you do not see it, you will not grasp it; because you do not grasp it, you will not be attached to it. Because of this cause and condition, the fathomless prajna paramita neither grasps nor is attached to matter, feeling, and so forth, and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. Well-Appearing One, you must know, I have not seen that the Buddha nature, Thus-Comer nature, natural enlightenment nature, and the nature of the perfect knowledge of everything of all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones can be grasped or attached. Because we do not see them, we will not grasp them. Because we do not grasp them, we will not be attached to them. So does the fathomless prajna paramita. It does not see that the Buddha nature, Thus-Comer nature, natural enlightenment nature, and the nature of the perfect knowledge of everything of all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones can be grasped or attached. Because it does not see that they can be grasped or attached, it will not grasp or be attached to them. Therefore, Well-Appearing One, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas should not grasp or be attached to matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness, and so forth, and the Buddha nature, Thus-Comer nature, natural enlightenment nature, and the nature of the perfect knowledge of everything of all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones.”

(The Buddha taught that bodhisattvas should not grasp and become attached to various dharmas when they practice prajna paramita. He said if you do not see the dharmas, you will not grasp them. If you do not grasp them, you will not be attached to them.)

At that time, the heavenly beings from the realm of desire and the realm of form said to the Buddha, “World-Honored One, such prajna paramita is very most profound; it is difficult to see or be awakened to it. It is beyond one’s imagination or thinking. It is so tranquil, subtle, refined, real, fathomless, and mystic that only the extremely intelligent ones can understand it. The sentient beings must have in the past made offerings to immeasurable Buddhas and taken vows and initiated great aspirations in the Buddhas’ places that they are able to believe in and understand prajna paramita now. They must have planted many virtuous roots, served many virtuous friends, and have been absorbed by immeasurable virtuous friends that they are able to believe in and understand prajna paramita. Those who can deeply believe in and understand such prajna paramita upon hearing it must belong to the bodhisattvas who will attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. World-Honored One, suppose that in this large threefold thousand-world, all sentient beings have achieved actions in accord with the belief and the dharma, the eight-forbearance, stream-entry effect, once-return effect, nonreturn effect, arhat effect, and self-enlightenment bodhi through either wisdom or the termination of defilements. On the other hand, suppose that one person has refrained from pleasures to reflect on, measure, investigate, and contemplate the fathomless prajna paramita for just one day, then in comparison, the forbearance that the latter one achieves in the fathomless prajna paramita will be superior to wisdom and the termination of defilements achieved by former ones by immeasurable and countless times. Why? The achievements arising from actions in accord with belief and dharma, and so forth, and the self-enlightenment bodhi through wisdom and the termination of defilements turn out relatively minor when compared to the great bodhisattva forbearance of nonarising.”

At that time, the Buddha said to various heavenly beings, “Excellent, excellent! It is as you say. You heavenly beings must know that if good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth immediately believe in, understand, write, accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, learn, reflect on, and lecture on the fathomless prajna paramita upon hearing it, then they will get rid of birth and death and attain nirvana quickly. What they achieve will be greater than the two-vehicle practitioners who stay far away from prajna paramita and learn other sutras for one or more than one kalpa. Why? It is because in the profound sutras of prajna paramita, all wonderful, subtle, and superior dharmas are extensively taught. The practitioners acting in accord with belief and

acting in accord with the dharma should learn these sutras diligently and attentively, so they will be able to fulfill what they are pursuing very soon. All Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones attained, will attain, and are attaining the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi because of learning the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita."

(The Buddha said that the practitioners through belief or through dharma should learn, practice, reflect on, and lecture on the sutras of prajna paramita because all superior and exquisite dharmas are extensively in these sutras.)

In the meantime, the heavenly sons said, "This prajna paramita is the great paramita, the inconceivable paramita, the immeasurable paramita, the countless paramita, and the unequaled equal paramita. World-Honored One, the practitioners in accord with belief, the dharma, and so forth, and the self-enlightenment bodhi should diligently and attentively cultivate and learn this fathomless prajna paramita, so they will be able to realize and attain nirvana soon. If great bodhisattvas cultivate and learn diligently and attentively this fathomless prajna paramita, they will attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly. World-Honored One, suppose that voice-hearers, self-enlightened ones, and bodhisattvas have cultivated and learned diligently and attentively the same fathomless prajna paramita, and each has reached the greatest extent of achievement in whatever they do, the fathomless prajna paramita will not gain or lose anything."

Meanwhile, the heavenly sons rejoiced, danced, and jumped after hearing what the Buddha said. They all bowed down on the ground before the Buddha's feet, walked around the Buddha clockwise for three times to say goodbye, and started to return to their palaces. They left the assembly and disappeared before long.

At that time, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "World-Honored One, if great bodhisattvas hear the teaching of the fathomless prajna paramita and develop deep belief in and understanding of it immediately, where are these great bodhisattvas from before being reborn to this world?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "Some great bodhisattvas have heard the fathomless prajna paramita and developed a deep belief in and understanding of it immediately

without their minds sinking, drowned, misguided, suffocated, puzzled, or skeptical. They neither grasp nor are attached to the prajna paramita; rather, they enjoy hearing and accepting it and make offerings respectfully to it. They always follow the dharma teacher to inquire about the essential meanings of the dharma and never stay away from the teacher no matter if they walk, stand, sit, or lie, just like a new-born baby calf always staying with mother. They will not stay away from the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita and the dharma teacher until they thoroughly understand the essential meanings of the fathomless prajna paramita and are able to teach others. Well-Appearing One, you must know that these great bodhisattvas had passed away from the human world before they were reborn to this human world. Why? Well-Appearing One, these great bodhisattvas had in their previous lives heard the fathomless prajna paramita, and further accepted, embraced, read, recited, cultivated, learned, reflected reasonably on it. They had written it and adorned the writing with various treasures. They had also made offerings to esteem and acclaim it. Because of these virtuous roots, they got rid of the eight difficult situations for cultivation and were reborn to human world again. Therefore, when they heard the fathomless prajna paramita, they immediately formed a deep belief in and understanding of it."

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, "Some great bodhisattvas had achieved superior merits and virtues, made offerings to and served the Buddhas in other directions of the world. When they were reborn from there to this world and when they heard the fathomless prajna paramita, will they develop a deep belief in and understanding of the fathomless prajna paramita? Will they write, accept, embrace, read, recite, learn, cultivate, reflect on, lecture on, and make offerings to the fathomless prajna paramita tirelessly?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "Some great bodhisattvas had achieved superior merits and virtues and made offerings to and served the Buddhas in other directions. When they were reborn from there to this world and when they heard the fathomless prajna paramita, they will develop a deep belief in and understanding of the fathomless prajna paramita; they will further write, accept, embrace, read, recite, learn, cultivate, reflect on, lecture on, and make offerings to the fathomless prajna paramita tirelessly. Why? In previous times, these great bodhisattvas had heard this fathomless prajna paramita at immeasurable Buddha places in other directions and had developed a deep belief in and understanding of it; they had further written,

accepted, embraced, read, recited, learned, cultivated, reflected on, lectured on, and made offerings respectfully to the fathomless prajna paramita tirelessly.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, some great bodhisattvas were reborn from the sentient beings in the Heaven of Tusita to this human realm and have also achieved such merits and virtues. Why? These great bodhisattvas had in previous lives inquired about the profound and essential meanings of prajna paramita at Bodhisattva Maitreya' place in the Heaven of Tusita. By riding such virtuous roots, they were reborn from there to this world. Upon hearing the fathomless prajna paramita, they immediately develop a deep belief in and understanding of the fathomless prajna paramita, and further write, accept, embrace, read, recite, learn, cultivate, reflect on, lecture on, and make offerings respectfully to the fathomless prajna paramita tirelessly.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, some good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth dwelling in the great vehicle had in previous lives heard prajna paramita, meditation paramita, and so forth, and giving 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 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 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 defilement, 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; great loving-kindness, great compassion, great joy, and great equanimity; the thirty-two perfect major marks and eight distinguishing minor features; staying in correct mindfulness and dwelling in equanimity at all times; all great bodhisattva actions and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas, and the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena. But they had never inquired about the profound and

essential meanings, so, when they hear the fathomless prajna paramita in current life, their minds are puzzled, suffocated, hesitated, fearful, and weak; they will very likely bring about a deviated interpretation based on mistakes, and it becomes very hard for them to develop an insightful understanding.

(It is unfortunate that these bodhisattvas did not seek guidance on the profound prajna paramita to clarify their questions.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, some good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth dwelling in the great vehicle had in previous lives heard about prajna paramita and inquired about its profound essential meanings for one day, two days, and so forth, and ten days, but they did not cultivate it diligently as they were taught. So, in current life, when they happened to hear the fathomless prajna paramita for one day, two days, and so forth, and ten days, their minds were solid and could not be destroyed. But once they stay away from the fathomless prajna paramita that they once heard, they will regress right away and hesitate about what they heard. Why? These good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth dwelling in the great vehicle did hear the fathomless prajna paramita in their previous lives and did inquire about its profound essential meaning, but they did not practice and cultivate diligently as they were taught. If they happen to encounter virtuous friends in current life and are encouraged by those good friends, they will love to hear and accept the fathomless prajna paramita. If they do not encounter virtuous friends, they will easily lose interest in the fathomless prajna paramita. They are inconsistent as they face the fathomless prajna paramita. Sometimes they love it and sometimes they dislike it. Sometimes they show strong determination and sometimes they waver and regress, just like the fluffed cotton that flies and changes directions following the wind. You must know that these good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth dwelling in the great vehicle have not aspired to the great vehicle long enough; have not been acquainted with real virtuous intellectuals; have not made offerings to various Buddhas, the World-Honored Ones; have not accepted, embraced, read, recited, written, reflected on, and lectured on the fathomless prajna paramita; and have not cultivated and learned diligently prajna, meditation diligence, forbearance, pure precept, and giving paramitas, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena. You must know that these good gentlemen and so forth are novice great-vehicle practitioners, they have so far

developed very little belief in, respect to, fondness of, and pleasure in the great vehicle, so they cannot write, accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, learn, reflect on, and lecture for others on the fathomless prajna paramita.

(The Buddha described the difficulties novice great-vehicle practitioners should overcome.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, if good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth dwelling in the great vehicle do not write, accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, learn, reflect on, and lecture for others on the fathomless prajna paramita, or if they do not absorb sentient beings with the fathomless prajna paramita, meditation paramita, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena, then these good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth will not be protected by the prajna paramita, meditation paramita, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena, they thus will fall into the stage of the voice-hearer or the stage of the self-enlightened one. Why? Because they cannot write, accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, learn, reflect on, lecture for others on the fathomless prajna paramita, nor can they absorb sentient beings by the fathomless prajna paramita, meditation paramita, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena, they will not be able to cultivate, and thus will not be protected, by prajna paramita, meditation paramita, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena, they thus will fall into the stage of voice-hearer or the stage of self-enlightened one.

(The Buddha described the bodhisattva-path learners who are not protected by the power of prajna paramita and easily fall into the two vehicles.)

"You must know, Well-Appearing One, in a shipwreck, those struggling to get to the seashore should grab a piece of wood, a floating bag, or a corpse when they swam. This is the only way that they can rely on to reach the other shore safe without being hurt. Therefore, Well-Appearing One, if good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth dwelling in the great vehicle have developed some belief, respect, love, and fondness in the great vehicle, but do not write, accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, learn, reflect on, and lecture for others on the sutras in accord with the fathomless prajna paramita, meditation paramita, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena, they will regress in the pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi and fall into the stage of the voice-hearer or the stage of the self-enlightened one. If the good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth dwelling in the great vehicle have developed

perfect belief, respect, love, and fondness in the great vehicle and can further write, accept, embrace, read, recite, cultivate, learn, reflect on, and lecture for others on the sutras in accord with the fathomless prajna paramita, meditation paramita, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena, they will never fall into the stage of the voice-hearer or the stage of the self-enlightened one; they rather certainly will realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, someone wanted to cross a dangerous and difficult wilderness but did not prepare sufficient food, water, and other related instruments, so this person would suffer and even lose life before arriving at the happy land safely. So, Well-Appearing One, if good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth dwelling in the great vehicle do not have belief, patience, pure mind, superior incentive, motivation, definitive understanding, equanimity, and diligence in the pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, and if they do not absorb the fathomless prajna paramita, meditation paramita, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena, they will withdraw in the middle of the way and fall into the stage of the voice-hearer or the stage of the self-enlightened one and will never realize the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.

"You must know, Well-Appearing One, someone wanted to cross a dangerous and difficult wilderness and had prepared sufficient food, water, and other related instruments, so this person would not suffer or lose life; rather, this person would get to the happy land safely. Well-Appearing One, if good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth dwelling in the great vehicle have developed belief, patience, pure mind, superior incentive, motivation, definitive understanding, equanimity, and diligence in the pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, and further absorb the fathomless prajna paramita, meditation paramita, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena, they will not withdraw in the middle of the way. Rather, they will transcend the stage of the voice-hearer and the stage of the self-enlightened one, assist sentient beings to mature, dignify and purify Buddha lands, and realize the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi very soon.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, some men or women held semi-finished vases to draw water from river, pond, well, spring, or ditch. You must know that the vases will be worn

out soon. Why? It is because these vases are unfinished products, so they cannot carry water for long and will finally return to dust. Well-Appearing One, if good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth have developed belief, forbearance, pure mind, superior incentive, motive, definitive understanding, equanimity, and great diligence in the pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, but they do not absorb the expedient skillfulness of the fathomless prajna paramita, meditation paramita, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena, they will regress in the pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi and fall into the stage of the voice-hearer or the stage of the self-enlightened one.

"Well-Appearing One, you must know that as men or women carry well burnt vases to draw water from pond, well, spring, or ditch, the vases will not be broken. Why? It is because these vases were perfectly made and good enough for holding water. Therefore, Well-Appearing One, if good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth dwelling in the great vehicle have developed deep belief, forbearance, pure mind, superior incentive, motive, definitive understanding, equanimity, and great diligence in the pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, and further absorb the expedient skillfulness of the fathomless prajna paramita, meditation paramita, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena, you must know that these good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth dwelling in the great vehicle will be protected by and kept in the minds of various Buddhas and bodhisattvas, and will not regress in the pursuit; rather, they will transcend the stage of the voice-hearer and the stage of the self-enlightened one, assist sentient beings to mature, dignify and purify Buddha lands, and realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi very soon.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, a merchant without expedient skill and wisdom ignored the maintenance of the ship when anchoring at the harbor and was in a hurry to load the goods and started the journey. The shipwreck happened before long, and men and the goods scattered around the ocean. This merchant thus lost his great fortune and life because of the lack of expedient wisdom. So, Well-Appearing One, if good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth dwelling in the great vehicle have developed belief, patience, pure mind, superior incentive, motive, definitive understanding, equanimity, and diligence in the pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, but do not absorb the expedient skillfulness of the fathomless prajna paramita, meditation paramita, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena, you

must know that these good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth dwelling in the great vehicle will regress in the middle of the way and lose their great fortune and life. The so-called losing life means falling into the stage of the voice-hearer or the stage of the self-enlightened one, and the so-called losing great fortune means losing the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.

"You must know, Well-Appearing One, if the merchant has skillful wisdom and has the ship well fixed and maintained at the pier and make sure it is not leaky before loading the goods, the ship will arrive at its destination in peace and safety. If good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth dwelling in the great vehicle have developed belief, patience, pure mind, superior incentive, motivation, definitive understanding, equanimity, and diligence in the pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, and can further absorb the expedient skillfulness of the fathomless prajna paramita, meditation paramita, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena, they will be always protected by and kept in the minds of various Buddhas and bodhisattvas. They will not regress in the middle of the way from the pursuit; instead, they will transcend the stage of the voice-hearer and the stage of the self-enlightened one, assist sentient beings to mature, dignify and purify Buddha lands, and realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi very soon.

(The Buddha used similes in these paragraphs to teach how bodhisattva-path practitioners could avoid falling into the two vehicles.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, a man aged one hundred and twenty years and was very weak and suffered from wind, heat, and phlegm, or a combination of these factors. What do you think about this? Can this old man get up from his bed by himself?"

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

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, "Even if this old man was supported by someone else, he could not walk for one krosa, two krosas, or three krosas. Why? It is because of old age and severe illness. So, Well-Appearing One, if good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth dwelling in the great vehicle have developed belief, patience, pure mind, superior incentive, motive, definitive understanding, equanimity, and diligence in the pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, but do not absorb the expedient skillfulness of the fathomless prajna

paramita, meditation paramita, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena, you must know that these good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth will regress in the middle of the way and cannot realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. They will fall into the stage of the voice-hearer or the stage of the self-enlightened one. Why? Because they do not absorb the expedient skillfulness of the fathomless prajna paramita, meditation paramita, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena; they are not protected by and kept in the minds of various Buddhas and bodhisattvas.

"Well-Appearing One, a man aged one hundred and twenty years and was very ill and suffered from wind, heat, and phlegm, or a combination of these factors. This old man was so weak that he could not stand up and walk by himself. Two strong men came to assist him by supporting each of his armpits, so he could stand up slowly. They told the old man, 'Don't you worry. You may go anywhere you like. We will go with you and assist you all the time to make sure that you can arrive safely and harmlessly.' So, Well-Appearing One, if good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth dwelling in the great vehicle have developed belief, patience, pure mind, superior incentive, motive, definitive understanding, equanimity, and diligence in the pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, and further absorb the expedient skillfulness of the fathomless prajna paramita, meditation paramita, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena, they will not regress in the pursuit. Rather, they will transcend the stage of the voice-hearer or the stage of the self-enlightened one, assist sentient beings to mature, dignify and purify Buddha lands, and realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly. Why? Because they can absorb the expedient skillfulness of the fathomless prajna paramita, meditation paramita, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena, they are protected by and kept in the minds of various Buddhas and bodhisattvas."

At that time, Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "Why can't the good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth dwelling in the great vehicle realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, but will fall into the stage of the voice-hearer or the stage of the self-enlightened one if they do not absorb the expedient skillfulness of the fathomless prajna paramita, meditation paramita, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “Excellent! You have asked such a good question. I am going to tell you why. Please listen to me carefully.

“Since the moment good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth dwelling in the great vehicle begin to aspire to the great bodhi, they have been attached to the ‘I’ and the associated images in cultivating giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita. When cultivating giving, they will think, ‘I can practice giving. I can give this to others. They are the receivers.’ When cultivating pure precepts, they will think, ‘I can observe the precepts. I am observing these precepts. I possess such precepts.’ When cultivating forbearance, they will think, ‘I can cultivate forbearance. I have refrained from doing this. I possess forbearance.’ When cultivating diligence, they will think, ‘I can work diligently. I work diligently for this purpose. I possess diligence.’ When cultivating meditation, they will think, ‘I can cultivate concentration. I cultivate concentration for this purpose. I possess such concentration.’ When cultivating prajna, they will think, ‘I can cultivate wisdom. I have cultivated wisdom for this purpose. I possess such wisdom.’

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, when these good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth dwelling in the great vehicle cultivate giving, they insist that giving is existent, something comes out of this giving, and this giving is related to me. When they cultivate pure precept, they insist that pure precept is existent, something comes out of this pure precept, and this pure precept is related to me. When they cultivate forbearance, they insist that forbearance is existent, something comes out of this forbearance, and this forbearance is related to me. When they cultivate diligence, they insist that diligence is existent, something comes out of this diligence, and this diligence is related to me. When they cultivate meditation, they insist that meditation is existent, something comes out of this meditation, and this meditation is related to me. When they cultivate prajna, they insist that prajna is existent, something comes out of this prajna, and this prajna is related to me. Because these good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth dwelling in the great vehicle have been attached to the ‘I’ and associated images, they experience birth and death more often, and the six paramitas they cultivate cannot free them from suffering. Why? In six paramitas, no differentiation can give rise to attachment. Why? Getting far away from this and the other shores is the form of the six paramitas.

"You must know, Well-Appearing One, these good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth dwelling in the great vehicle do not know the form of this shore and the other shore, so they cannot absorb giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna paramitas, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena. Because of this cause and condition, they will fall into the stage of the voice-hearer or the stage of the self-enlightened one and cannot realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi."

(The Buddha taught that those attached to themselves and the dharmas they cultivate cannot be liberated from birth and death, as such practice contradicts prajna paramita.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "Why do the good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth dwelling in the great vehicle fall into the stage of voice-hearer or the stage of self-enlightened one and fail to realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi because of the lack of expedient skillfulness?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "Since the moment beginning to aspire to the great bodhi, the good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth dwelling in the great vehicle have stayed away from expedient skillfulness, so when they cultivate giving, they will think, 'I am practicing giving. I possess giving. This is giving.' When cultivating pure precept, they will think, 'I can observe pure precept. I possess pure precept. This is pure precept.' When cultivating forbearance, they will think, 'I can cultivate patience. I possess forbearance. This is forbearance.' When cultivating diligence, they will think, 'I can practice diligence. I possess diligence. This is diligence.' When cultivating meditation, they will think, 'I can cultivate concentrations. I possess meditation. This is meditation.' When cultivating prajna, they will think, 'I can cultivate wisdom. I possess prajna. This is prajna.'

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing Ones, when cultivating giving, these good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth dwelling in the great vehicle are attached to the thinking that giving is existent, something comes out of this giving, and the giving is related to them, so they will become arrogant and less self-restrained. When cultivating pure precept, they are attached to the thinking that pure-precept is existent, something comes out of this pure precept, and the pure precept is related to them, so they become arrogant and less self-restrained. When cultivating diligence, they are attached to the thinking that diligence is existent, something comes out of this

diligence, and the diligence is related to them, so they will become arrogant and less self-restrained. When cultivating meditation, they are attached to the thinking that meditation is existent, something comes out of the meditation, and the meditation is related to them, so they will become arrogant and less self-restrained. When cultivating prajna, they are attached to the thinking that prajna is existent, something comes out of the prajna, and the prajna is related to them, so they will become arrogant and less self-restrained. Because these good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth dwelling in the great vehicle are attached to the 'I' and the associated images, the giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita they cultivate make birth and death increase instead of liberating them from this cycle. Why? It is because in these six paramitas, there is neither differentiation nor the things that can be differentiated. Why? Getting far away from this or the other shore is the form of the six paramitas.

(The Buddha explained why the cultivation of six paramitas without expedient skillfulness leads practitioners to attachment and arrogance, and cannot free them from birth and death.)

"You must know, Well-Appearing One, because the good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth dwelling in the great vehicle do not know the forms of this and the other shores, they are unable to absorb giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna paramitas, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena. Because of this cause and condition, they will fall into the stage of the voice-hearer or the stage of the self-enlightened one and cannot realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. Therefore, Well-Appearing One, because the good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth dwelling in the great vehicle do not absorb the fathomless prajna paramita and the rest of the merits and virtues, nor do they absorb the expedient skillfulness, they will fall into the stage of the voice-hearer or the stage of the self-enlightened one, and cannot realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi although they have cultivated the six paramitas."

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, "Why do the good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth dwelling in the great vehicle avoid falling into the stage of the voice-hearer or the stage of the self-enlightened one, and instead realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi soon if they absorb the expedient skillfulness of the

fathomless prajna paramita, meditation paramita, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "The good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth dwelling in the great vehicle have been detached from the 'I' and the associated images in the cultivation of giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita since the moment beginning to aspire to the great bodhi. Wen cultivating giving paramita, they do not think, 'I can practice giving. I give this to them. They receive what I give.' When cultivating pure precept, they do not think, 'I can observe precept. I observe this precept. I possess this precept.' When cultivating forbearance, they do not think, 'I can cultivate forbearance. I refrain from doing this. I possess forbearance.' When cultivating diligence, they do not think, 'I work diligently. I work diligently for this purpose. I possess diligence.' When cultivating meditation, they do not think, 'I can cultivate concentration. I cultivate concentration for this purpose. I possess such concentration.' When cultivating prajna, they do not think, 'I can cultivate wisdom. I cultivate wisdom for this purpose. I possess this wisdom.'

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, when cultivating giving, these good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth dwelling in the great vehicle are not attached to the thinking that this giving is existent, something comes out of this giving, and this giving is related to them. When cultivating pure precept, they are not attached to the thinking that this pure precept is existent, something comes out of this pure precept, and pure precept is related to them. When cultivating forbearance, they are not attached to the thinking that this forbearance is existent, something comes out of this forbearance, and forbearance is related to them. When cultivating diligence, they are not attached to the thinking that this diligence is existent, something comes out of this diligence, and diligence is related to them. When cultivating meditation, they are not attached to the thinking that this meditation is existent, something comes out of meditation, and meditation is related to them. When cultivating prajna, they are not attached to the thinking that this prajna is existent, something comes out of this prajna, and prajna is related to them. Because the good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth dwelling in the great vehicle are not attached to the 'I' and the associated images, giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita they cultivate, they will get rid of the cycle of birth and death, and they will become liberated from various kinds of suffering caused by birth and death. Why? In the six paramitas, no

differentiation can elicit attachment. Why? Getting far away from this and other shores is the form of the six paramitas.

"Well-Appearing One, you must know that because the good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth dwelling in the great vehicle know well the forms of this and the other shores, they are able to absorb the six paramitas, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena. Because of this cause and condition, they will not fall into the stage of the voice-hearer or the stage of the self-enlightened one; they will rather realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly."

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, "How do good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth dwelling in the great vehicle avoid falling into the stage of the voice-hearer or the stage of the self-enlightened one, and instead realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly through expediently and skillfully cultivating the six paramitas?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "The good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth dwelling in the great vehicle have possessed expedient skillfulness since the time beginning to aspire to the great bodhi. When cultivating giving, they do not think, 'I can practice giving. I possess giving. This is giving.' When cultivating pure precept, they do not think, 'I can observe pure precept. I possess pure precept. This is pure precept.' When cultivating forbearance, they do not think, 'I can cultivate forbearance. I possess forbearance. This is forbearance.' When cultivating diligence, they do not think, 'I can work diligently. I possess diligence. This is diligence.' When cultivating meditation, they do not think, 'I can cultivate concentration. I possess meditation. This is meditation.' When cultivating prajna, they do not think, 'I can cultivate wisdom. I possess prajna. This is prajna.'

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, if the good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth dwell in the great vehicle to cultivate giving without being attached to the thinking that giving is existent, something appears because of giving, and giving is related to me, they will not become arrogant and less self-restrained. If they cultivate pure precept without being attached to the thinking that pure precept is existent, something appears because of pure precept, and pure precept is related to me, they will not become arrogant and less self-restrained. If they cultivate

forbearance without being attached to the thinking that forbearance is existent, something appears because of forbearance, and forbearance is related to me, they will not become arrogant and less self-restrained. If they cultivate diligence without being attached to the thinking that diligence is existent, something appears because of diligence, and diligence is related to me, they will not become arrogant and less self-restrained. If they cultivate meditation without being attached to the thinking that meditation is existent, something appears because of meditation, and meditation is related to me, they will not become arrogant and less self-restrained. If they cultivate prajna without being attached to the thinking that prajna is existent, something appears because of prajna, and prajna is related to me, they will not become arrogant and less self-restrained. Because these good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth dwelling in the great vehicle are not attached to the 'I' and the associated images, giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita they cultivate, they will get rid of the cycle of birth and death, and become liberated from the suffering caused by birth and so forth. Why? It is because in the six paramitas, no differentiation exists. Why? Not reaching this shore or other shore is the form of the six paramitas.

(The Buddha showed how to cultivate superior virtuous dharmas without attachment.)

"You must know, Well-Appearing One, if the good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth dwelling in the great vehicle know well the form of this shore and other shore, they are able to absorb the six paramitas, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena. Because of this cause and condition, they will not fall into the stage of the voice-hearer or the stage of the self-enlightened one; they will realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi soon.

"Therefore, Well-Appearing One, as the good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth dwelling peacefully in the great vehicle can absorb the fathomless prajna paramita, the rest of merits and virtues, and expedient skillfulness to cultivate the six paramitas, they will not fall into the stage of the voice-hearer or the stage of the self-enlightened one; they rather will realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly."

(The Buddha concluded that great-vehicle practitioners who can absorb prajna paramita, other merits and virtues, and expedient skillfulness, to cultivate prajna paramita, will realize the unsurpassed bodhi quickly.)

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Chapter 18

The Virtuous Friends

(In the Third Assembly)

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

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “If novice great bodhisattvas would like to learn prajna paramita, meditation paramita, and so forth, and giving paramita, they should first of all stay close, offer services, and make offerings to real and pure virtuous friends who are capable of lecturing on prajna paramita, meditation paramita, and so forth, and giving paramita respectively. As lecturing on the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita, these virtuous friends will give cautions and teachings to the bodhisattvas who just begin to learn the great vehicle, ‘Come here, good gentlemen, you should cultivate diligently giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna paramitas. When cultivating diligently the six paramitas, you should adopt nonattainment as expediency to transfer the merits and virtues along with all sentient beings equally toward the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. You should not grasp the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi through grasping 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; ignorance, action, 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 defilement, 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; 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 everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena. Why? Good gentlemen, if you do not grasp matter, feeling, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena, you will attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.

"'Good gentlemen, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, do not become attached to matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena. Why? It is because matter, feeling, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena are not the dharmas to cling to. Why? It is because the self-natures of all dharmas are empty.'"

(The Buddha taught Well-Appearing One that novice great-vehicle bodhisattvas should not grasp the unsurpassed bodhi through grasping various dharmas; rather, they should adopt nonattainment as expediency. It is because all dharmas are inherently empty.)

At that time, Well-Appearing One said to the Buddha, “Various great bodhisattvas can do difficult things. They aspire to and work to realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi in the empty characteristics of all dharmas.”

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, “Yes, you are correct. Various great bodhisattvas can do difficult things. They can aspire to and work to realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi in the empty characteristics of all dharmas. You must know, Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas know well that all dharmas are like dreams, echoes, and so forth, and mirages; their characteristics are empty. But to bring justice and benefits to the world, they are determined to aspire to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. To bring beneficial things to the world, they are determined to aspire to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. To bring peace and happiness to the world, they are resolute to aspire to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. To bring relief to sentient beings of the world, they are determined to aspire to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. To provide the world with refuge, they are determined to aspire to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. To serve as a house for the world, they are determined to aspire to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. To demonstrate the ultimate path of the world, they are determined to aspire to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. To serve as an island in the sea, they are determined to aspire to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. To serve as the sun and moon of the world, they are determined to aspire to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. To serve as the lamp and the candle of the world, they are determined to aspire to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. To serve as the mentors of the world, they are determined to aspire to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. To serve as the generals of the world, they are determined to aspire to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. To reveal the desirable destinations of the world, they are determined to aspire to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.

(The Buddha further taught that for the sake of sentient beings, great bodhisattvas work hard to pursue the unsurpassed bodhi within the empty characteristics of all dharmas. They undertake difficult tasks to serve as refuge, home, and so forth, and reveal the desirable destination for the world.)

"How do great bodhisattvas aspire to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi to bring justice and benefits to the world? Well-Appearing One, great bodhisattvas have cultivated giving, pure precept, and so forth, and prajna to liberate all sentient beings from various vexations. This is how great bodhisattvas aspire to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi to bring justice and benefits to the world.

(The Buddha taught how great bodhisattvas bring justice and benefits to the world.)

"How do great bodhisattvas aspire to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi to bring beneficial things to the world? Well-Appearing One, they will remove the terrors and fears of the five destinies experienced by all sentient beings and relocate them well on the fearless other shore, the nirvana. This is how great bodhisattvas aspire to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi to bring beneficial things to the world.

(The Buddha taught how great bodhisattvas bring beneficial things to the world.)

"How do great bodhisattvas aspire to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi to bring peace and happiness to the world? Well-Appearing One, they will liberate all sentient beings from worries, fears, sorrows, and upsets and relocate them well on the peaceful and stable other shore, the nirvana. This is how great bodhisattvas aspire to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi to bring peace and happiness to the world.

(The Buddha taught how great bodhisattvas bring peace and happiness to the world.)

"How do great bodhisattvas aspire to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi to bring relief to sentient beings in the world? Well-Appearing One, great bodhisattvas have seen that various sentient beings are falling into the three bad destinies. To relieve them, they aspire to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, guide them to cultivate virtuous actions and gradually get out of inferior destinies step by step. This is how great bodhisattvas aspire to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi to bring relief to sentient beings of the world.

(The Buddha taught how great bodhisattvas relieve sentient beings.)

"How do great bodhisattvas aspire to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi to provide the world with refuge? Well-Appearing One, great bodhisattvas have worked diligently

to liberate all sentient beings from the compulsive suffering caused by birth, old age, illness, death, worry, sorrow, misery, anxiety, and upset, so they are able to dwell in the realm of nirvana without remainder. This is how great bodhisattvas aspire to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi to provide the world with refuge.

(The Buddha taught how great bodhisattvas provide the world with refuge.)

"How do great bodhisattvas aspire to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi to serve as a house for the world? Well-Appearing One, great bodhisattvas will teach all sentient beings that all dharmas do not combine. This is how great bodhisattvas aspire to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi to serve as the house for the world."

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "World-Honored One, how do all dharmas not combine?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "Various matters do not combine, so they do not belong to each other. Because they do not belong to each other, they have no arising. Because they have no arising, they have no extinction. Because matters have no extinction, they do not combine. So do feeling, thinking, action, consciousness, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena. The great bodhisattvas have aspired to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi to teach sentient beings that all dharmas have the phenomena of noncombination.

(The Buddha taught how great bodhisattvas serve as a house for the world. In this house, the dharmas are without arising and extinction, thus are stable and in peace and tranquility.)

"How do great bodhisattvas aspire to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi to demonstrate the ultimate path of the world? Well-Appearing One, great bodhisattvas aspire to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi to teach this dharma: the other shore of matter is not matter, and the other shore of feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness is not feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness either. And so on, the other shore of the perfect knowledge of everything is not the perfect knowledge of everything, and the other shore of the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena is not the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena either.

Well-Appearing Ones, you must know that all dharmas are also like the forms of the other shore."

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One said to the Buddha, "If all dharmas are like the form of the other shore, why are great bodhisattvas awakened intuitively to all dharmas? In the other shore, there is no such distinction to tell that this is matter and those are feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness. In feeling, thinking, action, consciousness, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena, there is no such distinction to tell that this is matter, those are feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness, and that is the perfect knowledge of all phenomena."

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, "Yes, you are correct. In the other shore of matter, feeling, and so forth, there is no such distinction to tell that this is matter, and that is the perfect knowledge of all phenomena. In the other shore of the perfect knowledge of all phenomena, there is no such distinction to tell that this is matter, and that is the perfect knowledge of all phenomena. It is because the original nature of all dharmas is empty. You must know, Well-Appearing One, various great bodhisattvas can do extremely difficult things. That is, they contemplate all dharmas and see that their phenomena are so profound, exquisite, and mystic, but their minds do not sink or get drowned. They rather think, 'I have been awakened intuitively to this dharma and realized the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. Now it is the time for me to lecture on this subtle and wonderful dharma for various sentient beings.' This is how great bodhisattvas aspire to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi to demonstrate the ultimate path of the world.

(The Buddha taught how great bodhisattvas aspire to unsurpassed bodhi to demonstrate the ultimate path of the world. He also explained the meaning of this ultimate path: in other shore, no differentiation among all dharmas.)

"How do great bodhisattvas aspire to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi to serve as an island of refuge for the world? Well-Appearing One, raised land in an ocean, river, or pond, big or small, can serve as an island to separate water and keep it flowing around outside. Well-Appearing One, so is the termination of matter, feeling, and so forth, and consciousness, and so forth, and the termination of the perfect knowledge of all phenomena in the past and the

future. Because the past and future terminate, all dharmas terminate. The termination of all dharmas in the past and future is tranquility and extinction, subtle and exquisite, as it really is. It means emptiness and nonattainment; it also means that the path terminates, craving ceases without remainder, and contamination extinguishes permanently. This is ultimate nirvana. Well-Appearing One, great bodhisattvas aspire to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi to lecture on and explain the profound and subtle tranquility of the termination of all dharmas in the past and future as it really is. This is how great bodhisattvas aspire to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi to serve as an island of the world.

(The Buddha explained how great bodhisattvas serve as an island to teach sentient beings ultimate nirvana so to separate them from vexations and impurities in the ocean of birth and death.)

"How do great bodhisattvas aspire to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi in to serve as the sun and moon of the world? Well-Appearing One, great bodhisattvas aspire to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi to dispel the darkness that obscures all sentient beings in the long night, heal the blindness of all sentient beings caused by ignorance so that they can become sighted again, and illuminate all ignorant sentient beings. This is how great bodhisattvas aspire to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi to serve as the sun and moon of the world.

(The Buddha taught how great bodhisattvas serve as the sun and moon of the world.)

"How do great bodhisattvas aspire to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi to serve as the lamp and candle of the world? Well-Appearing One, great bodhisattvas lecture on the real essential meanings of sutras correspondent with the six paramitas and the four approaches for absorbing sentient beings. They teach sentient beings expediently so they can cultivate and learn diligently to dispel all kinds of ignorant darkness. This is how great bodhisattvas aspire to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi to serve as the lamp and candle of the world.

(The Buddha taught how great bodhisattvas serve as the lamp and candle of the world.)

"How do great bodhisattvas aspire to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi to serve as the mentors of the world? Well-Appearing One, great bodhisattvas would convert the

sentient beings walking on evil path to correct path, so they will stay away from the four ways that they should not walk on. They also would like to bring purity to the contaminated ones, joy to the ones in worry and sorrow, reasonable thinking to the unreasonable ones, and a cessation to reincarnation. This is how great bodhisattvas aspire to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi to serve as the mentors of the world.

(The Buddha taught how great bodhisattvas serve as the mentors of the world.)

"How do great bodhisattvas aspire to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi to serve as the generals of the world? Well-Appearing One, great bodhisattvas would like to teach sentient beings that matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena are without arising and extinction, contamination and purification. This is how great bodhisattvas aspire to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi to serve as the generals of the world.

(The Buddha taught how great bodhisattvas serve as the generals of the world.)

"How do great bodhisattvas aspire to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi to reveal the desirable destinations of the world? Well-Appearing One, great bodhisattvas would like to teach sentient beings and show them that matter adopts empty space as its destination, and feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness adopt empty space as their destinations too. And so on, the perfect knowledge of everything, the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena adopt empty space as their destinations. Because all dharmas are like empty space that is nonexistent, these great bodhisattvas also would like to teach sentient beings that matter has neither destination nor nondestination. Why? The nature of matter is empty, and in emptiness there is neither destination nor nondestination. Feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness have neither destination nor nondestination. Why? The natures of feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness are empty, and in emptiness there is neither destination nor nondestination. And so on, the perfect knowledge of everything has neither destination nor nondestination. Why? The nature of the perfect knowledge of everything is empty, and in emptiness there is neither destination nor nondestination. The perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena have neither destination nor nondestination. Why? The natures of the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths and the

perfect knowledge of all phenomena are empty, and in emptiness there is neither destination nor nondestination. This is how great bodhisattvas aspire to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi to teach sentient beings and reveal them the destinations of the world. Why?

"Well-Appearing One, all dharmas have adopted emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration as their destinations. Great bodhisattvas are unable to transcend these destinations. Why? In emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration, neither destination nor nondestination is attainable.

"Well-Appearing One, all dharmas have adopted noninitiation and nonmaking as destinations. Great bodhisattvas are unable to transcend these destinations. Why? In noninitiation and nonmaking, neither destination nor nondestination is attainable.

"Well-Appearing One, all dharmas have adopted nonarising and nonextinction as destinations. Great bodhisattvas are unable to transcend these destinations. Why? In nonarising and nonextinction, neither destination nor nondestination is attainable.

"Well-Appearing One, all dharmas have adopted noncontamination and nonpurification as destinations. Great bodhisattvas are unable to transcend these destinations. Why? In noncontamination and nonpurification, neither destination nor nondestination is attainable.

"Well-Appearing One, all dharmas have adopted nonexistence as destination. Great bodhisattvas are unable to transcend this destination. Why? In nonexistence, neither destination nor nondestination is attainable.

"Well-Appearing One, all dharmas have adopted being like dreams, echoes, and so forth, and mirages as destination. Great bodhisattvas are unable to transcend this destination. Why? In dreams, echoes, and so forth, and mirages, neither destination nor nondestination is attainable.

"Well-Appearing One, all dharmas have adopted immeasurableness and boundlessness as destinations. Great bodhisattvas are unable to transcend these destinations. Why? In immeasurableness and boundlessness, neither destination nor nondestination is attainable.

“Well-Appearing One, all dharmas have adopted nongiving and nontaking as destinations. Great bodhisattvas are unable to transcend these destinations. Why? In nongiving and nontaking, neither destination nor nondestination is attainable.

“Well-Appearing One, all dharmas have adopted nonlifting and nonlowering as destinations. Great bodhisattvas are unable to transcend these destinations. Why? In nonlifting and nonlowering, neither destination nor nondestination is attainable.

“Well-Appearing One, all dharmas have adopted nongoing and noncoming as destinations. Great bodhisattvas are unable to transcend these destinations. Why? In nongoing and noncoming, neither destination nor nondestination is attainable.

“Well-Appearing One, all dharmas have adopted nonaddition and nonsubtraction as destinations. Great bodhisattvas are unable to transcend these destinations. Why? In nonaddition and nonsubtraction, neither destination nor nondestination is attainable.

“Well-Appearing One, all dharmas have adopted noncoming in and nongoing out as destinations. Great bodhisattvas are unable to transcend these destinations. Why? In noncoming in and nongoing out, neither destination nor nondestination is attainable.

“Well-Appearing One, all dharmas have adopted nongathering and nondispersion as destinations. Great bodhisattvas are unable to transcend these destinations. Why? In nongathering and nondispersion, neither destination nor nondestination is attainable.

“Well-Appearing One, all dharmas have adopted noncombination and nonseparation as destinations. Great bodhisattvas are unable to transcend these destinations. Why? In noncombination and nonseparation, neither destination nor nondestination is attainable.

“Well-Appearing One, all dharmas have adopted the ‘I,’ the sentient being, and so forth, and the viewer as destinations. Great bodhisattvas are unable to transcend these destinations. Why? The ‘I,’ the sentient being, and so forth, and the viewer are nonexistent in the final analysis, so how can we say that there is destination or nondestination attainable in them?

“Well-Appearing One, all dharmas have adopted the non-I, non-sentient being, and so forth, and the non-viewer as destinations. Great bodhisattvas are unable to transcend these

destinations. Why? The non-I, non-sentient being, and so forth, and the non-viewer are nonexistent in the final analysis, so how can we say that there is destination or nondestination attainable in them?

"Well-Appearing One, all dharmas have adopted permanence, pleasure, selfness, and purity as destinations. Great bodhisattvas are unable to transcend these destinations. Why? As permanence, pleasure, selfness, and purity are nonexistent in the final analysis, how can we say that there is destination or nondestination attainable in them?

"Well-Appearing One, all dharmas have adopted impermanence, suffering, selflessness, and impurity as destinations. Great bodhisattvas are unable to transcend these destinations. Why? As impermanence, suffering, selflessness, and impurity are nonexistent in the final analysis, how can we say that there is destination or nondestination attainable in them?

"Well-Appearing One, all dharmas have adopted greed, anger, and ignorance as destinations. Great bodhisattvas are unable to transcend these destinations. Why? As greed, anger, and ignorance are nonexistent in the final analysis, how can we say that there is destination or nondestination attainable in them?

"Well-Appearing One, all dharmas have adopted the things they have seen and done as destinations. Great bodhisattvas are unable to transcend these destinations. Why? As the things that one has seen and done are nonexistent in the final analysis, how can we say that there is destination or nondestination attainable in them?

"Well-Appearing One, all dharmas have adopted realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable as destinations. Great bodhisattvas are unable to transcend these destinations. Why? As realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable are nonexistent in the final analysis, how can we say that there is destination or nondestination attainable in them?

"Well-Appearing One, all dharmas have adopted motionlessness as destination. Great bodhisattvas are unable to transcend this destination. Why? As the nature of motionlessness is nonexistent in the final analysis, how can we say that there is destination or nondestination attainable in it?

“Well-Appearing One, all dharmas have adopted five aggregates as destinations. Great bodhisattvas are unable to transcend these destinations. Why? As matter, feeling, and so forth, and consciousness are nonexistent in the final analysis, how can we say that there is destination or nondestination attainable in them?

“Well-Appearing One, all dharmas have adopted six inner spheres as destinations. Great bodhisattvas are unable to transcend these destinations. Why? As the eye sphere, ear sphere, and so forth, and conscious sphere are nonexistent in the final analysis, how can we say that there is destination or nondestination attainable in them?

“Well-Appearing One, all dharmas have adopted six outer spheres as destinations. Great bodhisattvas are unable to transcend these destinations. Why? As the sight sphere, sound sphere, and so forth, and mental-image sphere are nonexistent in the final analysis, how can we say that there is destination or nondestination attainable in them?

“Well-Appearing One, all dharmas have adopted six inner realms as destinations. Great bodhisattvas are unable to transcend these destinations. Why? As the eye realm, ear realm, and so forth, and conscious realm are nonexistent in the final analysis, how can we say that there is destination or nondestination attainable in them?

“Well-Appearing One, all dharmas have adopted six outer realms as destinations. Great bodhisattvas are unable to transcend these destinations. Why? As the sight realm, sound realm, and so forth, and the mental-image realm are nonexistent in the final analysis, how can we say that there is destination or nondestination attainable in them?

“Well-Appearing One, all dharmas have adopted six consciousness realms as destinations. Great bodhisattvas are unable to transcend these destinations. Why? As the eye consciousness realm, ear consciousness realm, and so forth, and conscious consciousness realm are nonexistent in the final analysis, how can we say that there is destination or nondestination attainable in them?

“Well-Appearing One, all dharmas have adopted six contacts as destinations. Great bodhisattvas are unable to transcend these destinations. Why? As the eye contact, ear contact,

and so forth, and conscious contact are nonexistent in the final analysis, how can we say that there is destination or nondestination attainable in them?

"Well-Appearing One, all dharmas have adopted six kinds of feelings as destinations. Great bodhisattvas are unable to transcend these destinations. Why? As the feelings produced by eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact are nonexistent in the final analysis, how can we say that there is destination or nondestination attainable in them?

"Well-Appearing One, all dharmas have adopted six realms as destinations. Great bodhisattvas are unable to transcend these destinations. Why? As the earth realm, water realm, and so forth, and consciousness realm are nonexistent in the final analysis, how can we say that there is destination or nondestination attainable in them?

"Well-Appearing One, all dharmas have adopted four conditions as destinations. Great bodhisattvas are unable to transcend these destinations. Why? As cause and condition, consecutive thoughts, conditions that stimulate the mind, and the conditions that reinforce main causes are nonexistent in the final analysis, how can we say that there is destination or nondestination attainable in them?

"Well-Appearing One, all dharmas have adopted the twelve links of dependent origination as destinations. Great bodhisattvas are unable to transcend these destinations. Why? As ignorance, action, and so forth, and old age and death are nonexistent in the final analysis, how can we say that there is destination or nondestination attainable in them?

"Well-Appearing One, all dharmas have adopted six paramitas as destinations. Great bodhisattvas are unable to transcend these destinations. Why? As giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita are nonexistent in the final analysis, how can we say that there is destination or nondestination attainable in them?

"Well-Appearing One, all dharmas have adopted sixteen kinds of emptiness as destinations. Great bodhisattvas are unable to transcend these destinations. Why? As internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature are nonexistent in the final analysis, how can we say that there is destination or nondestination attainable in them?

"Well-Appearing One, all dharmas have adopted four noble truths as destinations. Great bodhisattvas are unable to transcend these destinations. Why? As the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering are nonexistent in the final analysis, how can we say that there is destination or nondestination attainable in them?

"Well-Appearing One, all dharmas have adopted thirty-seven factors for enlightenment (thirty-seven aids to enlightenment) as destinations. Great bodhisattvas are unable to transcend these destinations. Why? As the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path are nonexistent in the final analysis, how can we say that there is destination or nondestination attainable in them?

"Well-Appearing One, all dharmas have adopted four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations as destinations. Great bodhisattvas are unable to transcend these destinations. Why? As the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations are nonexistent in the final analysis, how can we say that there is destination or nondestination attainable in them?

"Well-Appearing One, all dharmas have adopted eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations as destinations. Great bodhisattvas are unable to transcend these destinations. Why? As the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations are nonexistent in the final analysis, how can we say that there is destination or nondestination attainable in them?

"Well-Appearing One, all dharmas have adopted three liberation gates as destinations. Great bodhisattvas are unable to transcend these destinations. Why? As the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration are nonexistent in the final analysis, how can we say that there is destination or nondestination attainable in them?

"Well-Appearing One, all dharmas have adopted ten stages of the three vehicles as destinations. Great bodhisattvas are unable to transcend these destinations. Why? As the stage of pure contemplation, stage of embryonic Buddha nature, and so forth, and stage of Thus-Comer

are nonexistent in the final analysis, how can we say that there is destination or nondestination attainable in them?

"Well-Appearing One, all dharmas have adopted ten stages of bodhisattva as destinations. Great bodhisattvas are unable to transcend these destinations. Why? As the stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilement, and so forth, and stage of dharma cloud are nonexistent in the final analysis, how can we say that there is destination or nondestination attainable in them?

"Well-Appearing One, all dharmas have adopted all dharani gates and all samadhi gates as destinations. Great bodhisattvas are unable to transcend these destinations. Why? As the dharani gates and samadhi gates are nonexistent in the final analysis, how can we say that there is destination or nondestination attainable in them?

"Well-Appearing One, all dharmas have adopted five eyes and six supernatural powers as destinations. Great bodhisattvas are unable to transcend these destinations. Why? As the five eyes and six supernatural powers are nonexistent in the final analysis, how can we say that there is destination or nondestination attainable in them?

"Well-Appearing One, all dharmas have adopted Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, four unhindered understandings, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power as destinations. Great bodhisattvas are unable to transcend these destinations. Why? As the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power are nonexistent in the final analysis, how can we say that there is destination or nondestination attainable in them?

"Well-Appearing One, all dharmas have adopted great loving-kindness, great compassion, great joy, and great equanimity as destinations. Great bodhisattvas are unable to transcend these destinations. Why? As great loving-kindness, great compassion, great joy, and great equanimity are nonexistent in the final analysis, how can we say that there is destination or nondestination attainable in them?

"Well-Appearing One, all dharmas have adopted thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features as destinations. Great bodhisattvas are unable to transcend

these destinations. Why? As the thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features are nonexistent in the final analysis, how can we say that there is destination or nondestination attainable in them?

"Well-Appearing One, all dharmas have adopted staying in correct mindfulness and dwelling in equanimity at all times as destinations. Great bodhisattvas are unable to transcend these destinations. Why? As staying in correct mindfulness and dwelling in equanimity at all times are nonexistent in the final analysis, how can we say that there is destination or nondestination attainable in them?

"Well-Appearing One, all dharmas have adopted perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena as destinations. Great bodhisattvas are unable to transcend these destinations. Why? As the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena are nonexistent in the final analysis, how can we say that there is destination or nondestination attainable in them?

"Well-Appearing One, all dharmas have adopted stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi as destinations. Great bodhisattvas are unable to transcend these destinations. Why? As stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi are nonexistent in the final analysis, how can we say that there is destination or nondestination attainable in them?

"Well-Appearing One, all dharmas have adopted all great bodhisattva actions and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas as destinations. Great bodhisattvas are unable to transcend these destinations. Why? As all great bodhisattva actions and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas are nonexistent in the final analysis, how can we say that there is destination or nondestination attainable in them?

"Well-Appearing One, all dharmas have adopted stream-enterers, once-returners, and so forth, and Thus-Comers as destinations. Great bodhisattvas are unable to transcend these destinations. Why? As stream-enterers, once-returners, and so forth, and the Thus-Comers are

nonexistent in the final analysis, how can we say that there is destination or nondestination attainable in them?"

(The Buddha taught how great bodhisattvas reveal the desirable destinations of the world. These destinations cannot be transcended because they are nonexistent in the final analysis.)

At that time, Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, "Who can develop deep belief in and understanding of this fathomless prajna paramita?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "If great bodhisattvas have aspired to and cultivate diligently the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi long enough, have made offerings to immeasurable Buddhas, have made great vows at various Buddhas' places, have been protected and kept in the minds of numberless virtuous friends, and if the virtuous roots that they planted have now matured, then they will be able to develop a deep belief in and an insightful understanding of this fathomless prajna paramita."

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

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "These great bodhisattvas will adopt the nature of overcoming greed, anger, and ignorance as their nature. They will adopt the form of getting far away from the forms of greed, anger, and ignorance as their form. They will adopt the condition of getting far away from greed, anger, and ignorance as their condition. They will adopt the appearance of getting far away from greed, anger, and ignorance as their appearance.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas will adopt the nature of overcoming greed, anger, and ignorance and the nature of no greed, no anger, and no ignorance as their natures. They will adopt the form of getting far away from greed, anger, and ignorance and the form of no greed, no anger, and no ignorance as their forms. They will adopt the condition of getting far away from greed, anger, and ignorance and the condition of no greed, no anger, and no ignorance as their conditions. They will adopt the appearance of getting far away from greed, anger, and ignorance and the appearance of no greed, no anger, and no ignorance as their appearances. If great bodhisattvas can fulfill such natures, forms, conditions, and

appearances, they will be able to develop deep belief in and understanding of the fathomless prajna paramita."

(The Buddha described the great bodhisattvas who can develop deep belief in and insightful understanding of the fathomless prajna paramita, and their natures, forms, conditions, and appearances.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, "What will the great bodhisattvas who can develop deep belief in and understanding of the fathomless prajna aspire to?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "They will aspire to the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge."

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One said to the Buddha again, "If great bodhisattvas aspire to the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge as their destination, they will be able to work with all sentient beings to aspire the same destination."

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "Yes. If great bodhisattvas can develop deep belief in and understanding of the fathomless prajna paramita, they will be able to aspire to the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. If they can aspire to the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, they will be able to work together with all sentient beings to aspire to the same destination."

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One said to the Buddha again, "Great bodhisattvas can do very difficult things. They put on solid armors and say, 'I must deliver all sentient beings so they can realize ultimate nirvana. Although I have done this for sentient beings, I do not see any establishment for sentient beings.'"

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, "Yes, it is as you say. Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the armors these great bodhisattvas wear do not belong to matter, feeling, and so forth, and consciousness. Why? Matter, feeling, and so forth, and consciousness are nonexistent in the final analysis, so they are neither the great bodhisattva nor the armor. That is why the great bodhisattvas' armors do not belong to matter, feeling, and so forth, and consciousness, or belong

to the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena. Why? The perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena are nonexistent in the final analysis; they are neither the great bodhisattva nor the armor, so it is said that the great bodhisattvas' armors do not belong to the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena. The armors the great bodhisattvas wear do not belong to the 'I,' the sentient being, and so forth, and the viewer. Why? The 'I,' the sentient being, and so forth, and the viewer are nonexistent in the final analysis; they are neither the great bodhisattva nor the armor. Therefore, it is said that the great bodhisattvas' armors do not belong to the 'I,' the sentient being, and so forth, and the viewer. The armors the great bodhisattvas wear do not belong to all dharmas. Why? All dharmas are nonexistent in the final analysis; they are neither the great bodhisattva nor the armor, so it is said that the great bodhisattvas' armors do not belong to all dharmas.

"Well-Appearing One, as great bodhisattvas cultivate the fathomless prajna paramita and wear the solid armors, they will say, 'I must deliver all sentient beings so they can realize ultimate nirvana.'"

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One said to the Buddha again, "If great bodhisattvas put on such solid armors and vow to guide all sentient beings to realize ultimate nirvana, they will not fall into the stage of the voice-hearer or the stage of the self-enlightened one. It is not suitable for them to stay in these two stages. Why? When wearing the armors, the great bodhisattvas will not limit themselves to establish a small number of sentient beings in peace and happiness."

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

Well-Appearing One replied, "World-Honored One, great bodhisattvas do not put on the solid armors to deliver few sentient beings or to attain little knowledge. Why? They put on solid armors with an attempt to let all sentient beings achieve nirvana. It is merely because of this reason that they refrain from falling into the stage of voice-hearer or self-enlightened one."

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, “Yes, it is as you say. These great bodhisattvas would like to liberate all sentient beings to let them attain nirvana. It is for this purpose that the great bodhisattvas wear such solid armors and aspire to the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. Because of this cause and condition, the great bodhisattvas will not fall into the stage of the voice-hearer or the stage of the self-enlightened one.”

(The Buddha affirmed Well-Appearing One’s statement that as great bodhisattvas wear solid armors and vow to help all sentient beings, they do not fall into the two vehicles only because they want to help all sentient beings achieve nirvana.)

At that time, Well-Appearing One said to the Buddha again, “Such prajna paramita is very profound. The ones who cultivate are nonexistent. The dharmas cultivated are nonexistent. The places for cultivation are nonexistent. The way for attaining cultivation is also nonexistent. Why? In the fathomless meanings of this prajna paramita, no dharma can be named as cultivator, the dharma cultivated, the place of cultivation, or the way of cultivation.

“World-Honored One, cultivating empty space is cultivating prajna paramita. Cultivating all dharmas is cultivating prajna paramita. Cultivating unreal dharmas is cultivating prajna paramita. Cultivating nonexistent being is cultivating prajna paramita. Cultivating no absorption is cultivating prajna paramita. Cultivating the ways of removal is cultivating prajna paramita.”

The Buddha asked Well-Appearing One, “You say cultivating the ways of removal is cultivating prajna paramita. Which dharmas will be removed?”

Well-Appearing One replied, “Removing five aggregates is cultivating prajna paramita. Removing six inner spheres is cultivating prajna paramita. Removing six outer spheres is cultivating prajna paramita. Removing six inner realms is cultivating prajna paramita. Removing six outer realms is cultivating prajna paramita. Removing six consciousness realms is cultivating prajna paramita. Removing six contacts is cultivating prajna paramita. Removing six feelings is cultivating prajna paramita. Removing four conditions is cultivating prajna paramita. Removing twelve links of dependent origination is cultivating prajna paramita. Removing the ‘I,’ the sentient being, and so forth, and the viewer is cultivating prajna paramita. Removing giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita is cultivating prajna paramita.

Removing internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature is cultivating prajna paramita. Removing realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable is cultivating prajna paramita. Removing four noble truths is cultivating prajna paramita. Removing four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path is cultivating prajna paramita. Removing four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations is cultivating prajna paramita. Removing eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations is cultivating prajna paramita. Removing liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration is cultivating prajna paramita. Removing stage of pure contemplation, stage of embryonic Buddha nature, and so forth, and stage of Thus-Comer is cultivating prajna paramita. Removing stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilement, and so forth, and stage of dharma cloud is cultivating prajna paramita. Removing all dharani gates and all samadhi gates is cultivating prajna paramita. Removing five eyes and six supernatural powers is cultivating prajna paramita. Removing Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power is cultivating prajna paramita. Removing great loving-kindness, great compassion, great joy, and great equanimity is cultivating prajna paramita. Removing thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features is cultivating prajna paramita. Removing staying in correct mindfulness and dwelling in equanimity at all times is cultivating prajna paramita. Removing stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi is cultivating prajna paramita. Removing all great bodhisattva actions and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas is cultivating prajna paramita. Removing perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena is cultivating prajna paramita."

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, "Yes, you are correct. If great bodhisattvas cultivate to remove matter, feeling, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena, they cultivate prajna paramita.

(The Buddha affirmed Well-Appearing One's assertion that removing various dharmas is cultivating prajna paramita.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, we may recognize bodhisattvas of nonregression by means of the fathomless prajna paramita. If great bodhisattvas practice prajna paramita, meditation paramita, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena without attachment, you must know that they are great bodhisattvas of nonregression.

(The Buddha taught that great bodhisattvas who practice superior virtuous dharmas without attachment are recognized as nonregressive.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, when great bodhisattvas of nonregression practice the profound prajna paramita, they do not regard teachings or words not by the Buddha as crucial. Therefore, they neither trust those teachings nor follow them in action. They will not be contaminated by greedy desire, hatred and anger, ignorance, and arrogance or attracted by them. When great bodhisattvas of nonregression practice the fathomless prajna paramita, they do not stay away from giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita. They will not be shocked, terrified, scared, sinking, or drowned, nor will withdraw in the pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi upon hearing the fathomless prajna paramita. Rather, they will be greatly delighted to listen to, accept, embrace, read, recite, thoroughly understand, stay in mindfulness of, and reflect on the fathomless prajna paramita tirelessly. You must know, they are great bodhisattvas of nonregression, who had in their previous lives heard all essential meanings of the fathomless prajna paramita and accepted, embraced, read, recited, reflected reasonably on, and cultivated it diligently and tirelessly. Why? Because these great bodhisattvas of nonregression are not shocked, scared, and frightened upon hearing the fathomless prajna paramita. Rather, they cultivate it diligently and tirelessly."

(The Buddha described more about the qualities of great bodhisattvas without regression.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "Some great bodhisattvas hear the fathomless prajna paramita and are not shocked, scared, frightened, sinking, or drowned; they do not withdraw from the pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi; they love to listen to, accept, embrace, read, recite, understand thoroughly, stay in mindfulness of, reflect on, and cultivate the fathomless prajna paramita tirelessly as they are taught. How should these great bodhisattvas cultivate the fathomless prajna paramita?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “These great bodhisattvas should consistently and irresistibly aspire to and appraoch the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. They should follow this approach as they practice the fathomless prajna paramita.”

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, “How should great bodhisattvas aspire to and reach the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge consistently and irresistibly when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, ‘When practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas should approach consistently and irresistibly and enter emptiness, formlessness, nonaspiration, empty space, nonexistence, nonarising, nonextinction, noncontamination, and nonpurity; realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable; nonmaking and nonaction; dreams, echoes, and so forth, and mirages. This is how great bodhisattvas aspire to and reach the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita.”

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, “As the World-Honored One says, ‘When practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, great bodhisattvas should aspire to and approach consistently and irresistibly to enter emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration, and so forth, and mirages. This is how great bodhisattvas aspire to and reach the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita.’ Do great bodhisattvas practice the five aggregates, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena when they practice the fathomless prajna paramita?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “These great bodhisattvas do not practice the five aggregates, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena. Why? In the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge great bodhisattvas have aspired to and reached consistently and irresistibly, there is no maker, no destroyer, nowhere one comes from, nowhere one goes, no direction, no area, no number, no quantity, no going, and no coming. As this is the case, no one can realize either.

“Well-Appearing One, the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge cannot be realized by the five aggregates, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena. Why? The five

aggregates are the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena is also the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. Why? The realness of the five aggregates and the realness of all dharmas are the same realness. They are neither different nor separate. The realness of the perfect knowledge of all phenomena, the realness of the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, and the realness of all dharmas are the same realness. They are neither different nor separate. Therefore, the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge cannot be realized by the five aggregates, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena."

(The Buddha explained why the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge cannot be realized by the five aggregates, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge.)

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Chapter 19

Realness

Section 1

(In the Third Assembly)

At that time, the heavenly sons from the realm of desire and the realm of form each carried and made various heavenly powdered incenses and heavenly flowers as offerings to the Buddha. They spread them to the Buddha from where they stood, then bowed down to the ground before the Buddha's feet, joined their palms respectfully, and said, "World-Honored One, such prajna paramita is too profound to see and become awakened to. It is unimaginable; it is beyond one's imagination and reflection; it is so subtle, mystic, and tranquil that only the intelligent and wise ones can understand. The ordinary ones of the world are unable to believe in and accept it. This is the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. All Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones teach about the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita and say that the five aggregates are the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, and the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge is the five aggregates, and so on, the perfect knowledge of all phenomena is the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, and the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge is the perfect knowledge of all phenomena; the Buddhas are the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, and the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge is the Buddhas. Why? The realness of the five aggregates, the realness of the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, and the realness of all dharmas are the same realness; they are neither different nor separate. And so on, the realness of the perfect knowledge of all phenomena, the realness of the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, and the realness of all dharmas are the same realness; they are neither different nor separate. The realness of the Buddhas, the realness of the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, and the realness of all dharmas are the same realness; they are neither different nor separate."

At that time, the Buddha said to various heavenly sons, “Yes, it is as you say. You must know, heavenly sons, I have contemplated this meaning, and every time my mind always wants me to go to tranquility and would not like to teach the dharma. Why? This dharma is too profound to see and become awakened to. It is unimaginable; it goes beyond imagination and reflection; it is so subtle, mystic, and tranquil that only the wise and intelligent ones can understand. The ordinary ones of the world are unable to believe in and accept it. This fathomless prajna paramita is exactly the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi that the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones have realized.

(The Buddha affirmed what the heavenly sons said about the dharma of the fathomless prajna paramita and realness. The dharma is too profound and subtle to imagine and understand except the wise and intelligent ones.)

“You must know, heavenly sons, the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi that the Buddhas have realized and attained is the one that no one can realize, the one that cannot be realized anywhere and anytime. Such dharma is profound and exquisite, not dualistic, and can be reached by intuition only. It is incomparable.

“You must know, heavenly sons, empty space is very profound, so is this dharma. Realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable are very profound, so is this dharma. The immeasurability and boundlessness are very profound, so is the dharma. The nongoing and noncoming are very profound, so is the dharma. The nonarising and nonextinction are very profound, so is the dharma. Freedom from contamination and purification is very profound, so is the dharma. Nonknowing and nonattainment are very profound, so is the dharma. Nonmaking and nonaction are very profound, so is the dharma. The ‘I,’ the sentient being, and so forth, and the viewer are very profound, so is the dharma. The five aggregates are very profound, so is the dharma. And so forth, the perfect knowledge of all phenomena is very profound, so is the dharma. All Buddha dharmas are very profound, so is the dharma.”

In the meantime, the heavenly sons said to the Buddha, “The dharma the Buddha teaches is very profound and subtle, no ordinary sentient beings of the worlds can believe in and accept it. Why? This profound dharma is taught neither for absorbing nor for discarding the five aggregates, and so on, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena and all Buddha dharmas. The

sentient beings in the worlds have very often acted to absorb the ‘I’ and the associated images and say that matter is the ‘I’ and the associated images; feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness are the ‘I’ and the associated images, and so on, the perfect knowledge of all phenomena is the ‘I’ and the associated images; the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena are the ‘I’ and the associated images.”

At that time, the World-Honored One said to various heavenly sons, “Yes, it is as you say. You must know, heavenly sons, if great bodhisattvas act in order to absorb or discard the five aggregates, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena and all Buddha dharmas, then these great bodhisattvas will not be able to cultivate prajna, meditation, diligence, forbearance, pure precept, and giving paramitas, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena.”

Meanwhile, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, “World-Honored One, this very profound dharma can go in compliance with all dharmas. It can go in compliance with prajna, meditation, diligence, forbearance, pure precept, and giving paramitas, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena without hindrance. It does not hinder matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena. This very profound dharma adopts nonhindrance as its form. Why? It is because empty space is equal; realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable are equal; emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration are equal; nonarising and nonextinction are equal; nonmaking and nonaction are equal; and noncontamination and nonpurification are equal. So, this very profound dharma adopts nonhindrance as its form. This very profound dharma is without arising and extinction. Why? It is because matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of everything, the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena are without arising and extinction. So is this very profound dharma. This very profound dharma has no footprint. Why? The footprints of matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of everything, the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena are unattainable. Therefore, this very profound dharma has no footprint.”

(Well-Appearing One delineated this profound dharma as being unhindered, without arising or extinction, and so forth.)

At that time, the heavenly sons from the realm of desire and the realm of form said to the Buddha again, “The great virtuous Well-Appearing One is really the son of the Buddha. He was born by following the Thus-Comer. Why? The dharma that the great virtuous Well-Appearing One teaches is all correspondent with the nature of emptiness.”

(Heavenly sons admired Well-Appearing One as the real son of the Buddha, born following the Thus-Comer.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One replied to various heavenly sons, “You say that I am a real son of the Buddha and was born by following the Thus-Comer. How was I born by following the Thus-Comer? It is because I was born by following the realness of the Thus-Comer. Why? The realness of the Thus-Comer is without coming and going, so is the realness of Well-Appearing One. That is why it is said that Well-Appearing One was born by following the Thus-Comer. The realness of the Thus-Comer is the realness of all dharmas, and the realness of all dharmas is the realness of the Thus-Comer. Thus, realness has neither the nature of realness nor the nature of nonrealness, so is the realness of Well-Appearing One. That is why Well-Appearing One was born by following the Thus-Comer. The realness of the Thus-Comer has no changes or differentiations but turns along with all dharmas universally. So is the realness of Well-Appearing One. Therefore, it is said that Well-Appearing One was born by following the Thus-Comer. The realness of the Thus-Comer has no worry and hindrance, so is the realness of all dharmas. The realness of the Thus-Comer and the realness of all dharmas are the same realness. They are neither dualistic nor different. They are without making and action. Therefore, the realness always appears in the form of realness; it never appears without the form of realness. Because of this reason, these forms are neither dualistic nor different. So is the realness of Well-Appearing One. Therefore, it is said that Well-Appearing One was born by following the Thus-Comer. The realness of the Thus-Comer has no memory or differentiation in all places, so is the realness of Well-Appearing One. Therefore, it is said that Well-Appearing One was born by following the Thus-Comer. The realness of the Thus-Comer has no other realness, and is unattainable, so is the realness of Well-Appearing One. Therefore, it is said that Well-Appearing

One was born by following the Thus-Comer. The realness of the Thus-Comer is not apart from the realness of all dharmas, and the realness of all dharmas is not apart from the realness of the Thus-Comer, so realness always appears as the form of realness; it never appears not as the form of the realness, so is the realness of Well-Appearing One. Therefore, it is said that Well-Appearing One was born by following the Thus-Comer. Although Well-Appearing One was born by following the Thus-Comer, there is truly no such birth only because the realness of Well-Appearing One is not different from the Buddha. The realness of the Thus-Comer is not the past, the future, or the present. The realness of all dharmas is not the past, the future, or the present. So is the realness of Well-Appearing One. Therefore, it is said that Well-Appearing One was born by following the Thus-Comer. The realness of the past and the realness of the Thus-Comer are equal. The realness of the future and the realness of the Thus-Comer are equal. The realness of the present and the realness of the Thus-Comer is equal. The realness of the past, the realness of the future, the realness of the present, and the realness of the Thus-Comer are all the same equal realness; they are not dualistic or different. The realness of matter and the realness of the Thus-Comer are equal. The realness of feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness and the realness of the Thus-Comer are equal. The realness of matter; the realness of feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness; and the realness of This-Comer are the same equal realness; they are not dualistic or different. And so on, the realness of the perfect knowledge of everything and the realness of the Thus-Comer are equal. The realness of the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena and the realness of the Thus-Comer are equal. The realness of the perfect knowledge of everything, the realness of the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena, and the realness of the Thus-Comer are the same equal realness; they are not dualistic or different.

(Well-Appearing One clarified that “Well-Appearing One was born by following the Thus-Comer” means he was born by following the realness of the Thus-Comer. He asserted that the realness of all dharmas is the same realness; they are neither dualistic nor different.)

“Heavenly sons, you must know that as the great bodhisattvas have intuitively realized the equality of the realness of all dharmas, they are given the name of Thus-Comer, One Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened One. I have had a deep belief in and

understanding of the realness of all dharmas, so it is said that Well-Appearing One was born by following the Thus-Comer."

When the forms of the realness was taught, six kinds of quake appeared in this large threefold thousand-world: the earth rose in the east and sank in the west; it rose in the west and sank in the east; it rose in the south and sank in the north; it rose in the north and sank in the south; it rose in the middle and sank in the border; and it rose in the border and sank in the middle. At that time, the heavenly sons from the realm of desire and the realm of form again made various wonderful heavenly powdered fragrances and heavenly flowers as offerings and spread them on the World-Honored One and Well-Appearing One. They said to the Buddha, "It is unique and exquisite, World-Honored One! This has never happened before. The great virtuous Well-Appearing One was born by following the Thus-Comer because of realness."

At that time, Well-Appearing One said to the heavenly sons from the realm of desire and the realm of form, "Heavenly sons, you must know that I was born by following the Thus-Comer not because of matter, or because of felling, thinking, action, and consciousness; not because of the realness of matter, or the realness of feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness; not because of being apart from matter, or because of being apart from feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness; not because of being apart from the realness of matter, or because of being apart from the realness of feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness. And so on, I was born by following the Thus-Comer not because of the perfect knowledge of everything, or because of the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena; not because of the realness of the perfect knowledge of everything, or because of the realness of the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena. I was born by following the Thus-Comer not because of being apart from the perfect knowledge of everything, or because of the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena; not because of being apart from the realness of the perfect knowledge of everything, or because of being apart from the realness of the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena. I was born by following the Thus-Comer not because of the conditioned phenomena or the unconditioned reality, not because of the realness of the conditioned phenomena or the realness of the unconditioned reality; not because of being apart from the conditioned phenomena or the unconditioned reality, not because

of being apart from the realness of the conditioned phenomena or the realness of the unconditioned reality. Why? All dharmas are nonexistent. All those born by following someone, the ones to be followed, and the places and the times of such births are nonexistent only because the self-natures of all dharmas are empty."

(Nevertheless, Well-Appearing One added, the self-natures of all dharmas are empty, therefore, the thing such as being born by following someone is truly nonexistent.)

At that time, Sariputra said to the Buddha, "World-Honored One, the realness of the dharmas, and so forth, and the realness of the realm of the inconceivable are very profound. Matter is unattainable, and feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness are unattainable; the realness of matter is unattainable, and the realness of feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness is unattainable too. Why? As matter, feeling, and so forth, and consciousness are unattainable, how can we say that the realness of matter, feeling, and so forth, and the realness of consciousness are attainable? And so on, the perfect knowledge of everything, the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena are unattainable; the realness of the perfect knowledge of everything, the realness of the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and the realness of the perfect knowledge of all phenomena are unattainable too. Why? As the perfect knowledge of everything, the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena are unattainable, how can we say that the realness of the perfect knowledge of everything, the realness of the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and the realness of the perfect knowledge of all phenomena are attainable?"

The Buddha replied to Sariputra, "Yes, it is as you say."

(The Buddha confirmed Sariputra's statement that as all dharmas are unattainable, the realness of all dharmas is unattainable.)

When the Buddha was teaching the forms of the realness, two hundred bhiksus (monks) were rid of all flaws permanently; they became arhats when their minds were liberated. Five hundred bhiksunīs (nuns) stayed far away from all defilements and attained the pure dharma eye in all dharmas. Five thousand bodhisattvas simultaneously attained the dharma forbearance of

nonarising. Six thousand bodhisattvas eliminated all flaws permanently, but they became arhats when their minds were liberated.

At that time, the Buddha said to Sariputra, “These six thousand bodhisattvas in the assembly today had in the past stayed close and made offerings to five hundred Buddhas. They had in each Buddha’s place vowed to renounce their families and pursue correct belief. They had practiced celibacy diligently. Although they had cultivated giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, and meditation, they had not absorbed and accepted the expedient skillfulness of the fathomless prajna paramita, so they had deviated in thoughts and actions. When cultivating giving, they thought, ‘This is giving. These are the things given. These are receivers. I can practice giving.’ When cultivating pure precept, they thought, ‘This is pure precept. These are guilty karmas. These are the areas that I should protect. I can observe the precept.’ When cultivating forbearance, they thought, ‘This is forbearance. These are the hindrances of forbearance. This is the state of forbearance. I can cultivate forbearance.’ When cultivating diligence, they thought, ‘This is diligence. This is laziness and tiredness. This is what I have done. I can cultivate diligence.’ When cultivating meditation, they thought, ‘This is meditation. This is distraction and restlessness. This is what I have done. I can cultivate meditation.’ Because they did not absorb the expedient skillfulness of the fathomless prajna paramita, they practiced giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, and meditation in deviated ways based on deviated thoughts. Because of their deviated thoughts and actions, they were unable to do correct bodhisattva actions based on correct thoughts. Because of this cause and condition, they were unable to enter onto the bodhisattva path of nonarising; instead, they attained stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and arhat effect. Therefore, Sariputra, some great bodhisattvas have access to the path of great bodhisattva and the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration, but they do not absorb the expedient skillfulness of the fathomless prajna paramita, they will fall into the stage of the voice-hearer or the stage of the self-enlightened one and cannot refrain from attaining the reality.”

Meanwhile, Sariputra asked the Buddha again, “Why do great bodhisattvas fall into the stage of the voice-hearer or the stage of the self-enlightened one and cannot refrain from attaining the reality because they do not absorb the expedient skillfulness of the fathomless prajna paramita although they have cultivated the dharmas of emptiness, formlessness, and

nonaspiration? Why do great bodhisattvas enter onto the bodhisattva path of nonarising, and cultivate the great bodhisattva actions step by step so to attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi if they can absorb the expedient skillfulness of the fathomless prajna paramita in addition to cultivating emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration?"

At that time, the World-Honored One replied to Sariputra, "If bodhisattvas stay far away from the mind in accord with the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge and are not guided by great compassion, they will fall into the stage of the voice-hearer or the stage of self-enlightened one and attain the reality because they do not absorb the expedient skillfulness of the fathomless prajna paramita although they have cultivated emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration. On the other hand, if great bodhisattvas stay in a mind in accord with the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge under the guidance of great compassion to cultivate emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration, and further absorb the expedient skillfulness of the fathomless prajna paramita, they will be able to enter onto the bodhisattva path of nonarising, cultivate bodhisattva actions step by step, and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.

(Well-Appearing One explained why great bodhisattvas could enter onto the bodhisattva path of nonarising through practicing expedient skillfulness of prajna paramita.)

"Sariputra, a big bird has a body as tall as one hundred yojanas, two hundred yojanas, or five hundred yojanas, but has no wings. On the way diving from the Heaven of the Thirty-Three Smaller Heavens down to the continent of Jambudvipa, the bird thought, 'I want to return to the Heaven of Thirty-Three Smaller Heavens.' Sariputra, what do you think about this? Can this bird return to the Heaven of Thirty-Three Smaller Heavens?"

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

The Buddha said to Sariputra, "This bird might think on the way, 'I want to arrive at the continent of Jambudvipa safely without getting hurt.' Sariputra, what do you think about this? Can this bird do safely?"

Sariputra said, “No, World-Honored One. No, Well-Gone One. When landing at the continent of Jambudvipa, the bird absolutely will be injured or die. Why? It is because the big bird is very heavy and has no wings.”

The Buddha said to Sariputra, “Yes, it is as you say. Sariputra, so do the great bodhisattvas. If they have diligently cultivated giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, and meditation, as well as emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration for immeasurable and countless kalpas, but do not absorb the expedient skillfulness of the fathomless prajna paramita, consequently, they cannot refrain from attaining reality, and thus fall into the stage of the voice-hearer or the stage of the self-enlightened one. Why? Because these bodhisattvas have stayed far away from the mind in accord with the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, and they are not guided by great compassion. Although they have diligently cultivated giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, and meditation, as well as the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration for immeasurable and countless great kalpas, they do not absorb the expedient skillfulness of the fathomless prajna paramita, so they will fall into the stage of the voice-hearer or the stage of the self-enlightened one. Although these bodhisattvas have stayed in the mindfulness of the aggregates of precept, concentration, wisdom, liberation, and the knowledge and views of liberation taught by various Buddhas in the past, future, and present and made offerings respectfully to various Buddhas and cultivated in compliance with their mindfulness, they cannot correctly understand the real merits and virtues of these aggregates because they are attached to and grasp the forms. Since they cannot correctly understand the merits and virtues of the Buddha, they become attached to the sounds and forms upon hearing the dharma voices the bodhisattva path and emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration. They further transfer the forms that they grasp toward the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. Such transference cannot allow them to attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, they thus fall into the stage of the voice-hearer or the stage of the self-enlightened one. Why? Sariputra, the bodhisattvas have not absorbed the expedient skillfulness of the fathomless prajna paramita.

(The Buddha explained to Sariputra why some bodhisattvas would fall into the stage of voice-hearer or self-enlightened one and could not attain the unsurpassed bodhi.)

“Furthermore, Sariputra, some bodhisattvas, since the moment first aspiring to the great bodhi, have stayed in a mind correspondent with the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, and under the guidance of great compassion, they have cultivated diligently giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, and meditation and consistently absorbed the expedient skillfulness of the fathomless prajna paramita. They have kept in mindfulness of the aggregates of precept, concentration, wisdom, liberation, and the knowledge and views of liberation possessed by the Buddhas, the World-Honored Ones, in the past, future, and present, but they do not grasp their forms. They have also cultivated the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration without grasping their forms. They have transferred their own and others’ merits and virtues along with all sentient beings equally toward the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi without grasping their forms.

“Sariputra, these great bodhisattvas will progress directly toward the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. They will not fall into the stage of the voice-hearer or the stage of the self-enlightened one. Why? Since the time initiated to aspire to the bodhi until finally achieving the ultimate effect, they have stayed in a mind in accord with the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge under the guidance of great compassion. They have cultivated giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, and meditation, but they do not grasp their forms. They have cultivated the great bodhisattva path through emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration, but they do not grasp their forms either.

“Sariputra, because these great bodhisattvas have observed expedient skillfulness, they are able to cultivate giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and 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 apart from the forms. As a result, they can realize the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi that they are pursuing.”

In the meantime, Sariputra said to the Buddha, “According to my understanding of the Buddha’s teaching, since first aspiring to the bodhi until finally achieving the ultimate stage, the great bodhisattvas have always absorbed the expedient skillfulness of the fathomless prajna paramita, and are already very close to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. Why? During the process, they have never seen any dharma that is attainable. Those who can realize,

the objects realized, the place and time of realization, and the causes of realization are all unattainable. Matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena are unattainable too.

"Furthermore, World-Honored One, some good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth of the great vehicle cannot absorb the expedient skillfulness of the fathomless prajna paramita in their pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. They are hesitant and skeptical, and always wonder if they can realize the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi they pursue. Why? These good gentlemen, gentlewomen, and so forth of the bodhisattvas vehicle cannot absorb the expedient skillfulness of the fathomless prajna paramita, so 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 always grasp their forms. Because of this cause and condition, they will be skeptical, hesitant, and wondering if they are able to attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.

"Therefore, World-Honored One, if great bodhisattvas would like to attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, they definitely should not stay far away from the expedient skillfulness of prajna paramita. They should dwell peacefully in the expedient skillfulness of prajna paramita, adopt nonattainment as expediency, and cultivate giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita and the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena with a mind of formlessness. If great bodhisattvas can cultivate the Buddha dharma this way, they will attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi soon."

(Sariputra summarized his understanding of Buddha's teaching about why some bodhisattvas could, while others could not, attain the unsurpassed bodhi.)

At that time, the heavenly sons from the realm of desire and the realm of form said to the Buddha, "The unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas is very difficult to believe in and understand. It is very difficult to realize. Why? The great bodhisattvas should realize the particular and common characteristics of all dharmas to attain the unsurpassed,

perfect, and universal bodhi that they are pursuing, while the dharma forms that the bodhisattvas understand are nonexistent and unattainable."

At that time, the Buddha said to various heavenly sons, "Yes, it is as you say. The unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas are extremely difficult to believe in and understand. It is extremely difficult to realize and attain. You must know, heavenly sons, although I have become awakened intuitively to the phenomena of all dharmas to realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, I do not attain the dharma forms of the ultimate meanings, so I do not talk about the ones who realize, the objects realized, the place and time of realization, and the causes of realization. Why? Heavenly sons, all dharmas are pure in the final analysis, the conditioned phenomena and the unconditioned reality are empty in the final analysis. Because of this reason, the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi is extremely difficult to believe in, understand, realize and attain."

(The Buddha explained why the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi is difficult to realize and believe.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One said to the Buddha, "As the World-Honored One says, the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas is extremely difficult to believe in, understand, realize, and attain. As I reflected on the meanings that the Buddha taught, I felt that the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas is very easy to believe in, understand, realize, and attain. Why? If one can believe in and understand that no dharma can realize, no dharma can be realized, no place in which the realization can happen, no time when the realization can happen, and no cause that makes realization happen, then this person will be able to believe in and understand the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas. If one can realize that no dharma can realize, no dharma can be realized, no place in which the realization can happen, no time when the realization can happen, and no cause to make the realization happen, this person will be able to realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas. Why? All dharmas are empty in the final analysis. In this emptiness, no dharma can be described as 'it can realize; it can be realized; this is the place where the realization occurs; this is the time when the realization occurs; this is the cause of realization.' Why? The natures and forms of all dharmas are empty, any addition to or

subtraction from them is nonexistent and unattainable. Because of this cause and condition, giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and 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 cultivated by great bodhisattvas are all nonexistent and unattainable. The dharmas that the great bodhisattvas contemplate as material or immaterial, visible or invisible, substantial or unsubstantial, flawed or flawless, conditioned or unconditioned are all nonexistent and unattainable. Because of this cause and condition, when I reflect on the essential meanings taught by the Buddha, I feel that the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas is very easy to believe in, understand, realize, and attain. Great bodhisattvas must not think that it is extremely difficult to believe in, understand, realize, and attain. Why? Matter and the self-nature of matter are empty; feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness and their self-natures, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena and their self-natures are empty. If great bodhisattvas can develop a deep belief in, and correct understanding and realization of the meaning of empty self-nature, they will attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. It is based on this meaning to say that the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi is not difficult to believe in, understand, realize, and attain."

(Well-Appearing One asserted that the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi was not difficult to believe and understand. He explained why.)

In the meantime, Sariputra said to Well-Appearing One, "Because of this cause and condition, the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas is extremely difficult to believe in, understand, realize, and attain. Why? Great bodhisattvas contemplate all dharmas and realize that their self-natures are like empty space. Empty space does not think, 'I should believe in, understand, realize, and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.' So, great bodhisattvas should not think, 'I should believe in, understand, realize, and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.' Why? The natures and the forms of all dharmas are like empty space. Great bodhisattvas should learn to believe in and understand that all dharmas are as empty as empty space and thus form a correct knowledge, so that they will be able to attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. If great bodhisattvas believe in and understand that all dharmas are as empty as space and easily believe in, understand, realize, and

attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, then there would not have as many great bodhisattvas as the sands of the Ganges to wear the armors of merits and virtues to pursue the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, and still inevitably encounter hindrances and withdraw. So, I will say that the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi is extremely difficult to believe in, understand, realize, and attain."

(Sariputra asserted that the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi was extremely difficult to believe and understand and explained why.)

Meanwhile, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked Sariputra, "What do you think about this? Does matter withdraw in its pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddha?"

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

"What do you think about this? Do feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness withdraw in their pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddha?"

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

"What do you think about this? Does the dharma apart from matter withdraw in its pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddha?"

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

"What do you think about this? Does the dharma apart from feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness withdraw in its pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddha?"

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

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

Sariputra replied, "No, Well-Appearing One.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“Do the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena withdraw in the pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddha?”

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“Furthermore, Sariputra, what do you think about this? Do realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable of various dharmas withdraw in the pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddha?”

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

“What do you think about this? Do realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable apart from various dharmas withdraw in the pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddha?”

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

In the meantime, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked Sariputra, “If the truth and the dwelling of all dharmas are nonexistent and unattainable, how can we say that the dharmas have withdrawn in the pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddha?”

Meanwhile, Sariputra replied to Well-Appearing One, “The benevolent one, if as you say, in the dharma forbearance of nonarising, neither the dharma nor the great bodhisattva withdraws in the pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, then why does the Buddha say that the three kinds of the individuals dwelling in the bodhisattva vehicle should be just one kind? And again, as the benevolent one says, there is no difference among the three vehicles of bodhisattva. Is there only one vehicle, the vehicle of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal enlightenment?”

In the meantime, Fully Loving-Kind One said to the long-lived sage Sariputra, “I would like to ask Well-Appearing One like this: Is only one bodhisattva vehicle allowed? Then you may challenge him further with this: No difference among the three vehicles should be established; there is only one vehicle, that is, the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal vehicle.”

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

Meanwhile, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One replied to Sariputra by asking him, “What do you think about this? Are there different forms of the three kinds of individuals dwelling in the bodhisattva vehicle within the realness of all dharmas? Namely, are there the individuals who have withdrawn from the bodhisattva vehicle and fall into the vehicle of voice-hearer, the individuals who have withdrawn from the bodhisattva vehicle and fall into the vehicle of self-enlightened one, and the individuals who have realized the unsurpassed vehicle?”

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

“What do you think about this? Are there three different vehicles of bodhisattva within the realness of all dharmas?”

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

“What do you think about this? Are there truly the bodhisattvas of the unsurpassed vehicle within the realness of all dharmas?’

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

“What do you think about this? Are there one form, two forms, or three forms within the realness of various dharmas?”

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

“What do you think about this? Is there any one dharma or one bodhisattva attainable within the realness of all dharmas?”

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

Meanwhile, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One said to Sariputra, “If all kinds of dharma truth and dharma dwelling are nonexistent and unattainable, how can we reflect: Do these bodhisattvas withdraw in the pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddha? Do these bodhisattvas definitely not withdraw in the pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddha? Are these bodhisattvas not certain if they will withdraw in the pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddha? Do these bodhisattvas belong to the vehicle of voice-hearer? Do these bodhisattvas belong to the vehicle of self-enlightened one? Do these bodhisattvas belong to the unsurpassed vehicle? Do they belong to three vehicles? Do they belong to one vehicle?

“Sariputra, if great bodhisattvas do not attain all dharmas; if they believe and understand that the realness of all dharmas is unattainable, various bodhisattvas are unattainable, and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddha is unattainable, then they are genuine great bodhisattvas. Sariputra, if great bodhisattvas are not shocked, frightened, scared, skeptical, regrettable, regressive, and drowned upon hearing the unattainable forms of the realness of various dharmas, they will realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly and will not withdraw in the pursuit.”

(Well-Appearing One described the traits of genuine great bodhisattvas.)

At that time, the World-Honored One praised Well-Appearing One, “Excellent, excellent! It is very good that you can teach the essential meanings of the dharma for bodhisattvas today. All your teachings are supported by the Buddha’s dignified supernatural powers. You must know, Well-Appearing One, if great bodhisattvas can develop a deep belief in and understanding of the nonattainment of the realness of the dharmas, and realize that all dharmas have no different forms, then they will not be shocked, frightened, scared, skeptical, regrettable, regressive, and drowned when hearing the nonattainment of the forms of the realness of the dharmas. These great bodhisattvas will realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly.”

(The Buddha admired Well-Appearing One and identified the qualities of genuine great bodhisattvas.)

At that time, Sariputra asked the Buddha, “World-Honored One, if great bodhisattvas have achieved this dharma, will they realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly?”

At that time, the Buddha replied to Sariputra, “Yes, they will. If great bodhisattvas have achieved this dharma, they will realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly and will not fall into the stage of voice-hearer or the stage of self-enlightened one.”

Meanwhile, Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, “If great bodhisattvas would like to realize and attain quickly the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi that they are pursuing, where will they dwell? How will they dwell?”

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, “If great bodhisattvas would like to realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly, they should treat all sentient beings with a mind of equality instead of inequality. They should initiate a mind of equality in treating all sentient beings instead of inequality. They should speak with all sentient beings with a mind of equality instead of inequality. They should initiate a mind of great loving-kindness toward all sentient beings instead of hatred. They should speak with all sentient beings with a mind of great loving-kindness instead of anger and hatred. They should initiate a mind of great compassion toward all sentient beings instead of doing harm. They should speak with all sentient beings with

a mind of great compassion instead of doing harm. They should initiate a mind of great joy instead of jealousy toward all sentient beings. They should speak with all sentient beings with a mind of great joy instead of jealousy. They should initiate a mind of great equanimity toward all sentient beings instead of prejudice. They should speak with all sentient beings with a mind of great equanimity instead of prejudice. They should initiate a mind of esteem toward all sentient beings instead of arrogance. They should speak with all sentient beings with a mind of esteem instead of arrogance. They should initiate a mind of straightforwardness and honesty toward all sentient beings instead of cheating and deception. They should speak with all sentient beings with a mind of straightforwardness and honesty instead of cheating and deception. They should initiate a mind of tenderness and softness toward all sentient beings instead of stubbornness. They should speak with all sentient beings in tenderness and softness instead of stubbornness. They should initiate a mind of bringing benefits to all sentient beings instead of doing harm to them. They should speak with all sentient beings to benefit them instead of doing harm to them. They should initiate a mind of bringing peace and happiness to all sentient beings instead of bringing them restlessness and agony. They should speak with all sentient beings to bring peace and happiness to them instead of restlessness and pain. They should initiate a mind of no hindrance toward all sentient beings instead of a mind of hindrance. They should speak with all sentient beings with a mind of no hindrance instead of hindrance.

(The Buddha taught how great bodhisattvas should treat all sentient beings to achieve the unsurpassed bodhi quickly.)

"They should initiate a mind of treating all sentient beings as parents, brothers, sisters, men, women, and relatives and speak with them with such a mind. They should initiate a mind of treating all sentient beings as friends and talk to them with such a mind. They should initiate a mind of treating all sentient beings as teachers, mentors, disciples, and classmates and talk to them with such a mind. They should initiate a mind of treating all sentient beings as stream-enterers, once-returners, nonreturners, arhats, self-enlightened ones, great bodhisattvas, and Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones and talk to them with such a mind. They should initiate a mind of making offerings respectfully to esteem and acclaim all sentient beings and talk to them with such a mind. They should initiate a mind of relieving, pitying, and protecting all sentient beings and talk to them with such a mind. They

should initiate a mind of viewing all sentient beings as empty in the final analysis, nonexistent, and unattainable and talk to them with such a mind. They should initiate a mind of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration toward all sentient beings and talk to them with such a mind. Well-Appearing One, if great bodhisattvas would like to realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly, they should adopt nonattainment as expediency and dwell in it.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, if great bodhisattvas would like to realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi that they are pursuing quickly, they should stay away from killing themselves, encourage others to do so, always praise publicly the way of not killing, and joyfully celebrate and acclaim those who have stayed away from killing. And so on, they should stay away from incorrect views themselves, encourage others to do so, always praise publicly the way of staying away from incorrect views, and joyfully celebrate and acclaim those who have stayed away from incorrect views. They should cultivate the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four immeasurable minds themselves; encourage others to do so; always praise publicly the way of cultivating the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations; and joyfully celebrate and acclaim those who have cultivated them. They should fulfill giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita themselves; encourage others to do so; always praise publicly the way of fulfilling giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita; and joyfully celebrate and acclaim those who have fulfilled giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita. They should dwell in internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature themselves; encourage others to do so; always praise publicly the way of dwelling in internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature; and joyfully celebrate and acclaim those who have dwelled in internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature. They should dwell in realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable themselves; encourage others to do so; always praise publicly the way of dwelling in realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable; and joyfully celebrate and acclaim those who have dwelled in realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable. They should dwell in the four noble truths themselves, encourage others to do so, always praise

publicly the way of dwelling in the four noble truths, and joyfully celebrate and acclaim those who have dwelled in the four noble truths. They should cultivate the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path themselves; encourage others to do so; always praise publicly the way of cultivating the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path; and joyfully celebrate and acclaim those who have cultivated the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path. They should cultivate the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration themselves; encourage others to do so; always praise publicly the way of cultivating the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration; and joyfully celebrate and acclaim those who have cultivated the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration. They should cultivate the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations themselves; encourage others to do so; always praise publicly the way of cultivating the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations; and joyfully celebrate and acclaim those who have cultivated the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations. They should fulfill the stages of bodhisattva themselves, encourage others to do so, always praise publicly the way of fulfilling the stages of bodhisattva, and joyfully celebrate and acclaim those who have fulfilled the stages of bodhisattva. They should fulfill all dharani gates and all samadhi gates themselves, encourage others to do so, always praise publicly the way of fulfilling all dharani gates and all samadhi gates, and joyfully celebrate and acclaim those who have fulfilled all dharani gates and all samadhi gates. They should fulfill the five eyes and six supernatural powers themselves, encourage others to do so, always praise publicly the way of fulfilling the five eyes and six supernatural powers, and joyfully celebrate and acclaim those who have fulfilled the five eyes and six supernatural powers. They should fulfill the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power; encourage others to do so; always praise publicly the way of fulfilling the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power; and joyfully celebrate and acclaim those who have fulfilled the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power.

They should fulfill great loving-kindness, great compassion, great joy, and great equanimity themselves; encourage others to do so; always praise publicly the way of fulfilling great loving-kindness, great compassion, great joy, and great equanimity; and joyfully celebrate and acclaim those who have fulfilled great loving-kindness, great compassion, great joy, and great equanimity. They should fulfill the thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features themselves, encourage others to do so, always praise publicly the way of fulfilling the thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features, and joyfully celebrate and acclaim those who have fulfilled the thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features. They should fulfill staying in correct mindfulness and dwelling in equanimity at all times themselves, encourage others to do so, always praise publicly the way of fulfilling staying in correct mindfulness and dwelling in equanimity at all times, and joyfully celebrate and acclaim those who have fulfilled staying in correct mindfulness and dwelling in equanimity at all times. They should contemplate the twelve links of dependent origination by following causes down to effects direction and tracing effects back to causes themselves, encourage others to do so, always praise publicly the way of contemplating the twelve links of dependent origination, and joyfully celebrate and acclaim those who have done such contemplation. They should know suffering, pinpoint the cause of suffering, attempt to cease suffering, and cultivate the path for the cessation of suffering; encourage others to do so; always praise publicly the way of knowing suffering, pinpointing the cause of suffering, attempting to cease suffering, and cultivating the path for the cessation of suffering; and joyfully celebrate and acclaim those who have known suffering, pinpointed the cause of suffering, attempted to cease suffering, and cultivated the path for the cessation of suffering. They should initiate and realize stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi themselves without attaining the reality; encourage others to do so; always praise publicly the way of initiating and realizing stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi without attaining the reality; and joyfully celebrate and acclaim those who have initiated and realized stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi without attaining the reality. They should enter onto the bodhisattva path of nonarising themselves, encourage others to do so, always praise publicly the way of entering onto the bodhisattva path of nonarising, and joyfully celebrate and acclaim those who have entered onto the bodhisattva path of nonarising.”

(The Buddha further taught the way through which great bodhisattvas could achieve the unsurpassed bodhi quickly.)

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Chapter 19

Realness

Section 2

(In the Third Assembly)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, if great bodhisattvas would like to quickly realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi that they pursue, they should assist sentient beings to mature themselves, encourage others to do so, always praise publicly and correctly the way of assisting sentient beings to mature, and joyfully admire and acclaim those who have assisted sentient beings to mature. They should initiate superior supernatural powers of bodhisattva themselves, encourage others to do so, always praise publicly and correctly the way of initiating superior supernatural powers of bodhisattva, and admire and acclaim those who have initiated superior supernatural powers of bodhisattva. They should initiate the perfect knowledge of everything themselves, encourage others to do so, always praise publicly and correctly the way of initiating the perfect knowledge of everything, and joyfully admire and acclaim those who have initiated the perfect knowledge of everything. They should initiate the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths themselves, encourage others to do so, always praise publicly and correctly the way of initiating the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and joyfully admire and acclaim those who have initiated the perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths. They should initiate the perfect knowledge of all phenomena themselves, encourage others to do so, always praise publicly and correctly the way of initiating the perfect knowledge of all phenomena, and joyfully admire and acclaim those who have initiated the perfect knowledge of all phenomena. They should terminate permanently the enduring negative disposition of vexations themselves, encourage others to do so, always praise publicly and correctly the way of terminating permanently the enduring negative disposition of vexations, and joyfully admire and acclaim those who have terminated permanently the enduring negative disposition of vexations. They should absorb perfect lifespan themselves, encourage others to do so, always praise

publicly and correctly the way of absorbing perfect lifespan, and joyfully admire and acclaim those who have absorbed perfect lifespan. They should turn the wonderful dharma wheel themselves, encourage others to do so, always praise publicly and correctly the way of turning the wonderful dharma wheel, and joyfully admire and acclaim those who have turned the wonderful dharma wheel. They should absorb and protect correct dharma to make it stay long, encourage others to do so, always praise publicly and correctly the way of absorbing and protecting correct dharma to make it stay long, and joyfully admire and acclaim those who have absorbed and protected correct dharma to make it stay long. Well-Appearing One, if great bodhisattvas would like to realize and attain quickly the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi that they pursue, they should adopt nonattainment as expediency to dwell in these dharmas.

(The Buddha continued to teach how great bodhisattvas can swiftly achieve the unsurpassed bodhi.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, great bodhisattvas should learn the expedient skillfulness of the fathomless prajna paramita this way. If they can do this, they will stay peacefully in the dharmas in which they should stay. If they learn and stay peacefully this way, they will encounter no hindrance in the five aggregates, six internal spheres, six external spheres, six internal realms, six external realms, six consciousness realms, six contacts, six feelings, and six realms. They will encounter no hindrance in the four conditions. They will encounter no hindrance in ignorance, action, and so forth, and old age and death. They will encounter no hindrance in staying away from killing, lying, and so forth, and incorrect views. They will encounter no hindrance in the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations. They will encounter no hindrance in giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita. They will encounter no hindrance in internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature. They will encounter no hindrance in realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable. They will encounter no hindrance in the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering. They will encounter no hindrance in the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path. They will encounter no hindrance in the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration. They will

encounter no hindrance in the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations. They will encounter no hindrance in the stage of pure contemplation, stage of embryonic Buddha nature, and so forth, and stage of Thus-Comer. They will encounter no hindrance in the stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilement, and so forth, and stage of dharma cloud. They will encounter no hindrance in the dharani gates and samadhi gates. They will encounter no hindrance in the five eyes and six supernatural powers. They will encounter no hindrance in the Buddha's ten abilities, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power. They will encounter no hindrance in great loving-kindness, great compassion, great joy, and great equanimity. They will encounter no hindrance in the thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features. They will encounter no hindrance in staying in correct mindfulness and dwelling in equanimity at all times. They will also encounter no hindrance in contemplating the twelve links of dependent origination from causes to effects and then from effects back to causes. They will encounter no hindrance in knowing suffering, figuring out the causes of suffering, determining to cease the causes of suffering, and cultivating the path of ceasing suffering. They will encounter no hindrance in stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi. They will encounter no hindrance in entering onto the bodhisattva path of nonarising. They will encounter no hindrance in assisting sentient beings to mature, dignifying and purifying Buddha lands, and initiating superior supernatural powers of bodhisattva. They will encounter no hindrance in the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena. They will encounter no hindrance in terminating permanently the enduring negative disposition of all vexations. They will encounter no hindrance in fulfilling perfect lifespan. They will encounter no hindrance in turning the wonderful dharma wheel. They will also encounter no hindrance in absorbing and protecting dharma dwelling.

"Why? Well-Appearing One, since the time unknown, the great bodhisattvas have not absorbed 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 thought, conditions that stimulate the mind, and the conditions that reinforce main causes; ignorance, action, and so forth, and old age and death; staying from killing, lying, and so forth, and incorrect views; the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations; 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 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 defilement, and so forth, and stage of dharma cloud; the dharani gates and samadhi gates; the five eyes and six supernatural powers; the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power; great loving-kindness, great compassion, great joy, and great equanimity; the thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features; staying in correct mindfulness and dwelling in equanimity at all times; the twelve links of dependent origination contemplated from both directions; experiencing suffering, knowing the cause of suffering, determining to cease suffering, and cultivating the path to cease suffering; stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi; entering onto the bodhisattva path of nonarising; assisting sentient beings to mature and dignifying and purifying Buddha lands; turning the wonderful dharma wheel to make correct dharma endure; and the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena. Why? The aggregates of matter, feeling, and so forth, and consciousness cannot be absorbed. Those that cannot be absorbed are not the aggregates of matter, feeling, and so forth, and consciousness. And so on, the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena cannot be absorbed. Those that cannot be absorbed are

not the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena."

(No dharma can be truly absorbed.)

As the Buddha was teaching the dharma in which great bodhisattvas should dwell, two thousand bodhisattvas in the assembly simultaneously attained the dharma forbearance of nonarising.

Chapter 20

The Characteristics of Nonregression

Section 1

(In the Third Assembly)

At that time, Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "How can we distinguish the actions, characters, and forms of great bodhisattvas of nonregression?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "The great bodhisattvas of nonregression know accurately the stages of ordinary sentient being, stages of voice-hearer, stages of self-enlightened one, stages of bodhisattva, and the stages of the Thus-Comer. They also know that although the stages are different, the real natures of all dharmas are the same; they are without changes and differentiations, and they are not different or separate. Although the great bodhisattvas have attained insightful understanding of the realness of the dharmas, they do not view realness differently because they have adopted nonattainment as expediency. These great bodhisattvas have developed a very deep and insightful understanding of the realness of the dharmas, so they are not confused or hesitated when hearing that realness and all dharmas are not different or separate. Why? Realness and the dharmas are not the same or different; they are not

one or two, or both. So are dharma realm, dharma nature, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable. Therefore, the great bodhisattvas of nonregression are very reluctant to talk about this issue unless the talks will bring justice and benefits to all sentient beings. They teach the dharma because of equality and compassion, not because of preference, dislike, caste, or criticism. They value dharma teachers not because of their origin, caste, or personal bias, but because the teachers can teach the true and pure meanings of the dharma. These are the actions, character, and forms of the great bodhisattva of nonregression."

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, "Are there more action, characters, and forms that can help us identify the great bodhisattvas of nonregression?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "Those who can contemplate various dharmas as without actions, characters, and forms are the great bodhisattvas of nonregression."

At that time, Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "If all dharmas have no actions, characters, and forms, then which dharmas are turned by the great bodhisattvas to be named without regression?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "The great bodhisattvas do not regress if they turn the aggregates of matter, feeling, and so forth, and consciousness. The great bodhisattvas do not regress if they turn the eye sphere, ear sphere, and so forth, and conscious sphere; the sight sphere, sound sphere, and so forth, and the 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. They do not regress if they turn 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; and ignorance, action, and so forth, and old age and death. The great bodhisattvas do not regress if they turn 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 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; and the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations. They do not regress if they turn 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 defilement, and so forth, and stage of dharma cloud; the dharani gates and samadhi gates; the five eyes and six supernatural powers; the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power; great loving-kindness, great compassion, great joy, and great equanimity; the thirty-two perfect marks and eighty distinguishing minor features; staying in correct mindfulness and dwelling in equanimity at all times; stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi; and the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena. They do not regress if they turn the stage of ordinary sentient beings, stage of voice-hearers, stage of self-enlightened ones, stage of bodhisattvas, and the stage of Thus-Comers. They do not regress if they turn various great bodhisattva actions and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddha. Why? The self-natures of matter, feeling, and so forth, and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of various Buddhas are nonexistent. The great bodhisattvas are turning because they do not dwell in them. If great bodhisattvas can realize this, they are named the great bodhisattvas of nonregression.

(The Buddha said that if great bodhisattvas turn various dharmas, they are not regressive. Because it means that they do not dwell in these dharmas, and the self-natures of the dharmas are nonexistent.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, all great bodhisattvas of nonregression do not like to contemplate the features and speeches of the sramanas and Brahmans of other path. They well know that sramanas and Brahmans cannot gain real knowledge and correct views of the dharmas or establish any dharma gate with correct views. If great bodhisattvas have achieved these qualities, they are not regressive.

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, all great bodhisattvas of nonregression have developed a deep belief in and understanding of vinaya, the precepts and laws for the monastics, as taught perfectly by the Buddha. They are not skeptical about them. They will not develop any invalid and erroneous precepts or accept evil views. They are not attached to the so-called auspicious matters and regard them as pure, not like ordinary people of the world. They do not pay homage to deities as other-path believers do, or make flower ornaments and wreaths, spread perfumes and powdered incenses, clothes, jewel necklaces, treasure banners, canopies, music and entertainment, and lamps as offerings to esteem the deities or other-path believers. Well-Appearing One, if great bodhisattvas have achieved such qualities, they are not regressive.

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, all great bodhisattvas of nonregression will not be reborn in hells, the realm of animals or ghosts, as asuras, or in inferior castes or families, such as Candāla or Pulkasa. They will never be reborn as beings without sex organs, with incomplete sex organs, possessing both male and female sex organs, and so forth, or blind, dumb, lame in both legs, epileptic, short, and ugly. They will not be reborn in the places where Buddha dharma is inaccessible. Well-Appearing One, if great bodhisattvas have achieved such qualities, they are not regressive.

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, all great bodhisattvas of nonregression will always enjoy practicing the path of the ten virtuous karmas. They not only stay away from killing, lying, and so forth, and incorrect views themselves, but also encourage others to do so. They always praise publicly and correctly the way of staying away from killing, lying, and so forth, and delightedly admire and acclaim those who have stayed away from killing, lying, and so forth. These great bodhisattvas definitely will not practice the path of the ten not virtuous karmas in dreaming, not to mention when they are awake. These are the actions, characters, and forms of the great bodhisattvas of nonregression.

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, to universally benefit all sentient beings, the great bodhisattvas of nonregression will adopt nonattainment as expediency to cultivate giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita constantly and tirelessly. The great bodhisattvas who possess such quality are not regressive.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, all great bodhisattvas of nonregression will accept, embrace, reflect on, read, recite, and understand thoroughly the teachings given by the Buddha in twelve categories: sutras, short verses, and so forth, and discourses. They enjoy sharing the dharma with all sentient beings. When they do this, they think, 'How should I satisfy all sentient beings in their pursuit of the correct dharma?' By adopting nonattainment as expediency, they will transfer the virtuous roots caused by dharma giving along with all sentient beings equally toward the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. Well-Appearing One, if great bodhisattvas have achieved such actions, characters, and forms, they are not regressive.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, all great bodhisattvas of nonregression are not skeptical or confused about the fathomless dharma gates taught by the Buddha."

(The Buddha delineated more superior qualities of great bodhisattvas without regression.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "Why are great bodhisattvas of nonregression not skeptical or confused about the fathomless dharma gates that the Buddha teaches?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "Great bodhisattvas of nonregression do not see that they should have doubts or confusion about any dharma. They have no doubts or confusion about 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; ignorance, action, 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

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 defilement, and so forth, and stage of dharma cloud; the dharani gates and samadhi gates; the five eyes and six supernatural powers; the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power; great loving-kindness, great compassion, great joy, and great equanimity; 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 bodhisattva actions and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas. These are the actions, characters, and forms of great bodhisattvas of nonregression.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, great bodhisattvas of nonregression will achieve harmony, tenderness, lovability, and desirability in their thoughts, words, and actions. They interact with sentient beings without anxiety and hesitation. These are the actions, characters, and forms of great bodhisattvas of nonregression.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, all great bodhisattvas of nonregression have fulfilled loving-kindness, compassion, joy, and equanimity. They always initiate body, speech, and mind karmas in accord with loving-kindness, compassion, joy, and equanimity to do beneficial things for sentient beings. These are also the actions, characters, and forms of great bodhisattvas of nonregression.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, great bodhisattvas of nonregression do not stay with the five covers, namely, greedy desire, hatred and anger, drowsiness and sleepiness, restlessness and regretting what they have done, and skepticism. These are the actions, characters, and forms of great bodhisattvas of nonregression.

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, great bodhisattvas of nonregression have overcome all hidden roots of vexations; all kinds of bondages and affiliated bonds of vexations will not arise. These are also the actions, characters, and forms of great bodhisattvas of nonregression.

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, great bodhisattvas of nonregression are not confused or puzzled when they are in, out, come, or go. They always dwell peacefully in correct mindfulness and correct knowledge when they go, stop, walk, stay, sit, lie, lift steps or lower steps. They watch carefully wherever they travel but walk in peace and comfort with eyes looking ahead. They do not move or speak abruptly. Well-Appearing One, when great bodhisattvas have achieved such actions, characters, and forms, they are not regressive.

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, all beds, bedding, and clothes used by great bodhisattvas of nonregression are always fragrant and clean, which are not smelly or greasy, and do not house lice and their eggs. They love clean, pure, and bright things and their health is in perfect condition. These are the actions, characters, and forms of great bodhisattvas of nonregression.

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, both bodies and minds of great bodhisattvas of nonregression are clean and pure, unlike ordinary human beings who are invaded and eaten continuously by eighty thousand small insects. Why? It is because these great bodhisattvas have their virtuous roots well developed and thus transcended all sentient beings in the world; their inner and outer bodies are all clean and pure so no insects will invade and eat them. As their virtuous roots increase, their bodies and minds will become purer. Because of this cause and condition, their bodies and minds will become as solid as diamonds, will not be annoyed or attacked by those undesirable conditions. They will not be troubled by bondages and complexes either. Well-Appearing One, if great bodhisattvas have achieved such qualities, they are not regressive.”

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, “How do great bodhisattvas of nonregression always keep their bodies, speeches, and minds clean?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “As the virtuous roots of these great bodhisattvas grow and increase, the karmas of their bodies, speeches, and minds will not arise in

the final analysis in endless future because of the conditioning powers of the virtuous roots, so the purity in body, speech, and mind will be maintained. Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, because the three kinds of wonderful actions in body, four kinds of wonderful actions in speech, and three kinds of wonderful actions in mind are present at all times, their bodies, speeches, and minds are always pure, and this suffices for them to transcend the stage of voice-hearer or self-enlightened one, remaining in the family of the stage of bodhisattva. They thus will always dwell in pure body, speech, and mind. These are the superior qualities of great bodhisattvas who are not regressive.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, all great bodhisattvas of nonregression do not seek benefits and offerings made to them or pursue reputation. They do not indulge in material comforts, such as food, clothes, beds, bedding, houses, and properties. Although they practice the twelve ways of ascetic life, they remain humble and unattached. These are superior qualities of great bodhisattvas who are not regressive.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, all great bodhisattvas of nonregression cultivate giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita at all times. They do not allow the minds of stinginess, greed, precept violation, anger, hatred, laziness, restlessness, ignorance and the minds correspondent with other vexations, bondages, complexes to arise in the final analysis. These are also the superior qualities of great bodhisattvas who are not regressive.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the awakening wisdom of all great bodhisattvas of nonregression is solid and deep rooted. Upon hearing correct dharma, they believe in and accept it respectfully, reflect on it and keep it in mind to look for its fundamental and ultimate meanings. They will expediently merge all dharmas of and beyond the world into the fathomless essential meanings of prajna paramita. Even businesses or things not directly related to dharma nature will also be merged into the fathomless essential meanings of prajna paramita. Nothing exists outside it. These are also the actions and qualities of the great bodhisattvas who are not regressive.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, an evil demon transformed eight great hells and in each great hell he made immeasurable and boundless transformed bodhisattvas who were tortured severely by violently burning fires. This evil demon showed these transformed images to

great bodhisattvas of nonregression and said to them, ‘Bodhisattvas suffer various fierce pains in great hells even if they are granted by the Buddha the prophecy of attaining the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal enlightenment in the future. You have also been conferred the same prophecy. The prophecy that Buddha confers on you is not for attaining the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, but for falling into great hells to suffer such violent tortures. Now you must cease the pursuit of the great bodhi to get rid of this suffering to be reborn in heaven and enjoy all kinds of pleasure there.’ At that time, seeing what was happening to them, the great bodhisattvas of nonregression were not frightened or hesitated. They thought, ‘It does not make sense to say that great bodhisattvas of nonregression will fall into hells, the realm of animals, ghosts, or asuras. Why? The great bodhisattvas of nonregression have removed all kinds of negative karma, while positive karma definitely does not invite any negative results. What the Buddhas teach are not lies. The Thus-Comers always teach with great kindness and great compassion to bring benefits and happiness to all sentient beings. What I have seen must be the illusions transformed by evil demon.’ Well-Appearing One, if great bodhisattvas have achieved such actions and qualities, you must know that they are great bodhisattvas of nonregression.

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, an evil demon pretended to be a sramana and came to a great bodhisattva’s place. He said, ‘You have heard that giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna paramitas, and so forth, and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi should be cultivated and fulfilled. All you have heard is incorrect. You should discard them immediately. You have also heard that all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones in the past, future, and present are delighted to transfer all virtuous roots of merits and virtues, accumulated since the time first aspiring to until finally attaining dharma dwelling, along with all sentient beings equally toward the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. What you have heard is not true either. You must discard it immediately. If you can do this, I will teach you genuine Buddha dharma, so that you can cultivate to attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly. The incorrect words that you have heard are the white lie created by some writers. Only what I say are the genuine words of the Buddha. I can assist you to attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly.’ Well-Appearing One, if great bodhisattvas are scared and hesitated when hearing these words, you must know that they have not been conferred the prophecy of nonregression; they are

uncertain if they can attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, so they are not nonregressive bodhisattvas.

(The traits of the bodhisattvas are not nonregressive.)

"Well-Appearing One, you must know that if great bodhisattvas, upon hearing these words, are not scared or hesitated, but rather decide to dwell in the dharma nature of nonaction, formlessness, and nonarising, you must know that these great bodhisattvas will not follow the words or teachings given by anyone other than the Buddha to cultivate giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna paramitas, or aspire to realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. You must know that these great bodhisattvas have achieved the stage of nonregression. The arhats free from all flaws are not moved by evil demons. They do not follow the words other than the Buddha's. They realize intuitively dharma nature without puzzlement and skepticism, so do the great bodhisattvas of nonregression. No voice-hearers, self-enlightened ones, other-path believers, or evil demons can subjugate them, harm them, or force them to withdraw in the pursuit of the great bodhi. As great bodhisattvas have dwelled firmly in the state of nonregression, they will reflect on all things carefully. They will not believe in others rashly. They even do not rashly accept the speeches made by the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones, let alone the words of voice-hearers, self-enlightened ones, other-path believers, and evil demons. These great bodhisattvas will not do things by following others' directions without reflection. Why? They do not see that matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness can be believed or practiced. They do not see that the realness of matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness can be believed or practiced. They do not see that all great bodhisattva actions and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas can be believed or practiced, nor do they see that the realness of all great bodhisattva actions and the realness of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas can be believed or practiced. These are also the actions, characters, and forms of great bodhisattvas of nonregression.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, an evil demon pretended to be a bhiksu (monk) and visited great bodhisattvas of nonregression. The demon said to the bodhisattvas, 'What you are practicing is the dharma of birth and death instead of the bodhisattva actions. You cannot attain

the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge through such practice. Now you must cultivate the path of ceasing suffering to get rid of all suffering and attain nirvana.' At that time, the demon spoke about the ways to get rid of birth and death or the sort, such as contemplation of bones, bruises, pus, swelling of the body, body devoured by insects, blood, and rotten fleshes; contemplation of loving-kindness, compassion, joy, and equanimity; the first meditation, second meditation, and so forth, and the concentration of boundless emptiness and the concentration of nonthinking and not nonthinking. The demon said to the bodhisattvas, 'These are the real paths for cultivation. Through these paths you will attain stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi. Through these paths, you will quickly go beyond the cycle of birth, old age, illness, and death. So, why do you suffer in birth and death for such a long time? You must discard the suffering that you are experiencing now, let alone the suffering that will come up in your next life. You should think about it carefully and give up what you have believed.'

"You must know, Well-Appearing One, when hearing the demon's words, these great bodhisattvas were not scared or hesitated, but thought, 'This bhiksu has helped me because he let me know that his dharma is not true and cannot assist one to attain stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi, let alone the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.' After having this thought, the bodhisattvas were in great joy, and thought, 'This bhiksu has really benefitted me by expediently telling me how his way can hinder the path, so that I am able to learn the path of the three vehicles freely and easily.

"Well-Appearing One, at that time, the evil demon knew that the bodhisattvas were in great joy and said again, 'Now, would you like to see more how great bodhisattvas have wasted their time to cultivate in vain? Various great bodhisattvas have made immeasurable best clothes, drinks, food, bedding, medicines, properties, and flower fragrances as offerings to esteem and acclaim as many Buddhas as the sands of the Ganges for as many kalpas as the sands of the Ganges. They have further, in as many Buddhas' places as the sands of the Ganges, cultivated giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramitas; 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; 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 liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration; cultivated the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations; cultivated various stages of great bodhisattva; 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 great loving-kindness, great compassion, great joy, and great equanimity; cultivated to stay in correct mindfulness and dwell in equanimity at all times; cultivated to contemplate the twelve links of dependent origination from two directions, assist sentient beings to mature, and dignify and purify Buddha lands; cultivated the superior supernatural powers of various bodhisattvas; and cultivated the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena. These various great bodhisattvas have also stayed close and offered services to as many Buddhas as the sands of the Ganges. They have asked various Buddhas about the path of the great bodhisattva, such as, 'How do great bodhisattvas dwell peacefully in the great vehicle? How do great bodhisattvas cultivate giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita? How do they dwell in internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature? How do they dwell in realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable? How do they dwell 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 four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path? How do they cultivate the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations? How do they cultivate the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration? How do they cultivate the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations? How do they cultivate the stages of great bodhisattva? How do they cultivate all dharani gates and all samadhi gates? 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 great loving-kindness, great compassion, great joy, and great equanimity? How do they stay in correct mindfulness and dwell in equanimity at all

times? How do they cultivate to contemplate the twelve links of dependent origination, assist sentient beings to mature, and dignify and purify Buddha lands? How do they cultivate the superior supernatural powers of bodhisattva? And how do they cultivate the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena?' There are as many Buddhas as the sands of the Ganges will answer their questions. These great bodhisattvas have dwelled peacefully and cultivated diligently by following the Buddhas' teachings for immeasurable kalpas, but they still cannot realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, so how can we say that you can attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi based on what you have cultivated and learned?'

"You must know, Well-Appearing One, when hearing the demon's words, the great bodhisattvas did not change their minds; they were not shocked, scared, skeptical, and confused either. They rather became more delighted and thought, 'This demon has done something beneficial for me. He has shown in an expedient way how one can be hindered and so kept away from attaining stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi, or blocked from approaching the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi that they are pursuing.'

"Meanwhile, the demon knew that the great bodhisattvas did not withdraw and were not puzzled or skeptical. So, the demon again made immeasurable transformed images of bhiksu and said to the bodhisattvas, 'These monks had pursued diligently the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi in the past. They had cultivated various difficult ascetic actions for immeasurable kalpas and could not attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. Now, they all retreated to arhat effect and thus have ended all flaws and all suffering. How can you think that you will attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi?'

"You must know, Well-Appearing One, after seeing and hearing this, the great bodhisattvas thought, 'This must be again the evil demon who made these transformed images of bhiksu to disturb my mind. What he said is not true as he asserted that no great bodhisattva could cultivate and fulfill prajna paramita or realize the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, and that all great bodhisattvas should withdraw and return to the stage of the voice-hearer or the stage of the self-enlightened one.' These great bodhisattvas again thought, 'It does not make sense to

say that after cultivating and fulfilling giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas are unable to attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. It is also unreasonable to say that after cultivating and fulfilling the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena, the great bodhisattvas are unable to attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.' These are actions, characters, and forms of great bodhisattvas who do not regress.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, all nonregressive great bodhisattvas always practice prajna paramita and think, 'If great bodhisattvas cultivate and learn diligently and attentively by following the Buddha's teachings, they will never stay far away from the wonderful actions absorbed in the six paramitas; they will never stay far away from the intentions correspondent with the six paramitas or correspondent with the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. They will always expediently persuade and encourage others to diligently and attentively cultivate and learn giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna paramitas. These great bodhisattvas certainly will not withdraw from giving paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita; from internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature; from realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable; from four noble truths; from four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path; from four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations; from three liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration; from eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations; from various stages of bodhisattva; from dharani gates and samadhi gates; from five eyes and six supernatural powers; from Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power; from great loving-kindness, great compassion, great joy, and great equanimity; from staying in correct mindfulness and dwelling in equanimity at all times; and from perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena. They definitely will realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.' These are also the actions, characters, and forms of great bodhisattvas who are not regressive.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, all nonregressive great bodhisattvas consistently practice prajna paramita and always think, 'If great bodhisattvas are aware of demonic hindrance and do not follow the demonic instructions, aware of evil friends' minds and do not follow the evil friends' words, aware of the change of environment but do not follow it accordingly, then these great bodhisattvas definitely will not withdraw from 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 four noble truths; the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path; the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations; the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration; the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations; various stages of bodhisattva; the dharani gates and samadhi gates; the five eyes and six supernatural powers; the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power; great loving-kindness, great compassion, great joy, and great equanimity; staying in correct mindfulness and dwelling in equanimity at all times; and the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena. They will realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.' These are also the actions, characters, and forms of great bodhisattvas without regression.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, all great bodhisattvas of nonregression are delighted to believe in, accept, and understand the essential meanings of the dharma upon hearing the teachings given by various Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones. Their minds are as solid as diamonds, unmovable and invincible. They will consistently and diligently cultivate and learn giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna paramitas. They will also tirelessly encourage others to cultivate and learn the six paramitas. These are actions, characters, and forms of great bodhisattvas who are not regressive."

(The Buddha gave more examples to explain the qualities of great bodhisattvas who do not regress, including their awareness of evil demons' hindrances.)

At that time, Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, “Why are great bodhisattvas called nonregressive if they regress?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “As great bodhisattvas regress in the thinking of the aggregates of matter, feeling, and so forth, and consciousness, they do not regress. If they regress in the thinking of the eye sphere, ear sphere, and so forth, and conscious sphere, they do not regress. If they regress in the thinking of the sight sphere, sound sphere, and so forth, and mental-image sphere, they do not regress. If they regress in the thinking of the eye realm, ear realm, and so forth, and conscious realm, they do not regress. If they regress in the thinking of the eye consciousness realm, ear consciousness realm, and so forth, and conscious consciousness realm, they do not regress. If they regress in the thinking of the eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact, they do not regress. If they regress in the thinking of the feelings produced by eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact, they do not regress. If they regress in the thinking of the earth realm, water realm, and so forth, and consciousness realm, they do not regress. If they regress in the thinking of cause and condition, consecutive thoughts, conditions that stimulate the mind, and the conditions that reinforce main causes, they do not regress. If they regress in the thinking of ignorance, action, and so forth, and old age and death, they do not regress. If they regress in the thinking of greed, anger, ignorance, and various incorrect views, they do not regress. If they regress in the thinking of giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita, they do not regress. If they regress in the thinking of internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature, they do not regress. If they regress in the thinking of realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable, they do not regress. If they regress in the thinking of the four noble truths, they do not regress. If they regress in the thinking of the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path, they do not regress. If they regress in the thinking of the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations, they do not regress. If they regress in the thinking of the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration, they do not regress. If they regress in the thinking of the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations, they do not regress. If they regress in the thinking of the stage of pure contemplation, stage of embryonic Buddha nature, and so forth, and stage of

Thus-Comer, they do not regress. If they regress in the thinking of the stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilement, and so forth, and stage of dharma cloud, they do not regress. If they regress in the thinking of the dharani gates and samadhi gates, they do not regress. If they regress in the thinking of the five eyes and six supernatural powers, they do not regress. If they regress in the thinking of the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power, they do not regress. If they regress in the thinking of great loving-kindness, great compassion, great joy, and great equanimity, they do not regress. If they regress in the thinking of the thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features, they do not regress. If they regress in the thinking of staying in correct mindfulness and dwelling in equanimity at all times, they do not regress. If they regress in the thinking of stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi, they do not regress. If they regress in the thinking of all great bodhisattva actions and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas, they do not regress. If they regress in the thinking of the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena, they do not regress. If they regress in the thinking of the ordinary sentient being, voice-hearer, self-enlightened one, bodhisattva, and the Buddha, they do not regress. Why? The great bodhisattvas of nonregression have contemplated the particular characteristics of all dharmas as empty and entered onto the bodhisattva path of nonarising. They have not seen any dharma attainable. Because the dharmas are unattainable, they are without making and doing. Because they are without making and doing, they are named nonarising in the final analysis. Because they are without arising in the final analysis, they are named dharma forbearance of nonarising. Because great bodhisattvas have attained the dharma forbearance of nonarising, they are named great bodhisattvas without regression. Great bodhisattvas with such actions, characters, and forms are not regressive."

(The Buddha told Well-Appearing One that great bodhisattvas who regress in the thinking of various dharmas are called nonregressive. He also explained why.)

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Chapter 20

The Characteristics of Nonregression

Section 2

(In the Third Assembly)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, an evil demon came to great bodhisattvas' places to make them become disgusted with and give up the pursuit of the unsurpassed bodhi. He said, 'The perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge equals empty space. It adopts nonnature as nature and its particular characteristics are originally empty. Various dharmas are also equivalent to empty space and adopt nonnature as nature. In the emptiness of particular characteristics, no dharma can realize or can be realized, nor is there the place of realization, the time of realization, or the cause of realization. As all dharmas are equivalent to empty space and adopt nonnature as nature, and their particular characteristics are originally empty, why do you still pursue the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi so hard? You heard previously that great bodhisattvas should aspire to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. But it is the assertion made by demons, not the teaching given by the Buddha. You should stop pursuing the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal enlightenment. Do not try to bring benefits and happiness to all sentient beings through suffering and hardship. You work hard to practice all difficult actions to attain the bodhi, but all will end up in vain.' When hearing the demon's words, the great bodhisattvas contemplated carefully and thought, 'This is the hindrance made by evil demon. He is trying to destroy my aspiration for great bodhi. I must not believe his words. It is true that all dharmas are equivalent to empty space and adopt nonnature as nature, their particular characteristics are originally empty, but various sentient beings do not known it; they are upside down and lazy, and create many negative karmas, thus suffer in birth and death. I should put on the armor of merits and virtues that is as empty as empty space, work toward the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly, teach the dharma to sentient beings in suitable ways, so they are able to get rid of the suffering in birth and death and attain stream-entry effect, once-return effect, nonreturn

effect, arhat effect, self-enlightenment bodhi, or the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi to bring benefits and happiness to all sentient beings in endless future.' These great bodhisattvas have heard this dharma since they began to aspire to the great bodhi. They have solid and unmovable minds; they have correctly and consistently cultivated the six paramitas and entered onto the bodhisattva path of nonarising. Through such cultivation, they have overcome various bondages and complexes and reached the stage of nonregression. All kinds of hindrance made by evil demons cannot make them withdraw in the pursuit of the great bodhi. These are the actions, characters, and forms of great bodhisattvas who are not regressive."

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "Are great bodhisattvas called nonregressive because they do not regress or because they regress?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "The great bodhisattvas do not regress, so they are called nonregressive. They regress, so they are also called nonregressive."

At that time, Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, "Why are great bodhisattvas called nonregressive if they do not regress? Why are they also called nonregressive if they regress?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "As great bodhisattvas have transcended the stage of voice-hearer or self-enlightened one, they will not regress and fall into these two stages, they are called nonregressive. As great bodhisattvas are determined to regress from these two stages, they are also called nonregressive. Therefore, I say that great bodhisattvas are called nonregressive either they regress or do not regress. These are the actions, characters, and forms of great bodhisattvas of nonregression. If they achieve these, they will not be defeated by demonic armies, and definitely will attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.

(The Buddha explained why great bodhisattvas are called nonregressive either they regress or do not regress.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, all great bodhisattvas of nonregression can enter the first, second, third, or fourth meditation freely and easily as they wish. They can enter immeasurable loving-kindness, compassion, joy, and equanimity freely and easily as they wish. They can enter the concentration of boundless emptiness, concentration of boundless

consciousness, concentration of nothingness, or the concentration of nonthinking and not nonthinking freely and easily as they wish. They can enter the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path freely and easily as they wish. They can enter the first liberation, second liberation, and so forth, and the liberation of extinction of thinking and feeling freely and easily as they wish. They can enter the first, second, and so forth, and the eighth vexation-overcoming meditations freely and easily as they wish. They can enter the first concentration, second concentration, and so forth, and the concentration of the extinction of thinking and feeling freely and easily as they wish. They can enter the first universal contemplation, second universal contemplation, and so forth, and tenth universal contemplation freely and easily as they wish. They can enter the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration freely and easily as they wish. They can elicit five supernatural powers freely and easily as they wish.

"Well-Appearing One, although great bodhisattvas can enter the four meditations, the immeasurable minds, and so forth, and elicit the five supernatural powers freely and easily as they wish, they will not be affected by the effects thus derived. Because of this cause and condition, they will not be reborn by following the powers of various meditations, immeasurable minds, samapatti, concentration of extinction, and the rest of merits and virtues. They will not attain stream-entry effect, once-return effect, nonreturn effect, arhat effect, or self-enlightenment bodhi and stay there. To bring benefits and happiness to all sentient beings, they can and are willing to accept any body indispensable for rebirth. When they accomplish what they intend to do, they will stay from that task immediately. These are also the actions, characters, and forms of great bodhisattvas who are not regressive.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, once initiating the pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, great bodhisattvas of nonregression will remain dedicated to this path with consistency. They will not overvalue 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. They will not overvalue dependent origination and the nature of mutual dependence; forms; minor distinguishing features; ones to be relied on; the material and the immaterial dharmas; the visible and the invisible dharmas; the substantial and the unsubstantial dharmas; the flawed and the flawless dharmas; the conditioned and unconditioned dharmas; the dharmas of and beyond the world; the 'I,' the sentient being, and so forth, and the knower and the viewer; disciples, associates, and family members; positions, properties, and treasures; giving pramita, 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 path of the ten virtuous karmas; the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations; the five supernatural powers; 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 defilement, and so forth, and stage of dharma cloud; the dharani gates and samadhi gates; the five eyes and six supernatural powers; the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power; great loving-kindness, great compassion, great joy, and great equanimity; 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 dignifying and purifying Buddha lands, assisting sentient beings to mature, visiting many Buddhas, and planting many virtuous roots. Why? Great bodhisattvas have thoroughly understood that all dharmas are equivalent to empty space and that the dharmas adopt nonnature as nature and their particular characteristics are empty, they do not see any dharma that can give birth to this overvaluing; ones who can give

birth, ones to be born, and the time, place, and the cause of birth are unattainable. Why? It is because all dharmas are equivalent to empty space; their natures and forms are empty and there are no meanings of arising in them. These great bodhisattvas have achieved an intention for pursuing the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi and will never stay far away from the aspiration to the great bodhi. Their minds always remain in concentration whether they are going, coming, entering, getting out, or lifting and lowering their feet. When they walk, stay, sit, lie, move forward, or stop, their demeanors and actions always dwell in correct mindfulness. These are the actions, characters, and forms of great bodhisattvas of nonregression.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, to bring benefits and happiness to sentient beings, some great bodhisattvas of nonregression will stay at home expediently and skillfully. Although they enjoy music and other entertainments, they do not indulge in the pleasure of the five senses because what they intend to do is to relieve sentient beings. Namely, they will give food, drinks, clothes, vehicles, and so forth, and other living supplies to satisfy the sentient beings in need. These great bodhisattvas have not only practiced giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita themselves, but also encouraged others to do so. They always praise publicly and correctly the way of practicing giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita, and joyfully admire and acclaim those who have practiced giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita. When staying at home, they use supernatural powers and great aspiring power to absorb various kinds of rarities and treasures to fill the entire continent of Jambudvipa, continent of Purvavideha, and so forth, and the large threefold thousand-world. They make these treasures as offerings to the triple gem: the Buddha, the dharma, and the sangha; they also give them to various poor sentient beings. Although staying at home, they live a pure and celibate life instead of enjoying the pleasures of desire. Although they have absorbed various treasures and properties, they are not attached to them. As they collect instruments of entertainment, rarities, and treasures, they try not to annoy sentient beings or make them worried and painful. These are the actions, characters, and forms of great bodhisattvas of nonregression.

(The Buddha described great bodhisattvas of nonregression who stay at home.)

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, all great bodhisattvas of nonregression have been kept and protected by the king of Vajrayaksa gods, who always think, ‘These great bodhisattvas will before long realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. I would like to follow and guard them always until they attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.’ During this period, because Vajrayaksa gods also always watch and protect them, no human and nonhuman beings can do harm to them; no heavenly deities, demons, Brahmas, and other sentient beings of the world can hinder them pursuing the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. Because of this cause and condition, these bodhisattvas’ bodies and minds always stay in peace and stability, not harmed or disturbed until attaining the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. Well-Appearing One, these great bodhisattvas have the perfect worldly five roots, namely, the eye, ear, nose, tongue, and body roots. They also have the perfect five roots beyond the world, namely, the roots of belief, diligence, mindfulness, concentration, and wisdom. Well-Appearing One, these great bodhisattvas have perfect bodies and limbs, and their appearances are solemn, brilliant, and in great dignity. The merits and virtues of their minds will grow and increase each time their correct thinking arises, and will continue to progress until attaining the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. Well-Appearing One, if great bodhisattvas have achieved such actions, characters, and forms, you must know that they are the great bodhisattvas of nonregression.

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, all great bodhisattvas of nonregression always behave as superior gentlepersons instead of inferior ones.”

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, “Why do all great bodhisattvas always behave as superior gentlepersons rather than inferior ones?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “These great bodhisattvas have no more vexations. Their virtuous dharmas increase consistently until they achieve the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. Their minds remain in freedom from chaos, distraction, and wandering at all times, so I will say that these great bodhisattvas always behave as superior gentlepersons.

(The Buddha explained why great bodhisattvas of nonregression behave as superior gentlepersons.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, all great bodhisattvas of nonregression will possess an intention to pursue the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. They will not stay away from this aspiration. They constantly cultivate pure livelihood and do not practice inappropriate livelihood such as putting curses on people, as a fortune teller or a witch doctor. They will not put a curse on ghosts or deities to invite reputation and money, nor encourage others to ask deities or ghosts for a prophecy. They do not put a curse on men and women, adults and children, animals, and ghosts to make something strange happen. They do not foretell one's lifespan, property, official position, and the relationship between man and woman. They do not worry about weather, prosperity, poverty, good or bad luck, and like or dislike to confusing sentient beings. They do not make herbal medicine by chanting magical spells, practice medical treatments in evil ways, try to flatter and please high-ranking officials, pass on requests to them for others, or pretend to be someone's relatives and friends to gain personal fame and benefits. They do not watch men and women with a contaminated mind when they are playing, laughing, and talking together in fun. They do not make offerings respectfully to the ghosts and deities either. Therefore, I say these great bodhisattvas are superior gentlepersons instead of inferior gentlepersons. Why? These great bodhisattvas know very well that the natures and phenomena of all dharmas are empty. In this emptiness, they do not see the phenomena. Because they do not see the phenomena, they will stay far away from all kinds of evil livelihood and negative practices of spells, medicines, and divinations. What they solely look for is the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, so that they can benefit all sentient beings. These are the actions, characters, and forms of great bodhisattvas of nonregression.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, all great bodhisattvas of nonregression have gained great skill in writing and the techniques of the world, but they are not deeply imbued with them. Why? These great bodhisattvas have known very well that all dharmas are empty in the final analysis. In emptiness all writings and techniques of the world are unattainable. Besides, many writings and techniques of the world are defiled by evil livelihood, so they choose not to do them although they know how to do them. You must know, Well-Appearing One, these great bodhisattvas also know very well about the other-path books and discourses of the world, but they are not attached to them either. Why? These great bodhisattvas know very well that the natures and phenomena of all dharmas are empty, and in this emptiness no books and discourses

are attainable. Besides, the books and discourses of the world have spoken either too much or too little, many are not in accord with the bodhisattva path, and some are defiled and nonsensical, so the great bodhisattvas know them but do not enjoy them. These are also the actions, characters, and forms of great bodhisattvas of nonregression.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, there are more qualities that distinguish great bodhisattvas of nonregression from the regressive ones. I will let you know now. Please listen to me carefully and reflect on them well!"

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

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, "When practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, great bodhisattvas of nonregression are thoroughly aware that all dharmas are nonexistent, but they will not stay far away from the aspiration to the great bodhi. In addition, they do not like to contemplate, investigate, and argue about various aggregates, spheres, and realms. Why? They have reflected on and understood the empty natures and phenomena of various aggregates, spheres, and realms and understood them very well.

"You must know, Well-Appearing One, these great bodhisattvas do not like to contemplate, investigate, and argue about people's affairs either. Why? These great bodhisattvas have reflected on and understood the empty natures and phenomena of all people very well.

"You must know, Well-Appearing One, these great bodhisattvas do not like to contemplate, investigate, and argue about the kings' affairs. Why? The great bodhisattvas, who have dwelled in empty original nature, do not see the forms of superior class, inferior class, nobler class, or lower class.

"You must know, Well-Appearing One, these great bodhisattvas do not like to contemplate, investigate, and argue about the robbers' affairs. Why? These great bodhisattvas, who have dwelled in empty particular characteristics, do not see the forms of gaining, loss, and robbery.

“You must know, Well-Appearing One, these great bodhisattvas do not like to argue about military affairs. Why? These great bodhisattvas, who have dwelled in empty original nature, do not see the forms of many, few, gathering, and dispersing.

“You must know, Well-Appearing One, these great bodhisattvas do not like to contemplate, investigate, and argue about war or fighting. Why? These great bodhisattvas, who have dwelled in empty realness of all dharmas, do not see the forms of strength, weakness, love, and hatred.

“You must know, Well-Appearing One, these great bodhisattvas do not like to contemplate, investigate, and argue about man and woman. Why? These great bodhisattvas, who have dwelled in the emptiness of all dharmas, do not see the forms of fondness of beauty and dislike of ugliness.

“You must know, Well-Appearing One, these great bodhisattvas do not like to contemplate, investigate, and argue about the villages where people live. Why? These great bodhisattvas, who have dwelled in the emptiness of all dharmas, do not see the forms of increase, decrease, living together, and separation.

“Well-Appearing One, you must know that these great bodhisattvas do not like to contemplate, investigate, or argue about the cities. Why? These great bodhisattvas, who have dwelled in emptiness of all dharmas, do not see the forms of absorbing, nonabsorbing, like, and dislike.

“Well-Appearing One, you must know that these great bodhisattvas do not like to contemplate, investigate, and argue about the country territories. Why? These great bodhisattvas have dwelled peacefully in reality and do not see the forms of the dharmas belonging to or not belonging to a country.

“Well-Appearing One, you must know that these great bodhisattvas do not like to contemplate, investigate, and argue about the perfect physical marks. Why? These great bodhisattvas have dwelled peacefully in formlessness and do not see the forms of differences between perfect and imperfect marks.

"Well-Appearing One, you must know that these great bodhisattvas do not like to contemplate, investigate, and argue about the 'I,' the sentient being, and so forth, and the knower and the viewer. Why? These great bodhisattvas have dwelled in emptiness in the final analysis and do not see the different or not different forms of the 'I,' the sentient being, and so forth, and the viewer.

"Well-Appearing One, you must know that these great bodhisattvas do not like to contemplate, investigate, and argue about all these affairs in the world; rather, they like to contemplate, investigate, and argue about prajna paramita. Why? The fathomless prajna paramita is far away from forms and can realize the unsurpassed great bodhi.

(The Buddha explained why great bodhisattvas of nonregression do not like to contemplate or talk about affairs in the world. They instead like to think and talk about prajna paramita because it is far away from forms.)

"Well-Appearing One, you must know that these great bodhisattvas have not been far away from the intention correspondent with the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. When cultivating giving paramita, they stay away from stinginess and greed. When cultivating pure-precept paramita, they stay away from precept violation. When cultivating forbearance paramita, they stay away from hatred and anger. When cultivating diligence, they stay away from laziness and tiredness. When cultivating meditation paramita, they stay away from distraction and restlessness. When cultivating prajna paramita, they stay away from wisdom abuse.

"Well-Appearing One, you must know that these great bodhisattvas have dwelled in the emptiness of all dharmas. They love and enjoy correct dharmas and dislike incorrect dharmas. Although they have dwelled in emptiness of nonattainment, they always admire and acclaim the merits and virtues of the triple gem.

"Well-Appearing One, you must know that these great bodhisattvas have practiced the one-taste form of realness and dharma realm of all dharmas, but they love to praise publicly the various merits and virtues of realness.

“Well-Appearing One, you must know that these great bodhisattvas know that all dharmas are empty in the final analysis, but they love virtuous friends and dislike not virtuous friends. The virtuous friends are the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones and the great bodhisattvas. The voice-hearers and self-enlightened ones who can teach and establish well sentient beings and guide them to move toward the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi are also the virtuous friends.

(The Buddha defined the meaning of virtuous friends.)

“Well-Appearing One, you must know that these great bodhisattvas always love to visit with all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones to listen to their teachings of correct dharma. If they know that the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones are currently teaching correct dharma in some other worlds, they will be reborn there by the powers of their aspiration, make offerings respectfully to esteem and acclaim them, and listen to and accept the correct dharma.

“Well-Appearing One, you must know that these great bodhisattvas have never been far away from the mindfulness of the Buddha or the intention to hear the correct dharma day and night. Because of this cause and condition, they will ride on the powers of aspiration to be reborn in the land where the Buddha, World-Honored One, is currently teaching correct dharma, or they will ride on their supernatural powers to go and hear the dharma. Because of this cause and condition, these bodhisattvas will never be away from the Buddha wherever they are reborn. They thus can always hear correct dharma without interruption.

“Well-Appearing One, you must know that these great bodhisattvas can initiate meditations and various formless concentrations anytime; but to bring benefits and happiness to all sentient beings, they will also initiate a mind to be reborn in the realm of desire, and expediently and skillfully teach sentient beings the path of the ten virtuous karmas. They can follow their powers of aspiration to appear in the Buddha land in the realm of desire. They will make offerings respectfully to esteem and acclaim various Buddhas, World-Honored Ones, listen to correct dharma, and cultivate various superior actions there. These are also the actions, characters, and forms of great bodhisattvas of nonregression.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, all great bodhisattvas of nonregression consistently practice giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramira; 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 liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration; the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations; various superior 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; great loving-kindness, great compassion, great joy, and great equanimity; staying in correct mindfulness and dwelling in equanimity at all times; and the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena. They consistently practice all great bodhisattva actions and always pursue the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas.

"Well-Appearing One, you must know that these great bodhisattvas are always not skeptical about their own stage, so they will not think, 'I am nonregressive or I am not nonregressive.' Why? These great bodhisattvas do not see any dharma regressive or nonregressive in the pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.

"Well-Appearing One, you must know that these great bodhisattvas are not skeptical or puzzled about the dharma of their own stage. Why? These great bodhisattvas have thoroughly understood and realized the dharma of their own stage.

"Well-Appearing One, like the stream-enterers, once-returners, nonreturners, arhats, self-enlightened ones, and the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones, who are not skeptical or puzzled about the effect of their own stage, so the great bodhisattvas, who have known and seen intuitively the dharma, are not skeptical and puzzled about various dharmas absorbed by the stage of nonregression in which they dwell.

"Well-Appearing One, you must know that these great bodhisattvas have dwelled in the stage of nonregression, assisted sentient beings to mature, dignified and purified Buddha lands, and cultivated various merits and virtues. Once demonic hindrances appear, they are aware of it immediately, so they will not follow the powers of demons. They can destroy various demonic hindrances so the merits and virtues that they are cultivating will not be harmed.

"Well-Appearing One, you must know that the mind creating karma and causing suffering without interruption will not cease even after the end of one's life. Why? The powers of karma increase as it rolls and cannot be overcome by later other minds even after the end of one's life. So are the great bodhisattvas' powers when their minds dwell firmly in the state that they are currently in; that is, their minds will remain motionless and without differentiation, and cannot be moved by all heavenly beings, human beings, asuras, and so forth. Why? These great bodhisattvas' minds are more solid and firmer than all heavenly beings, human beings, demons, Brahmas, asuras, and so forth of the world. Why? The great bodhisattvas have entered onto the bodhisattva path of nonarising and stayed in a state of nonregression. They have also attained superior supernatural powers of bodhisattva to assist sentient beings to mature and dignify and purify Buddha lands. They have made offerings respectfully to esteem and acclaim various Buddhas, World-Honored Ones, and their disciples from one Buddha land to the other. They have listened to Buddha dharma in various Buddhas' places, planted virtuous roots there, and inquired the bodhisattvas there about the meanings of the dharma.

"Well-Appearing One, you must know that these great bodhisattvas have dwelled in their current stage. Once demonic hindrances arise, they are alert and aware right away, so, they will not follow the demonic way to satisfy demons' wishes. Rather, they will expediently collect those demonic affairs and put them together, and then in a single attack destroy them all. They have no puzzlement or doubt about their current stages. Why? They know that all dharmas are absorbed in reality. They also fully understand that reality is neither one nor many, and there is no differentiation in it. Because they have no puszzle and doubts about reality, they have no hesitation about their current stages.

"Well-Appearing One, you must know that if great bodhisattvas receive rebirth in another form, they will not regress in reality; that is, they will not fall back to stay in the stage of the

voice-hearer or the stage of the self-enlightened one. Why? These great bodhisattvas fully understand that the particular characteristics of all dharmas are empty, and in emptiness they do not see any dharma arise or extinguish, or any dharma become contaminated or purified.

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

"Well-Appearing One, you must know, if great bodhisattvas dwell in their current stage and do not follow other conditions, they will not be harmed or destroyed by anyone. Why? It is because they have achieved the perfect knowledge of motionlessness and nonregression; they cannot be moved by any negative conditions. These are also the actions, characters, and forms of great bodhisattvas of nonregression.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, an evil demon pretended to be the Buddha, came to said to great bodhisattvas, 'Now you must pursue arhat effect to permanently terminate all flaws and enter nirvana. You have not been granted the prophecy of attaining the great bodhi, nor have you realized and attained dharma forbearance of nonarising. You do not possess the qualities of great bodhisattva of nonregression, so the Thus-Comer will not confer on you the prophecy of attaining the great bodhi in the future. Only those who have achieved the actions, characters, and forms of great bodhisattva of nonregression will be conferred such prophecy.' After hearing these words, the great bodhisattvas were not frightened, scared, and sinking, nor did they withdraw. They must have realized, 'I had been conferred in the past by the Buddha the prophecy of attaining the great bodhi. Why? Bodhisattvas who have achieved such superior dharmas are definitely conferred by Thus-Comer the prophecy of attaining the great bodhi. I had achieved such superior dharmas in the past, why didn't Thus-Comer confer on me this prophecy? Therefore, I must have been conferred such prophecy in the past." These are also great bodhisattvas of nonregression.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, an evil demon or messenger pretended to be the Buddha and came to confer on bodhisattvas the prophecy of attaining the stage of voice-hearer or the stage of self-enlightened one, and said, 'Why do you bother to suffer in reincarnation and

pursue the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi? You must realize and attain nirvana without remainder quickly to leave birth and death forever and enjoy ultimate peace and blessing.' After hearing these words, the bodhisattvas thought, 'This must be a demon or messenger pretending to be a Buddha to disturb my mind by conferring on me the prophecy of attaining voice-hearer or the self-enlightened one, trying to draw me back from the pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. Why? No Buddha will teach bodhisattvas to discard the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi and turn to set voice-hearer or self-enlightened one as destination.' These are also the actions, characters, and forms of great bodhisattvas who are not regressive.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, a demon or messenger pretended to be the Buddha and said to bodhisattvas, 'The great-vehicle sutras that you have accepted and embraced are not taught by the Buddha or his disciples; they are counterfeited by evil demons or other-path believers. You should not accept, embrace, read, and recite them.' Upon hearing these words, the bodhisattvas thought, 'This must be the evil demon or follower who wanted to hinder me from pursuing the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi when they said that these fathomless sutras are not taught by the Buddha or his disciples. Why? No one can attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi apart from these sutras.'

"Well-Appearing One, you must know, these great bodhisattvas have dwelled peacefully in the stage of nonregression, and various Buddhas in the past had conferred on them the prophecy of attaining the great bodhi. Why? They possess various features that great bodhisattvas of nonregression should have. If bodhisattvas achieve these actions, characters, and forms, they must have been conferred by the Buddha the prophecy of attaining the great bodhi in the future. They must have reached the stage of nonregression so they are aware of demonic hindrance. These are the actions, characters, and forms of great bodhisattvas of nonregression.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, all great bodhisattvas of nonregression will risk their lives to protect and support correct dharma, not to mention they will also risk their treasures, properties, friends, and family to protect the correct dharma. These great bodhisattvas always think, 'I would rather renounce relatives, friends, treasures, properties, and my own life, but I will never renounce the correct dharma of

the Buddhas. Why? The relatives, friends, treasures, properties, and life can be easily obtained in each of one's lives to come, but one can encounter correct dharma of the Buddhas only once in hundreds of thousands of koti nayuta kalpas. Once encountering and attaining the correct dharma, you will gain great benefits and happiness for a very long time. Therefore, I definitely should keep and protect it diligently and assiduously.' Well-Appearing One, when protecting correct dharma, the great bodhisattvas must have thought, 'I protect correct dharma not only for the correct dharma of one Buddha, two Buddhas, or hundreds of thousands of Buddhas, but for the correct dharma of all Buddhas of the ten directions in the past, future, and present, so the correct dharma will not be damaged.'"

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "What is the correct dharma of all Buddhas? How do great bodhisattvas willingly protect and support correct dharma at the risk of losing their treasures, properties, relatives, friends, and life?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "As all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones teach the emptiness of all dharmas for bodhisattvas, they are teaching the correct dharma of all Buddhas. Some foolish criticized and slandered, and argued that this is not the dharma, not the vinaya, namely the laws and precepts for monastics, and not the holy teaching given by the teacher of heavenly and human beings. They further asserted that cultivating and learning this dharma cannot attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi or realize permanent tranquility, peace, and happiness of nirvana. Therefore, great bodhisattvas want to willingly risk their treasures, properties, relatives, friends, bodies, and lives to support and protect this dharma. They often think, 'The emptiness of all dharmas that the Thus-Comer teaches is a real refuge that all sentient beings should take. If bodhisattvas cultivate and learn it, they will realize the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly. They will bring relief to all sentient beings to let them get rid of birth, old age, illness, and death and attain ultimate and permanent happiness of nirvana. So, I should risk all my treasures, properties, relatives, friends, and even my life to support and protect this dharma.' The great bodhisattvas will think again, 'I also count as a Buddha in the future. I have been conferred by the Buddha the prophecy of attaining the great bodhi in the future. Because of this cause and condition, the correct dharma of various Buddhas is my dharma; I should risk my body, life, treasures, properties, relatives, and friends to support and protect the dharma. When I become a

Buddha in the future, I will also teach the emptiness of all dharmas for sentient beings.' Well-Appearing One, these great bodhisattvas have seen the justice and benefits of the dharma, so they will support and protect correct dharma even if they need to sacrifice their bodies, lives, treasures, properties, relatives, and friends. They will do this tirelessly until they attain the bodhi. These are the actions, characters, and forms of great bodhisattvas who are not regressive.

(The Buddha explained the meaning of correct dharma and why bodhisattvas are willing to protect and support it at the risk of their properties, lives, and so forth.)

Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, when hearing the correct dharma teachings given by various Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones, all great bodhisattvas of nonregression will not be skeptical or puzzled. They will retain them in their minds and will not forget until they attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. Why? These great bodhisattvas have already obtained the expedient and skillful dharani."

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "What kind of dharani have these great bodhisattvas obtained so they will not be skeptical or puzzled and will not forget after hearing the correct dharma teachings given by the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "These great bodhisattvas have obtained the expedient and skillful dharani and so forth, so when they hear the correct dharma teachings given by the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones, they are not skeptical or puzzled; they rather will accept and embrace them, and retain them in mindfulness until they attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi as if the Buddha were consistently teaching in front of them."

At that time, Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, "Will these great bodhisattvas not be skeptical and puzzled, but accept and embrace without losing them only upon hearing the correct dharma teachings given by the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones, or will they be so too upon hearing the correct dharma teachings given by bodhisattvas, self-enlightened ones, voice-hearers, deities, dragons, yaksas, humans, and nonhumans?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “As these great bodhisattvas hear the words, voices, and meanings of the truth given by all sentient beings, they will fully understand them without doubt and puzzle and remember them in the endless future. Why? It is because these great bodhisattvas have acquired the expedient and skillful hearing-and-remembering dharani and can retain what they hear without losing them. These are the actions, characters, and forms of great bodhisattvas of nonregression.”

(The Buddha taught about the great bodhisattvas of nonregression who have achieved the dharani of hearing and remembering.)

Chapter 21

The Forms of Emptiness

Section 1

(In the Third Assembly)

At that time, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One said to the Buddha, “World-Honored One, these great bodhisattvas of nonregression have achieved such broad, great, numberless, boundless, and inconceivable unusual merits and virtues.”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “Yes, it is as you say. Why? These great bodhisattvas have achieved superior, immeasurable, and boundless perfect knowledge not shared by voice-hearers and self-enlightened ones. Dwelling in this perfect knowledge, they can initiate superior four unhindered understandings. Because of these four unhindered understandings, no heavenly beings, human beings, asuras, and so forth of the world can challenge them and make them exhaust in wisdom and the talent of debate.”

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One said to the Buddha again, “The World-Honored One can teach about the actions, characters, and forms of great bodhisattvas of nonregression for as many kalpas as the sands of the Ganges. The Buddha’s teachings about the actions, characters, and forms achieved by great bodhisattvas of nonregression have manifested their immeasurable superior merits and virtues. We are pleading that the Thus-Comer, One Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened One will further teach about the locus of the fathomless meanings to let bodhisattvas dwell in them, so they can practice and fulfill quickly giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita; internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature; realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable; the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering; the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path; the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations; the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentration in sequence, and ten universal contemplations; the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration; the stages of great bodhisattva; all dharani gates and all samadhi gates; the five eyes and the six supernatural powers; the Buddha’s ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha’s wisdom and power; great loving-kindness, great compassion, great joy, and great equanimity; the thirty-two perfect major marks and the 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.”

(Well-Appearing One pledged Buddha to teach the locus of the essential meanings of the dharma for bodhisattvas.)

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, “Excellent, excellent! Now you can, on behalf of various great bodhisattvas, ask the Thus-Comer, One Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened One to teach the locus of the fathomless meaning so bodhisattvas can dwell in them and practice and fulfill quickly various merits and virtues. You must know, Well-Appearing One, the locus of the fathomless meaning is emptiness, formlessness, nonaspiration, no making, no arising, no extinction, freedom from contamination, nirvana, realness, dharma

realm, dharma nature, and reality. All these are the names for the locus of the fathomless meaning. You must know, Well-Appearing One, all these designated names of the locus of the fathomless meaning have shown that nirvana is the fathomless meaning."

(The Buddha taught the locus of the profound meanings of the bodhisattva path. They are emptiness, formlessness, nonaspiration, no making, no arising, no extinction, freedom from contamination, nirvana, realness, and so forth.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, "Is only nirvana named the fathomless meaning? Are there other dharmas also named the fathomless meaning?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "The rest of dharmas are also named the fathomless meaning. The aggregates of matter, feeling, and so forth, and consciousness are fathomless; the eye sphere, ear sphere, and so forth, and conscious sphere are fathomless; the sight sphere, sound sphere, and so forth, and mental-image sphere are fathomless; the eye realm, ear realm, and so forth, and conscious realm are fathomless; the sight realm, sound realm, and so forth, and mental-image realm are fathomless; the eye consciousness realm, ear consciousness realm, and so forth, and conscious consciousness realm are fathomless; the feelings produced by eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact are fathomless; the earth realm, water realm, and so forth, and consciousness realm are fathomless; cause and condition, consecutive thoughts, conditions that stimulate the mind, and the conditions that reinforce main causes are fathomless; ignorance, action, and so forth, and old age and death are fathomless; giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita are fathomless; internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature are fathomless; realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable are fathomless; the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering are fathomless; the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path are fathomless; the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations are fathomless; the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations are fathomless; the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration are fathomless; the stage of pure contemplation, stage of embryonic Buddha nature, and so forth, and stage of Thus-Comer

are fathomless; the stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilement, and so forth, and stage of dharma cloud are fathomless; the dharani gates and samadhi gates are fathomless; the five eyes and six supernatural powers are fathomless; the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power are fathomless; great loving-kindness, great compassion, great joy, and great equanimity are fathomless; the thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features are fathomless; staying in correct mindfulness and dwelling in equanimity at all times are fathomless; the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena are fathomless; the stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi are fathomless; all great bodhisattva actions and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas are also fathomless."

At that time, Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, "Why is the aggregate of matter fathomless? Why are the aggregates of feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness fathomless? And so on, why are all great bodhisattva actions and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas also fathomless?"

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

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, "Why is the realness of the aggregate of matter fathomless? Why is the realness of the aggregates of feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness fathomless? Why is the realness of all great bodhisattva actions fathomless? Why is the realness of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas fathomless?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "The realness of the aggregate of matter is not with or apart from the aggregate of matter, so it is fathomless; the realness of the aggregates

of feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness is not with or apart from the aggregates of feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness, so it is fathomless. And so on, the realness of all great bodhisattva actions is not with or apart from all great bodhisattva actions, so it is fathomless. The realness of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas is not with or apart from the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, so it is fathomless."

At that time, Well-Appearing One said to the Buddha, "The World-Honored One is unique, amazing, subtle, and expedient! He has negated the aggregates of matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness, and so on, and all great bodhisattva actions and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas to manifest nirvana. The World-Honored One is unique, amazing, subtle, and expedient! He has, for the sake of great bodhisattvas of nonregression, negated all dharmas of and beyond the world, all dharmas shared and not shared by the two vehicles, all flawed and flawless dharmas, all dharmas that invite and do not invite arguments, all guilty and not guilty dharmas, and all conditioned and unconditioned dharmas to manifest nirvana."

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "Yes, it is as you say. The World-Honored One is unique, amazing, subtle, and expedient! He has, for the sake of great bodhisattvas of nonregression, negated the aggregates of matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness, and so on, and all great bodhisattva actions and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas to manifest nirvana. The World-Honored One is unique, amazing, subtle, and expedient! He has, for the sake of great bodhisattvas of nonregression, negated all dharmas of and beyond the world, all dharmas shared and not shared by the two vehicles, all flawed and flawless dharmas, all dharmas that invite argument and do not invite argument, all guilty and not guilty dharmas, and all conditioned and unconditioned dharmas to manifest nirvana.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, great bodhisattvas should reflect on, measure, contemplate, and investigate carefully these profound meanings correspondent with the fathomless prajna paramita. They should think, 'Now I must dwell and learn as I am taught by the fathomless prajna paramita.'

"You must know, Well-Appearing One, if great bodhisattvas can reflect on, measure, contemplate, and investigate carefully the profound meanings correspondent with the fathomless

prajna paramita and dwell and learn as they are taught by the fathomless prajna paramita, then these great bodhisattvas will, because of their diligent cultivation and learning, initiate a single mindfulness based on the fathomless prajna paramita to absorb immeasurable, countless, and boundless virtuous roots, transcend numberless kalpas of reincarnation in birth and death, and realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly. If they can cultivate prajna paramita consistently without interruption, they will always dwell in the intention correspondent with the bodhi.

"A man in burning desire dated with a pretty woman, but the woman did not appear for some reason. This man's desire then became blazing. Well-Appearing One, what do you think about this? Where will the man's desire turn to?"

"World-Honored One, this man's desire will remain on the woman, and he will think, 'Why didn't she come to meet me?'"

"Well-Appearing One, what do you think about this? Is the man lusting after her day and night?"

"World-Honored One, yes, this man was quite driven by lust.

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, "If great bodhisattvas have initiated a single mindfulness to learn as they are taught by the fathomless prajna paramita, then the kalpas of reincarnation in birth and death that they transcend will be as many as the desires that this man has had in one day and night. You must know, Well-Appearing One, if these great bodhisattvas cultivate and learn by following the fathomless essential meanings of prajna paramita, they will immediately get rid of all flaws and sins that have hindered their pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. Therefore, the bodhisattvas will be able to realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly if they can cultivate and learn diligently and assiduously by following the fathomless prajna paramita. Well-Appearing One, if great bodhisattvas can dwell as the fathomless prajna paramita teaches, then the merits and virtues gained by them in one day and night will be too many to be contained by all Buddha worlds of the large threefold thousand-world that are as many as the sands of the Ganges in case the merits and virtues could be measured quantitatively. In comparison, the rest of the merits and virtues

filling as many Buddha worlds of the large thousand-world as the sands of the Ganges will be much less than those gained by these great bodhisattvas for one day and one night by one hundredth, one thousandth, one hundred-thousandth, and so forth, and one upanisadam-api."

(The Buddha taught why and how great bodhisattvas should cultivate prajna paramita with exceptionally attentive and powerful motivation.)

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Chapter 21

The Forms of Emptiness

Section 2

(In the Third Assembly)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, if great bodhisattvas stay away from the fathomless prajna paramita to practice giving to the triple gem, the Buddha, dharma, and sangha, for as many great kalpas as the sands of the Ganges, will they gain many blessings?"

Well-Appearing One replied, "The blessings will be many, World-Honored One. The blessings will be many, Well-Gone One. The blessings thus gained will be numberless, countless, boundless, inconceivable, and measureless."

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, "Yes. If great bodhisattvas stay in the fathomless prajna paramita and learn it as they are taught for one day and night, then the merits and virtues thus gained will be much more than the former ones by numberless and boundless times. Why? The fathomless prajna paramita is the vehicle for great bodhisattvas. By riding on this vehicle, great bodhisattvas can achieve the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly, then they can turn the wonderful dharma wheel to deliver sentient beings.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, if great bodhisattvas stay away from the fathomless prajna paramita to made offerings to stream-enterers, once-returners, non-returners, arhats, self-enlightened ones, bodhisattvas, and Thus-Comers for as many great kalpas as the sands of the Ganges, will they be much blessed?"

Well-Appearing One replied, "Very much, World-Honored One; very much, Well-Gone One. The blessings thus gained will be numberless, countless, boundless, inconceivable, and measureless."

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, “Yes. If great bodhisattvas stay in the fathomless prajna paramita and learn it as they are taught for one day and night, the merits and virtues thus gained will be much more than the former ones by numberless and boundless times. Why? Through the fathomless prajna paramita, great bodhisattvas can transcend the stage of the voice-hearer and the stage of self-enlightened one and enter onto the bodhisattva path of nonarising quickly. After that they will continue to cultivate great bodhisattva actions step by step, realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, and turn the wonderful dharma wheel to deliver sentient beings.

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, if great bodhisattvas stay away from the fathomless prajna paramita to cultivate giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna for as many great kalpas as the sands of the Ganges, will they be much blessed?”

Well-Appearing One replied, “Very much, World-Honored One; very much, Well-Gone One. The blessings thus gained will be numberless, countless, boundless, inconceivable, and measureless.”

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, “Yes. If great bodhisattvas stay in the fathomless prajna paramita as they are taught to cultivate and learn diligently giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna for one day and night, then the merits and virtues thus gained will be much more than the former ones by numberless and boundless times. Why? The fathomless prajna paramita is the mother of great bodhisattvas. Why? The fathomless prajna paramita can give birth to all great bodhisattvas, and great bodhisattvas can fulfill Buddha dharma because of the fathomless prajna paramita.

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, if great bodhisattvas stay away from the fathomless prajna paramita to practice dharma giving to all sentient beings, will they be much blessed?”

Well-Appearing One replied, “Very much, World-Honored One; very much, Well-Gone One. The blessings thus gained will be numberless, countless, boundless, inconceivable, and measureless.”

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, “Yes. If great bodhisattvas stay in the fathomless prajna paramita to practiced giving to all sentient beings for one day and night, then

the merits and virtues thus gained will be much more than the former ones by numberless and boundless times. Why? If great bodhisattvas stay away from the fathomless prajna paramita, they will be away from the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. If great bodhisattvas do not stay away from the fathomless prajna paramita, they will not be away from the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. Therefore, Well-Appearing One, if great bodhisattvas would like to attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, they should not stay away from the fathomless prajna paramita.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, if great bodhisattvas stay far away from the fathomless prajna paramita to cultivate, for as many great kalpas as the sands of the Ganges, 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 inconceivable; dwell peacefully in the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering; cultivate the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path; cultivate the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations; cultivate the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration; cultivate the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations; cultivate the stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilement, 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 great loving-kindness, great compassion, great joy, and great equanimity; 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; and cultivate the rest of boundless Buddha dharma, will they be much blessed?"

Well-Appearing One replied, "Very much, World-Honored One; very much, Well-Gone One. The blessings thus gained will be numberless, countless, boundless, inconceivable, and measureless."

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, “Yes. If great bodhisattvas dwell in the fathomless prajna paramita as they are taught to cultivate giving, pure precept forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna paramitas, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, the perfect knowledge of all phenomena for one day and night, then the merits and virtues thus gained will be much more than the former ones by numberless and boundless times. Why? If great bodhisattvas do not stay away from the fathomless prajna paramita, it does not make sense to say that they will regress in the pursuit of the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. If great bodhisattvas stay away from the fathomless prajna paramita, it is for sure that they will regress in the pursuit of the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. Therefore, Well-Appearing One, if great bodhisattvas would like to attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, they should not stay away from the fathomless prajna paramita.

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, if great bodhisattvas stay away from the fathomless prajna paramita to cultivate, for as many great kalpas as the sands of the Ganges, various kinds of property giving and dharma giving, live in a quiet and spacious place to reflect on various bliss-inviting karmas cultivated by them previously, and transfer the merits and virtues along with sentient beings equally toward the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, then will they be much blessed?”

Well-Appearing One replied, “Very much, World-Honored One; very much, Well-Gone One. The blessings thus gained will be numberless, countless, boundless, inconceivable, and measureless.”

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, “Yes. If great bodhisattvas dwell in the fathomless prajna paramita as they are taught for one day and one night to cultivate various kinds of property giving and dharma giving, live in an quiet and spacious place to reflect on various bliss-inviting karmas cultivated by them previously, and transfer the merits and virtues along with sentient beings equally toward the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, then the merits and virtues thus gained will be much more than the former ones by numberless and boundless times. Why? The transference based on the fathomless prajna paramita is the unsurpassed one, while the transference apart from the fathomless prajna paramita is at most the second best one.

Therefore, Well-Appearing One, if great bodhisattvas would like to attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, they should transfer all bliss-inviting karmas that they have cultivated along with sentient beings equally toward the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi without being apart from the fathomless prajna paramita.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, if great bodhisattvas stay away from the fathomless prajna paramita to assemble, for as many great kalpas as the sands of the Ganges, all merits, virtues, and virtuous roots caused by all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones and their disciples in the past, future, and present, joyfully participate in them and then transfer he merits and virtues thus derived along with all sentient beings equally toward the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, then what do you think about this? Will these great bodhisattvas be much blessed because of this cause and condition?"

Well-Appearing One replied, "Very much, World-Honored One; very much, Well-Gone One. The blessings thus gained will be numberless, countless, boundless, inconceivable, and measureless."

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, "Yes. If great bodhisattvas dwell in the fathomless prajna paramita for one day and one night as they are taught to assemble all merits, virtues, and virtuous roots of all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones and their disciples in the past, future, and present, put them together and joyfully participate in them, and transfer the merits and virtues thus derived along with all sentient beings equally toward the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, then the merits and virtues thus gained will be much more than the former ones by numberless and boundless times. Why? All merits, virtues, and the virtuous roots caused by joyful participation and transference will always appear as the most valuable ones if accomplished based on the fathomless prajna paramita. Therefore, Well-Appearing One, if great bodhisattvas would like to attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, they should not stay away from the fathomless prajna paramita when joyfully participating and transferring the virtuous roots toward the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi."

(The Buddha taught why staying in the fathomless prajna paramita to cultivate superior dharmas for one day and night would gain much more blessings than cultivating superior dharmas for as many kalpas as the sands of the Ganges if done apart from the fathomless prajna paramita.)

At that time, Well-Appearing One said to the Buddha, “As the Buddha says, all actions are caused by differentiation and delusions, and none of them is real. How can great bodhisattvas gain numberless, countless, and boundless blessings? World-Honored One, various bliss-inviting karmas produced by differentiation should not give rise to correct views of the world, assist practitioners to enter onto the correct path of nonarising or attain stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.”

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, “Yes, it is as you say. When practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, great bodhisattvas understand that all dharmas are caused by differentiation; they are empty and nonexistent, deluded and unreal. Why? Great bodhisattvas have learned very well internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature and dwelled peacefully in these kinds of emptiness. They have contemplated accurately and realized that all dharmas are caused by differentiation and are empty, nonexistent, deluded, and unreal. Because of this reason, great bodhisattvas will not stay far away from the fathomless prajna paramita. Because they do not stay away from the fathomless prajna paramita, they will gain numberless, countless, and boundless blessings. As a result, their correct views grow, guiding them to enter onto the correct path of nonarising and further attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi they pursue.”

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, “Could you please clarify the distinctions between ‘the numberless,’ ‘the countless,’ and ‘the boundless’?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “The numberless means the number is unattainable in the dharmas of the past, future, and present. The countless means the counting is unattainable in the conditioned and the unconditioned realms. The boundless means the boundary is unattainable and measureless.”

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, “Are there causes and conditions that indicate matter is numberless, countless, and boundless and feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness are also numberless, countless, and boundless?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “There are the causes and conditions to indicate that matter is numberless, countless, and boundless and feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness are also numberless, countless, and boundless.”

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, “Based on what causes and conditions to indicate that matter is numberless, countless, and boundless, and feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness are also numberless, countless, and boundless?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “The nature of matter is empty, so matter is numberless, countless, and boundless. The natures of feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness are empty, so they are numberless, countless, and boundless.”

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, “Are only the natures of matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness empty, or are the natures of all dharmas also empty?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “Didn’t I say that all dharmas are empty?”

Well-Appearing One said, “The Buddha did often say that all dharmas are empty, but sentient beings do not know, see, or realize it, so I ask again. World-Honored One, the empty nature of all dharmas is endless, and is also numberless, countless, and boundless. World-Honored One, in the emptiness of all dharmas, the endless is unattainable, the numberless is unattainable, the countless is unattainable, and the boundless is also unattainable. Owing to this cause and condition, the meanings and the words of the endless, numberless, countless, and boundless are not different.”

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, “Yes, it is as you say. The endless, numberless, countless, and boundless do not differ in meanings and words. They all manifest one thing: all dharmas are empty. You must know, Well-Appearing One, the truth of the emptiness of all dharmas is unspeakable, but the Thus-Comer expediently describes it as endless, numberless,

countless, boundless, empty, formless, no aspiration, no making, no doing, no arising, no extinction, freedom from contamination, permanent extinction, nirvana, realness, or reality. All these names are used expediently by Thus-Coner in his teachings, but they are not different in meanings."

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One so said to the Buddha, "World-Honored One, it is so unique, expedient, and skillful! The real nature of all dharmas cannot be taught or spoken, but for the sake of sentient beings, Thus-Comer has taught and manifested it expediently. My understanding of the meanings taught by the Buddha is that the real nature of all dharmas is unspeakable."

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, "Yes, the real nature of all dharmas is unspeakable. Why? All dharma natures are empty in the final analysis, and the emptiness in the final analysis cannot be taught or spoken."

At that time, Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, "Can the unspeakable meanings increase or decrease?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "The unspeakable meanings neither increase nor decrease."

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One said to the Buddha again, "If the unspeakable meanings do not increase or decrease, then giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita should not increase or decrease; the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path should not increase or decrease; the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentration should not increase or decrease; the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration should not increase or decrease; the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations should not increase or decrease; the stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilement, and so forth, and stage of dharma cloud should not increase or decrease; all dharani gates and all samadhi gates should not increase or decrease; the five eyes and six supernatural powers should not increase or decrease; the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and

power should not increase or decrease; great loving-kindness, great compassion, great joy, and great equanimity should not increase or decrease; staying in correct mindfulness and dwelling in equanimity at all times should not increase or decrease; and the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena should not increase or decrease."

"World-Honored One, if giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena do not increase or decrease, then giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena would be nonexistent. If giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena are nonexistent, how can great bodhisattvas cultivate giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena and realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "As the unspeakable meanings do not increase or decrease, giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena do not increase or decrease either. As the unspeakable meanings are nonexistent, giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita are also nonexistent. When practicing the fathomless prajna paramita and dwelling peacefully in the expedient skillfulness of prajna paramita, great bodhisattvas do not think, 'prajna paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and giving paramita increase or decrease;' they rather think, 'prajna paramita, meditation paramita, and so forth, and giving paramita are only the names and the concepts.' When cultivating giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita, these great bodhisattvas will stay in a mind in accord with giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita to initiate virtuous roots, and transfer the mind and the virtuous roots along with all sentient beings equally toward the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi as the Buddha did when he initiated transference toward the unsurpassed bodhi in a subtle and profound way. He realized the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi because of the power of the expedient and skillful transference."

At that time, Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "What is the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “The realness of all dharmas is the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.”

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, “What is the realness of various dharmas that is named the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “The realness of the aggregates of matter, feeling, and so forth, and consciousness is named the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. The realness of the eye sphere, ear sphere, and so forth, and conscious sphere is named the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. The realness of the sight sphere, sound sphere, and so forth, and mental-image sphere is named the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. The realness of the eye realm, ear realm, and so forth, and conscious realm is named the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. The realness of the sight realm, sound realm, and so forth, and mental-image realm is named the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. The realness of the eye consciousness realm, ear consciousness realm, and so forth, and conscious consciousness realm is named the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. The realness of the eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact is named the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. The realness of the feelings produced by eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact is named the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. The realness of the earth realm, water realm, and so forth, and consciousness realm is named the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. The realness of cause and condition, consecutive thoughts, conditions that stimulate the mind, and the conditions that reinforce main causes is named the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. The realness of ignorance, action, and so forth, and old age and death is named the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. The realness of giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita is named the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. The realness of internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature is named the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. The realness of the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering is named the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. The realness of the four bases of mindfulness, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and noble eightfold path is named the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. The realness of the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations is named the

unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. The realness of the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration is named the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. The realness of the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations is named the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. The realness of the stage of pure contemplation, stage of embryonic Buddha nature and so forth, and stage of Thus-Comer is named the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. The realness of the stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilement, and so forth, and stage of dharma cloud is named the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. The realness of the dharani gates and samadhi gates is named the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. The realness of the five eyes and six supernatural powers is named the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. The realness of the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power is named the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. The realness of great loving-kindness, great compassion, great joy, and great equanimity is named the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. The realness of the thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features is named the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. The realness of staying in correct mindfulness and dwelling in equanimity at all times is named the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. The realness of stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi is named the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. The realness of the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena is named the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. The realness of the birth and death and the realness of nirvana are the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.

(The Buddha taught that the realness of all dharmas is the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.)

"You must know, Well-Appearing One, because the realness of all dharmas does not increase or decrease, the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas does not increase or decrease. You must know, Well-Appearing One, great bodhisattvas never stay far away from the fathomless prajna paramita; they always dwell peacefully in the realness of all dharmas and have not seen any dharma increase or decrease. Because of this cause and condition, as the unspeakable meanings do not increase or decrease, giving paramita, pure-

precept paramita, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena do not increase or decrease either. Well-Appearing One, all great bodhisattvas have relied on nonincrease, nondecrease, and nonattainment as expediency to practice the fathomless prajna paramita. Through this gate, great bodhisattvas can accumulate sufficient merits and virtues to realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi."

(Realizing the self-nature of all dharmas as empty, great bodhisattvas become free from attachment to all dharmas, they then practice various holy dharmas in accord with expediency of prajna paramita to reach the unsurpassed bodhi swiftly. This is the profound meanings of bodhisattva path.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "Do initial minds or latter minds of great bodhisattvas realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi? World-Honored One, when their initial minds arise, their latter minds have not arisen yet. These two phases of arising are not connected. When their latter minds arise, former minds have passed away, these two phases of arising are not connected either. Looking at these two phases of minds and the associated images, we can reason that they are not connected. Then, how can one accumulate virtuous roots? If virtuous roots cannot be accumulated, how can virtuous roots grow to help great bodhisattvas realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi?"

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, "Let me give you some analogies, so you can easily understand their meanings. Those who are wise will gain insightful understanding when they hear the examples. Well-Appearing One, what do you think about this? When a lamp is burning, is the wick ignited by the first flame or the flames that come after?"

Well-Appearing One replied, "My understanding is that the wick is ignited not by the initial flame or apart from the initial flame; it is not ignited by the latter flames or apart from the latter flames."

The Buddha asked Well-Appearing One, "What do you think about this? Is the wick ignited when the lamp is burning?"

Well-Appearing One replied, "It looks so."

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, “So do great bodhisattvas. When practicing the fathomless prajnta paramita, the great bodhisattvas realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi not because of their initial minds or apart from their initial minds. They realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi not because of their later minds or apart from their later minds. But they can practice the fathomless prajna paramita, foster virtuous roots to let them grow and become perfect, so they will realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas have practiced the fathomless prajna paramita beginning with initial mind and fulfilling the tenth stage with last minds, and finally realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.”

At that time, Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, “What ten stages have great bodhisattvas cultivated, learned, and fulfilled so that they are able to realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “Great bodhisattvas will cultivate and fulfill the stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilement, and so forth, and the stage of dharma cloud to realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. They will also learn and fulfill the stage of pure contemplation, stage of embryonic Buddha nature, and so forth, and the stage of Thus-Comer to realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. You must know, Well-Appearing One, when great bodhisattvas cultivate and fulfill the ten stages to realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, they neither grasp nor separate from the initial minds, neither grasp nor separate from the later minds. They just diligently and attentively cultivate, learn, and fulfill the ten stages to realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.”

(The Buddha again emphasized that great bodhisattvas are not attached to the thoughts of initial minds or later minds when aspiring to the unsurpassed bodhi. They just do it diligently and attentively.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One said to the Buddha, “The essential meanings of dependent origination that the Thus-Comer teaches are extremely subtle, exquisite, and

fathomless. The meanings of dependent origination indicate that when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, great bodhisattvas adopt nonattainment as expediency to cultivate and learn the ten stages. When they realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, they neither grasp the initial mind nor separate from the initial mind, neither grasp the later minds nor separate from the later minds. They just begin with initial minds to practice the fathomless prajna paramita and fulfill the ten stages with later minds when they realize the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi."

The Buddha asked Well-Appearing One, "What do you think about this? As the mind extinguishes, will it arise again?"

Well-Appearing One replied, "No, World-Honored One. As the mind extinguishes, it will not arise again."

The Buddha asked Well-Appearing One, "What do you think about this? As the mind arises, will it extinguish?"

Well-Appearing One replied, "Yes, World-Honored One. As the mind arises, it will extinguish."

The Buddha asked Well-Appearing One, "What do you think about this? Will the thought of extinction endure?"

Well-Appearing One, "No, World-Honored One, it definitely will extinguish."

The Buddha asked Well-Appearing One, "What do you think about this? Is mind dwelling like the realness of mind?"

Well-Appearing One replied, "Yes, World-Honored One. The mind dwelling is like the realness of mind."

The Buddha asked Well-Appearing One, "What do you think about this? If mind dwelling is like realness, is mind dwelling as permanent as realness or as reality?"

Well-Appearing One replied, "No, World-Honored One, the mind dwelling is not as permanent as realness or reality."

The Buddha asked Well-Appearing One, “What do you think about this? Is realness of all dharmas extremely fathomless?”

Well-Appearing One replied, “Yes, World-Honored One. The realness of all dharmas is extremely fathomless.”

The Buddha asked Well-Appearing One, “What do you think about this? Is mind equivalent to realness?”

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

The Buddha asked Well-Appearing One, “What do you think about this? Is mind apart from realness?”

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

The Buddha asked Well-Appearing One, “What do you think about this? Is realness equivalent to the mind?”

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

The Buddha asked Well-Appearing One, “What do you think about this? Is realness apart from the mind?”

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

The Buddha asked Well-Appearing One, “What do you think about this? Can realness see realness?”

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

The Buddha asked Well-Appearing One, “What do you think about this? If great bodhisattvas can practice this way, do they practice the fathomless prajna paramita?”

Well-Appearing One replied, “Yes, World-Honored One. If great bodhisattvas can practice this way, they do practice the fathomless prajna paramita.”

The Buddha asked Well-Appearing One, “What do you think about this? If great bodhisattvas practice this way, where do they practice?”

Well-Appearing One replied, “If great bodhisattvas practice this way, they practice nowhere. Why? If great bodhisattvas practice the fathomless prajna paramita and dwell in realness, no mind will arise, and nowhere it arises. Why? If great bodhisattvas practice the fathomless prajna paramita and dwell in realness, there will be no arising in the present; the time of arising, the place of arising, and the one that arises are nonexistent.”

(The Buddha described the mental features of great bodhisattvas who practice various superior holy dharmas based on expediency of prajna paramita.)

The Buddha asked Well-Appearing One, “What do you think about this? When practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, what do great bodhisattvas practice?”

Well-Appearing One replied, “When practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas practice the ultimate superior meanings, within which, both the arising of the mind and the place where the mind arises do not exist.”

The Buddha asked Well-Appearing One, “What do you think about this? Do great bodhisattvas practice the forms without grasping the forms when they practice the fathomless prajna paramita?”

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

The Buddha asked Well-Appearing One, “What do you think about this? Do great bodhisattvas practice the ultimate meanings to negate the forms when they practice the fathomless prajna paramita?”

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

The Buddha asked Well-Appearing One, “What do you think about this? Do great bodhisattvas practice the ultimate meanings by thinking of negating the forms when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita?”

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

The Buddha asked Well-Appearing One, “Why do great bodhisattvas neither negate the forms nor think of negating the forms when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita?”

Well-Appearing One replied, “When practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas do not think, ‘I should negate the forms or should have such a thought.’ Nor do they think, ‘I should negate the formlessness or the thinking of negating the formlessness.’ Why? There is no differentiation in all kinds of dharmas.

“Furthermore, World-Honored One, although great bodhisattvas practice the fathomless prajna paramita without attachment to various differentiations, they still need to fulfill the immeasurable and boundless merits and virtues of the Buddha’s ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, four unhindered understandings, great loving-kindness, great compassion, great joy, great equanimity, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha’s wisdom and power before they can attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.”

“Furthermore, World-Honored One, great bodhisattvas can achieve the superior expedience and skillfulness, and neither grasp nor negate all dharmas. Why? They have realized that the particular characteristics of all dharmas are empty.

“Furthermore, World-Honored One, great bodhisattvas dwell in the emptiness of the particular characteristics of all dharmas, enter the three kinds of samadhi, and through the three kinds of samadhi to expediently assist sentient beings to mature.”

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

At that time, Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, “How do great bodhisattvas enter the three kinds of samadhi to assist sentient beings to mature?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “While dwelling in the samadhi of emptiness and observing that sentient beings mistakenly differentiate between the ‘I’ and the associated images, great bodhisattvas use the powers of expediency to guide them to dwell peacefully in the samadhi of emptiness. While dwelling in the samadhi of formlessness and observing that sentient beings mistakenly differentiate between various dharma forms, great bodhisattvas use the powers of expediency to guide them to dwell peacefully in the samadhi of

formlessness. While dwelling in the samadhi of nonaspiration and observing that sentient beings mistakenly differentiate between many aspirations that they prefer, great bodhisattvas thus use the powers of expediency to guide them to dwell peacefully in the samadhi of nonaspiration. Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas have practiced the fathomless prajna paramita and entered the three kinds of samadhi skillfully, so they can help expediently sentient beings and allow them to gain great benefits suitable for each of them."

(The Buddha affirmed Well-Appearing One's statement and further explained how great bodhisattvas assist sentient beings expediently through the three kinds of samadhi.)

At that time, Sariputra asked the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One, "If great bodhisattvas enter the three kinds of samadhi in their dreams, will that foster their cultivation of the fathomless prajna paramita?"

Well-Appearing One replied, "If entering the three kinds of samadhi will foster the cultivation of the fathomless prajna paramita when one is awake, it will also foster the cultivation when one is dreaming. Why? Being awake is not different from dreaming. Sariputra, if the cultivation of the fathomless prajna paramita is called the cultivation of the fathomless prajna paramita when one is awake, then the cultivation in dreams should also be called the cultivation of the fathomless prajna paramita. The same applies to the three kinds of samadhi in fostering the cultivation of the fathomless prajna paramita."

In the meantime, Sariputra said to Well-Appearing One, "As great bodhisattvas make karmas in their dreams, do the karmas make them gain or lose? The Buddha says that all dharmas are as illusory and unreal as dreams, then how can their karmas make them gain or lose? Why? It should not be the karmas made in the dreams that let them gain or lose; it should be the karmas happening in the dreams but being recalled when one is awake let them gain or lose."

Well-Appearing One replied, "One man killed a person when he was awake, then he recalled it in a dream and felt excited. Another man killed a person in a dream and felt excited when he was awake. What do you think about these two karmas?"

Sariputra said to Well-Appearing One, “Karma or thinking cannot arise without conditions; they arise only when conditions are available. Based on what conditions do karma and thinking in dreams arise?”

Well-Appearing One said, “Karma and thinking do not arise without conditions whether one is awake or dreaming. Karma and thinking only arise out of sufficient conditions. Why? Sariputra, when one sees, hears, feels, or realizes with awakening wisdom, karma and thinking will arise based on these conditions. It is in this case that contamination or purification arises. Without seeing, hearing, feeling, realization, or awakening wisdom, contamination and purification will not arise. So, we may realize that karma and thinking arise when conditions are available whether one is dreaming or awake. They will not arise otherwise.”

Meanwhile, Sariputra asked Well-Appearing One, “The Buddha says that karma and thinking have no self-nature, how can we say that karma and thinking will arise with conditions but will not arise without conditions?”

Well-Appearing One replied, “Although the self-nature of karma, thinking, and the conditions is empty, one’s mind will grasp and perceive the images with differentiation. So, it is said that karma and thinking come from certain conditions; they will not appear without conditions.”

At that time, Sariputra asked Well-Appearing One, “If great bodhisattvas cultivate giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna paramitas in dreams, and transfer the virtuous roots thus derived along with various sentient beings equally toward the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, do they really undertake transference toward the great bodhi?”

Well-Appearing One replied, “Great Bodhisattva Maitreya has been conferred the prophecy of attaining the unsurpassed bodhi for a long time. He is in the last phase before becoming a Buddha and can answer all kinds of difficult and challenging questions. In today’s assembly, it is appropriate to ask him this issue.”

Sariputra then asked Bodhisattva Maitreya this question respectfully as Well-Appearing One suggested.

Bodhisattva Maitreya thus asked Sariputra, “What is meant by saying that the Maitreya can answer? Can the aggregate of matter answer? Can the aggregates of feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness answer? Can the emptiness of the aggregate of matter answer? Can the emptiness of the aggregates of feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness answer? Can the realness of the aggregate of matter answer? Can the realness of the aggregates of feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness answer? The aggregate of matter cannot answer, and the aggregates of feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness cannot answer either. The emptiness of the aggregate of matter cannot answer, and the emptiness of the aggregates of feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness cannot answer either. Why? I do not see any dharma can answer or any dharma can be answered, nor do I see the time, place, and the cause of answering questions. I do not see any dharma can remember or can be remembered, nor do I see the time, place, and the cause of remembering. Why? Sariputra, the original natures of all dharmas are empty; they are not existent, different, or separate. They are unattainable in the final reasoning.”

At that time, Sariputra asked Great Bodhisattva Maitreya again, “Did the benevolent one share what you have realized?”

Great Bodhisattva Maitreya replied, “Not exactly. Why? The dharma I have realized is unspeakable.”

At that time, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One said to Sariputra, “Bodhisattva Maitreya possess profound and broad wisdom of enlightenment. He has cultivated all kinds of giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna paramitas to their perfection for a long time. He has adopted nonattainment as expediency. So, he can answer challenging questions like this.”

At that time, the Buddha said to Sariputra, “You have become an arhat through this dharma, can you express it in words?”

Sariputra replied, “No, World-Honored One.”

The Buddha said to Sariputra, “So the dharma nature that various great bodhisattvas have realized is also unspeakable when they practice the fathomless prajna paramita. Sariputra, great bodhisattvas will not think, ‘I had through this dharma been conferred, will be conferred, and am

conferred the prophecy of attaining the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.' Nor do they think, 'Because of this dharma, I definitely will realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.' Sariputra, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, they are not skeptical and think, 'Can I realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi?' They will think, 'I definitely will realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.' Sariputra, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita and hearing the profound dharma, they are not frightened, scared, terrified, afraid, sinking, or drowned, nor are they afraid of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. They know this: I certainly will realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi that I am pursuing, turn the wonderful dharma wheel, and deliver all sentient beings."

At that time, the Buddha said to the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One, "A great bodhisattva practicing giving paramita observes that various sentient beings are experiencing suffering from hunger and thirst. Their clothes are old and ragged, they need beds and bedding, but they do not have enough money and other necessities for living. Seeing all these, the bodhisattva reflected, 'How can I bring relief to these sentient beings and assist them to get rid of stinginess and greed, so they will not be in need of living supplies anymore?' The bodhisattva then vowed, 'I swear to practice giving paramita diligently without giving a thought to myself, so I can assist sentient beings to mature, dignify and purify Buddha lands, and realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly. I swear that in my Buddha land there will be no more sentient beings in need of living supplies, and all sentient beings in my Buddha land will enjoy the best entertainments like the heavenly beings in the Heaven of Four Great Kings, Heaven of Thirty-Three Smaller Heavens, and so forth, and the Heaven of Enjoying Other-Made Changes.' Because of fulfilling giving paramita, this great bodhisattva is very close to the attainment of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, a great bodhisattva cultivating pure-precept paramita observes that various sentient beings have burning vexations. They kill each other and are attached to incorrect views. Because of this cause and condition, they become ill and live shortly; their countenances look haggard, weak, and not virtuous. They will be reborn in families of poverty and low caste, imperfect in physical bodies, and earn a living by doing vulgar and filthy jobs. Seeing this, the bodhisattva reflected, 'How can I bring relief to these sentient beings so

they will stay far away from various negative karmic effects?' After having such a reflection, the bodhisattva vowed, 'I swear to cultivate pure-precept paramita diligently without giving a thought to myself, so that I can assist sentient beings to mature, dignify and purify Buddha lands, and realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly. I vow that in my Buddha land there will be no more sentient beings affected by negative karmas; all sentient beings will practice the ten virtuous karmas and enjoy superior effects, such as a long lifespan and so forth. Well-Appearing One, because of fulfilling pure-precept paramita, this great bodhisattva becomes very close to the attainment of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, a great bodhisattva cultivating forbearance paramita observes that many sentient beings treat each other with anger and hatred. They slander, insult, and scold others as piercing them with spears. They fight and kill each other with swords and sticks, and their vicious anger perseveres even after killing. Upon seeing all these matters, the bodhisattva thought, 'How can I bring relief to these sentient beings so they will stay far away from evils?' After having this thought, the bodhisattva vowed, 'I swear to cultivate forbearance paramita diligently without giving a thought to myself, so that I will be able to assist sentient beings to mature, dignify and purify Buddha lands, and fully realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly. The sentient beings in my Buddha land will be no more bothered by the vexations caused by negative karmas, and all sentient beings will treat each other like parents, brothers, sisters, and relatives without disharmony among them.' Because of fulfilling forbearance paramita, this great bodhisattva is very close to the attainment of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, a great bodhisattva cultivating diligence paramita observes that various sentient beings are lazy and tired; they do not work diligently; they abandon the three vehicles and do not cultivate heavenly and human virtuous karmas. Seeing this, the bodhisattva thought, 'How can I bring relief to these sentient beings so they will stay far away from laziness and tiredness?' After having this thought, the bodhisattva vowed, 'I swear to cultivate diligence paramita assiduously without giving a thought to myself to assist sentient beings to mature, dignify and purify the Buddha lands, and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly. There will be no more lazy and tired sentient beings in my Buddha land;

they will all work and progress bravely and powerfully, cultivate assiduously virtuous dharmas leading to the three vehicles and positive destinies, and will be reborn in the heavenly and human realms and attain liberation before long.' Well-Appearing One, because of fulfilling diligence paramita quickly, this great bodhisattva is very close to the attainment of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, a great bodhisattva cultivating meditation paramita observes that various sentient beings are concealed by the five covers; they have lost meditations, immeasurable minds, and formless concentrations. Seeing this, the bodhisattva thought, 'How can I bring relief to these sentient beings, so they are able to stay far away from restlessness and turbulences?' After having this thought, the bodhisattva vowed, 'I swear to cultivate meditation paramita diligently without giving a thought to myself to assist sentient beings to mature, dignify and purify Buddha lands, and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly. There will be no more sentient beings with restless and turbulent minds in my Buddha land; they will enter and get out of the subtle and wonderful superior concentrations in meditations freely and easily.' Well-Appearing One, because of fulfilling meditation paramita, this great bodhisattva is very close to the attainment of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, a great bodhisattva cultivating prajna paramita observes that various sentient beings are ignorant and fond of vicious wisdom; their views of the world and beyond the world are wrong; they deny the existence of virtuous karmas, not virtuous karmas, and the effects of karmas. They insist on the discontinuation of all dharmas, the permanence of all dharmas, the sameness of all dharmas, and the difference of all dharmas. Seeing this, the bodhisattva thought, 'How can I bring relief to these sentient beings, so they are able to stay far away from wrong views and attachments?' After having this thought, the bodhisattva vowed, 'I swear to cultivate prajna paramita diligently without giving a thought to myself to assist sentient beings to mature, dignify and purify Buddha lands, and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly. In my Buddha land, no sentient beings will possess vicious wisdom or incorrect views; all will have correct views, profound wisdom, and all will look dignified.' Well-Appearing One, because of fulfilling prajna paramita, this great bodhisattva is very close to the attainment of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, a great bodhisattva cultivating the six paramitas simultaneously observe that there are three different groups of sentient beings: those who are decided for correct concentration, those who are decided for incorrect concentration, and those who are not decided yet. Seeing all these, the bodhisattva thought, 'How can I bring relief to these sentient beings, so they are able to stay away from incorrect concentration and uncertainty?' after having this reflection, the bodhisattva vowed, 'I swear to cultivate the six paramitas without giving a thought to myself to assist sentient beings to mature, dignify and purify Buddha lands, and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly. In my Buddha land, no more sentient beings stay in incorrect concentration or in the undecided condition, nor the names and voices of these two groups of sentient beings; all sentient beings will dwell in correct concentration.' Well-Appearing One, because of fulfilling the six paramitas quickly, this great bodhisattva is very close to the realization and attainment of the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, a bodhisattva cultivating the six paramitas simultaneously observes that various sentient beings fall into the three inferior destinies and suffer fiercely. Seeing the situation of sentient beings, the bodhisattva thought, 'How can I bring relief to these sentient beings, so they are able to get rid of the suffering of the three inferior destinies forever?' After having this reflection, the bodhisattva vowed, 'I swear to cultivate the six paramitas without giving a thought to myself to assist sentient beings to mature, dignify and purify Buddha lands, and attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge quickly. In my Buddha land, no more names and voices of hells, the realm of animals, and the realm of ghosts; all sentient beings will be oriented to the superior destinies.' Well-Appearing One, because of fulfilling the six paramitas quickly, the great bodhisattva is very close to the realization and attainment of the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge."

(The Buddha taught how great bodhisattvas should cultivate the six paramitas to assist sentient beings and establish dignified and pure Buddha lands.)

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Chapter 21

The Forms of Emptiness

Section 3

(In the Third Assembly)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, a great bodhisattva cultivating the six paramitas simultaneously observes that various sentient beings live on uneven grounds due to their negative karmas. The places they live are filled with mounds, ditches, pits, filthy grass and stems, poisonous thorns and thistles, and all kinds of impurity. Seeing this, the bodhisattva thought, 'How can I bring relief to these sentient beings, so they can get rid of various hindrances caused by negative karmas forever and live on the ground as plain as the palms, in which there are no thistles, filthy grass, and so forth?' After having this thought, the bodhisattva vowed, 'I swear to cultivate the six paramitas without giving a thought to myself to assist sentient beings to mature, dignify and purify Buddha lands, and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly. In my Buddha land, there will be no such filthy karmas; the vast grounds where the sentient beings live are plain, pretty, and widespread, magnificently decorated with desirable and lovely gardens, ponds, and fragrant flowers.' Well-Appearing One, you must know that because of fulfilling the six paramitas quickly, this great bodhisattva is very close to the realization and attainment of the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, a great bodhisattva cultivating the six paramitas simultaneously observes that various sentient beings live on the grounds without treasures but full of soils, rocks, and rubbles because they are less blessed. Seeing this, the bodhisattva thought, 'How can I bring relief to these less blessed sentient beings, so they can live in prosperous and wealthy places?' After having this thought, the bodhisattva vowed, 'I swear to cultivate the six paramitas diligently without giving a thought to myself to assist sentient beings to mature, dignify and purify Buddha lands, and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal

bodhi quickly. In my Buddha land, there will be no more such less blessed sinful sentient beings; the grounds are paved with the sands of gold, full of rare and unique lapis lazuli, and so forth. All sentient beings will enjoy them without being indulged in them.' Well-Appearing One, you must know that because of fulfilling the six paramitas quickly, this great bodhisattva is very close to the realization and attainment of the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, a great bodhisattva cultivating the six paramitas simultaneously observes that various sentient beings become attached to whatever they receive and thus initiate all kinds of negative karmas. Seeing this, the bodhisattva thought, 'How can I bring relief to these sentient beings, so they can get rid of the attachment to negative karmas forever?' After having this thought, this bodhisattva vowed, 'I swear to cultivate the six paramitas diligently and assiduously without giving a thought to myself to assist sentient beings to mature, dignify and purify Buddha lands, and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly. In my Buddha land, all sentient beings will not be attached to the stimuli caused by the sight, sound, and so forth, nor will they be indulged in various living supplies.' Well-Appearing One, you must know that because of fulfilling the six paramitas quickly, this great bodhisattva is very close to the realization and attainment of the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, a great bodhisattva cultivating the six paramitas simultaneously observe that various sentient beings have four different castes, the Ksatriya, Brahman, and so forth. Seeing this, the bodhisattva thought, 'How can I bring relief to these various sentient beings, so they will be free from all these differentiations?' After having this reflection, the bodhisattva vowed, 'I swear to cultivate the six paramitas diligently and assiduously without giving a thought to myself to assist sentient beings to mature, dignify and purify Buddha lands, and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly. In my Buddha land, there will be no more differences between the noble status and the humble status; all sentient beings will live with great dignity and nobility.' Well-Appearing One, you must know that because of fulfilling the six paramitas quickly, this great bodhisattva is very close to the realization and attainment of the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge.

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, a great bodhisattva cultivating the six paramitas simultaneously observes that various sentient beings are reborn either in inferior families, middle families, or in noble families. Seeing this, the bodhisattva thought, ‘How can I bring relief to these sentient beings, so there will be no more differences among families?’ After having this reflection, the bodhisattva vowed, ‘I swear to cultivate the six paramitas diligently and assiduously without giving a thought to myself to assist sentient beings to mature, dignify and purify Buddha lands, and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly. In my Buddha land, there will be no such differences as noble, middle, or inferior families. All sentient beings will be reborn in noble families.’ Well-Appearing One, you must know that because of fulfilling the six paramitas quickly, this great bodhisattva is very close to the realization and attainment of the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge.

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, a great bodhisattva cultivating the six paramitas simultaneously observes that various sentient beings have different countenances and builds; some are pretty and upright, while some are ugly and not featured proportionally and well. Seeing this, the bodhisattva thought, ‘How can I bring relief to these sentient beings, so they will get rid of all these differentiations?’ After gaving this reflection, the bodhisattva vowed, ‘I swear to cultivate the six paramitas diligently and assiduously without giving a thought to myself to assist sentient beings to mature, dignify and purify Buddha lands, and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly. In my Buddha land, there will be no more differences of countenances and physical bodies for all sentient beings; all will appear in solid gold color, and look upright, solemn, and magnificent. They will achieve the utmost perfect and purest appearances.’ Well-Appearing One, you must know that because of fulfilling the six paramitas quickly, this great bodhisattva is very close to the realization and attainment of the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge.

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, a great bodhisattva cultivating the six paramitas simultaneously observes that various sentient beings are manipulated and dominated so they are not free or comfortable. Seeing this, this bodhisattva thought, ‘How can I bring relief to these sentient beings, so they will become liberated?’ After having this thought, the bodhisattva vowed, ‘I swear to cultivate the six paramitas diligently and assiduously without giving a thought to myself to assist sentient beings to mature, dignify and purify Buddha lands, and attain the

unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly. In my Buddha land, all sentient beings will be able to act independently; they are no more dominated by someone else. No more images of the dominator can be seen, and no more names of the dominator can be heard. There are only the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones, who conduct and guide with the correct dharma and thus are named the dharma Kings.' Well-Appearing One, you must know that because of fulfilling the six paramitas quickly, this great bodhisattva is very close to the realization and attainment of the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, a great bodhisattva cultivating the six paramitas simultaneously observes that various sentient beings have different destinies, such as hells, the realm of animals, and so forth. Seeing this, the bodhisattva thought, 'How can I bring relief to these sentient beings, so there will be no differences among superior and inferior destinies?' After having such a thought, the bodhisattva vowed, 'I swear to cultivate the six paramitas diligently and assiduously without giving a thought to myself to assist sentient beings to mature, dignify and purify Buddha lands, and attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge quickly. In my Buddha land, there will be no more differences among destinies, or the names of hells, the realm of animals, the realm of ghosts, asuras, human beings, and heavenly beings. All sentient beings will belong to one species and cultivate same virtuous dharmas. Namely, they will cultivate harmoniously giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita; dwell peacefully in internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature; dwell peacefully in realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable; dwell peacefully in the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering; cultivate the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path; cultivate the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations; cultivate the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration; cultivate the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations; cultivate the stages of bodhisattva; cultivate the dharani gates and 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 great loving-kindness, great compassion, great joy, and great equanimity; cultivate the causes of the perfect major marks and 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; and cultivate all great bodhisattva actions and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas.' Well-Appearing One, you must know, because of fulfilling these six paramitas quickly, this great bodhisattva is very close to the realization and attainment of the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, a great bodhisattva cultivating the six paramitas simultaneously observes that various sentient beings are born through four different ways: born from an egg, born from the womb, born from moisture, and born from transformation. Seeing this, the bodhisattva thought, 'How can I bring relief to these sentient beings, so there will be no more differences among the ways of birth?' After having this thought, the bodhisattva vowed, 'I swear to cultivate the six paramitas diligently and assiduously without giving a thought to myself to assist sentient beings to mature, dignify and purify Buddha lands, and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly. In my Buddha land, there will be no more four different ways of birth; all will be born through transformation.' Well-Appearing One, you must know that because of fulfilling the six paramitas quickly, this great bodhisattva is very close to the realization and attainment of the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, a great bodhisattva cultivating the six paramitas simultaneously observes that various sentient beings do not have the five supernatural powers and cannot act easily and freely. Seeing this, the bodhisattva thought, 'How can bring relief to these sentient beings, so they are able to attain the five supernatural powers?' After having such a thought, the bodhisattva vowed, 'I swear to cultivate the six paramitas diligently and assiduously without giving a thought to myself to assist sentient beings to mature, dignify and purify Buddha lands, and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly. In my Buddha land, all sentient beings will be able to play the five supernatural powers freely and at ease.' Well-Appearing One, you must know that because of fulfilling the six paramitas quickly, this great bodhisattva is very close to the realization and attainment of the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, a great bodhisattva cultivating the six paramitas simultaneously observes that various sentient beings have bowel movement and urination because of eating food to support their physical bodies; there are also pus, blood, and other smelly and filthy things with which people feel disgusted. Seeing this, the bodhisattva thought, 'How can I bring relief to these sentient beings, so they will be free from eating food and rid of all kinds of filthy things?' After having this thought, the bodhisattva vowed, 'I swear to cultivate the six paramitas diligently and assiduously without giving a thought to myself to assist sentient beings to mature, dignify and purify Buddha lands, and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly. In my Buddha land, all sentient beings will eat wonderful dharma as food; they will all be like heavenly beings in the Heaven of Extremely Great Brightness and Purity, who are free from all kinds of defilements inside and outside their bodies.' Well-Appearing One, you must know that because of fulfilling the six paramitas quickly, this great bodhisattva is very close to the realization and attainment of the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, a great bodhisattva cultivating the six paramitas simultaneously observes that various sentient beings cannot emit bright lights, whatever they do will depend on illumination from outside. Seeing this, the bodhisattva thought, 'How can I bring relief to these sentient beings, so they will not have the bodies without bright lights?' After having such a thought, the bodhisattva vowed, 'I swear to cultivate the six paramitas diligently and assiduously without giving a thought to myself to assist sentient beings to mature, dignify and purify Buddha lands, and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly. In my Buddha land, all sentient beings will have brilliant bodies and do not depend on the illumination from outside.' Well-Appearing One, you must know that because of fulfilling the six paramitas quickly, this great bodhisattva is very close to the realization and attainment of the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, a great bodhisattva cultivating the six paramitas simultaneously observes that the lands in which various sentient beings live have the days, nights, months, semi-months, and seasons, and all are changing. Seeing this, the bodhisattva reflected, 'How can I bring relief to these sentient beings, so the land where they live will be rid of the changes in day, night, season, and so forth?' After having such a reflection, the

bodhisattva vowed, ‘I swear to cultivate the six paramitas diligently and assiduously without giving a thought to myself to assist sentient beings to mature, dignify and purify Buddha lands, and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly. In my Buddha land, there will be no more the names of the day, night, month, semi-month, and season.’ Well-Appearing One, you must know that because of fulfilling the six paramitas quickly, this great bodhisattva is very close to the realization and attainment of the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge.

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, a great bodhisattva cultivating the six paramitas simultaneously observes that various sentient beings have very short lifespan. Seeing this, the bodhisattva thought, ‘How can I relief the sentient beings, so they will have long lifespan?’ After having such a reflection, this bodhisattva vowed, ‘I swear to cultivate the six paramitas diligently and assiduously without giving a thought to myself to assist sentient beings to mature, dignify and purify Buddha lands, and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly. In my Buddha land, the sentient beings will have a lifespan as long as countless kalpas.’ Well-Appearing One, you must know that because of fulfilling the six paramitas quickly, this great bodhisattva is very close to the realization and attainment of the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge.

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, a great bodhisattva cultivating the six paramitas simultaneously observes that various sentient beings do not have perfect physical features. Seeing this, the bodhisattva thought, ‘How can I bring relief to these sentient beings, so they will have perfect physical features?’ After having such a thought, the bodhisattva vowed, ‘I swear to cultivate the six paramitas diligently and assiduously without giving a thought to myself to assist sentient beings to mature, dignify and purify Buddha lands, and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly. In my Buddha land, all sentient beings will have perfect, magnificent features; looking at them will bring others pure, exquisite joys.’ Well-Appearing One, you must know that because of fulfilling the six paramitas quickly, this great bodhisattva is very close to the realization and attainment of the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge.

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, a great bodhisattva cultivating the six paramitas simultaneously observes that various sentient beings stay away from virtuous roots. Seeing this, the bodhisattva thought, ‘How can I bring relief to these sentient beings, so they will possess

virtuous roots?' After having such a reflection, this bodhisattva vowed, 'I swear to cultivate the six paramitas diligently and assiduously without giving a thought to myself to assist sentient beings to mature, dignify and purify Buddha lands, and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly. In my Buddha land, all sentient beings will be able to achieve superior and exquisite virtuous roots. Because of these virtuous roots, they will make the best offerings to the Buddhas, and due to the blessings thus derived, they will make offerings to more Buddhas, World-Honored Ones, wherever they are reborn.' Well-Appearing One, you must know that because of fulfilling the six paramitas quickly, this great bodhisattva is very close to the realization and attainment of the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, a great bodhisattva cultivating the six paramitas simultaneously observes that various sentient beings have diseases in body and mind. The diseases of the body are caused by wind, heat, phlegm, or the mixture of these factors. The diseases of the mind are greed, anger, ignorance, arrogance, and so forth. Seeing this, the bodhisattva thought, 'How can I bring relief to these sentient beings, so they can get rid of the suffering caused by these physical and mental diseases?' After having such a reflection, this great bodhisattva vowed, 'I swear to cultivate the six paramitas diligently and assiduously without giving a thought to myself to assist sentient beings to mature, dignify and purify Buddha lands, and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly. In my Buddha land, all sentient beings will have pure bodies and minds; there will be neither the diseases of the body and the mind, nor the names of the diseases.' Well-Appearing One, you must know that because of fulfilling the six paramitas quickly, this great bodhisattva is very close to the realization and attainment of the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, a great bodhisattva cultivating the six paramitas simultaneously observes that various sentient beings have different interests in the three vehicles. Seeing this, the bodhisattva thought, 'How can I bring relief to the sentient beings, so they will abandon two vehicles and become dedicated to the only one great vehicle?' After having this reflection, this bodhisattva vowed, "I swear to cultivate the six paramitas diligently and assiduously without giving a thought to myself to assist sentient beings to mature, dignify and purify Buddha lands, and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly. In my Buddha land, all sentient beings will aspire to the one great vehicle, no one is interested in the

effects of the two vehicles, even the names of these two vehicles will disappear.' Well-Appearing One, you must know that because of fulfilling the six paramitas quickly, this great bodhisattva is very close to the realization and attainment of the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, a great bodhisattva cultivating the six paramitas simultaneously observes that various sentient beings are arrogant. They insist that they are enlightened although they are not yet. Seeing this, the bodhisattva thought, 'How can I bring relief to these sentient beings, so their growing bondage of conceit will be removed?' After having this thought, the bodhisattva vowed, 'I swear to cultivate the six paramitas diligently and assiduously without giving a thought to myself to assist sentient beings to mature, dignify and purify Buddha lands, and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly. In my Buddha land, there will be no sentient beings with inordinate self-esteem; all sentient beings will stay away from arrogance.' Well-Appearing One, because of fulfilling the six paramitas quickly, this great bodhisattva is very close to the realization and attainment of the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, a great bodhisattva cultivating the six paramitas simultaneously observes that many sentient beings are attached to the aggregates of matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness, and so forth, and the great bodhisattva actions and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. Seeing this, the great bodhisattva thought, 'How can I expediently relieve various sentient beings, so they will get rid of the attachment?' After having this thought, the great bodhisattva vowed, 'I should cultivate diligently and attentively the six paramitas without worries and attachment to assist sentient beings to mature and dignify and purify Buddha lands, so I can fulfill the six paramitas quickly and realize and attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge before long. In my Buddha land, all sentient beings will not have various kinds of attachment.' Well-Appearing One, you must know that because of fulfilling the six paramitas quickly, this great bodhisattva is very close to the realization and attainment of the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, a great bodhisattva cultivating the six paramitas simultaneously observes that the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and

Universally Enlightened Ones have limitless lifespan, limitless brilliant light, and the number of their disciples is also limitless. Seeing this, the great bodhisattva thought, ‘How can I attain unlimited lifespan, limitless brilliant light, and limitless disciples?’ After having such a reflection, the bodhisattva vowed, ‘I swear to cultivate the six paramitas diligently and assiduously without worries and attachments, assist sentient beings to mature, dignify and purify Buddha lands, so I can fulfill the six paramitas quickly and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi soon, then I will have limitless brilliant light, limitless lifespan, and limitless disciples.’ Well-Appearing One, you must know that because of fulfilling the six paramitas quickly, this great bodhisattva is very close to the realization and attainment of the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge.

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, a great bodhisattva cultivating the six paramitas simultaneously observes that the land in which the Thus-Comer, One Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened One lives is vast beyond measure in circumference. Seeing this, the bodhisattva reflected, ‘How can I live in a measureless vast land?’ After having this reflection, the bodhisattva vowed, ‘I swear to cultivate the six paramitas diligently and assiduously without worries and attachments, assist sentient beings to mature, and dignify and purify Buddha lands, so I can fulfill the six paramitas quickly and attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge before long, then all the large thousand-worlds of the ten directions as many as the sands of the Ganges will combine together into a land, in which I will teach the dharma to deliver numberless, countless, and boundless sentient beings.’ Well-Appearing One, you must know that because of fulfilling the six paramitas quickly, this great bodhisattva is very close to the realization and attainment of the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge.

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, a great bodhisattva cultivating the six paramitas simultaneously observes that numberless sentient beings are drifting in the endless cycle of birth and death. Seeing this, the bodhisattva reflected, ‘The border of the birth and death is like empty space, so are the sentient beings. The sentient beings, the cycle of birth and death, and the liberated ones are unreal, but the sentient beings have been attached to them and insist that they are existent. So, they are drifting in the boundless suffering of birth and death. How can I bring relief to them?’ After having this reflection, the great bodhisattva vowed, ‘I swear to cultivate the six paramitas diligently and assiduously without worries and attachments, assist sentient beings

to mature, and dignify and purify Buddha lands, so I can fulfill the six paramitas quickly and attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge soon. Then I will teach sentient beings about the unsurpassed dharma to liberate them from severe suffering of birth and death by letting them realize that the birth and death and the liberation are nonexistent and empty in the final analysis.' Well-Appearing One, you must know that because of fulfilling the six paramitas quickly, this great bodhisattva is very close to the realization and attainment of the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge."

(The Buddha provided many examples to explain how great bodhisattvas should cultivate the six paramitas simultaneously to assist sentient beings to mature and dignify and purify Buddha lands.)

Chapter 22

A Heavenly Lady Named the Ganges

(In the Third Assembly)

At that time, a heavenly lady named the Ganges rose from her seat and paid homage to the Buddha by bowing to the ground. She knelt down with right knee touching the ground, with her left shoulder covered, putting her palms together, and said respectfully, "World-Honored One, I can cultivate and fulfill giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna paramitas and absorb the Buddha land where the World-Honored One is now teaching various sentient beings."

In the meantime, this lady made various gold flowers, silver flowers, flowers grown in waters and ground, and two pieces of heavenly clothing in golden color as offerings to the Buddha. She presented the offerings with great respect. Because of the Buddha's supernatural

powers, the offerings were rising up into the sky, rolling clockwise, turning into a treasure square platform with four pillars that were beautifully adorned and looked magnificent and lovely, and flying just above the head of the Buddha. This heavenly lady then transferred the virtuous roots thus derived along with sentient beings equally toward the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.

At that time, the World-Honored One knew that this heavenly lady had a deep and expansive aspiration, so he smiled. As it usually happens when the Buddhas smile, brilliant lights of different colors, the blue, yellow, dark red, white, red, purple, and fresh green, emitted from the Buddha's face and shone over immeasurable and boundless Buddha worlds of the ten directions. Owing to a great supernatural transformation, the bright lights returned to this land and entered Buddha's head.

In the meantime, witnessing what had happened, Ananda stood up from his seat and bowed down to the ground before the Buddha's feet with his left shoulder covered and right knee touching the ground. He put his palms together respectfully and said, "World-Honored One, why did you smile? The Buddhas do not smile without causes and conditions."

At that time, the World-Honored One replied to Joyfully Celebrating One (Ananda), "This heavenly lady will become a Thus-Comer, One Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened One in a future kalpa named Stellar Simile; the name of the Buddha will be Golden Flower. You must know, Joyfully Celebrating One, this heavenly lady is now in her last female body. After this lifetime, she will become a male and will remain so in the future. After this lifetime, she will be reborn in the east in a lovely and joyful land of the Unmovable Thus-Comer, One Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened One, and will cultivate diligently celibacy in the Buddha's place. The name of that place is Golden Flower. She will cultivate various great bodhisattva actions there. You must know, Joyfully Celebrating One, after passing away from the world of the Unmovable Buddha, Bodhisattva Golden Flower will be reborn from one Buddha land to the other, and will always make offerings respectfully to esteem and acclaim various Buddhas, the World-Honored Ones, and will never stay away from the Buddhas. Like a wheel-turning king who moves from one high building to the other and enjoy all kinds of entertainment and pleasure without walking on the ground until the end of life,

so does Bodhisattva Golden Flower, who moves from one Buddha country to the other, always encounters various Buddhas, listens to correct dharma teachings, and cultivates great bodhisattva actions until attaining the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi."

At that time, Joyfully Celebrating One thought to himself, "When Bodhisattva Golden Flower becomes a Buddha, he will also teach the fathomless prajna paramita. The great bodhisattvas attending the assembly will be as many as those in this assembly today."

The Buddha knew what Joyfully Celebrating One was thinking, so he said, "Yes, it is as you think. When Bodhisattva Golden Flower becomes a Buddha, he will also teach the fathomless prajna paramita, and the great bodhisattvas attending the assembly will be as many as those in this assembly today. You must know, Joyfully Celebrating One, when Bodhisattva Golden Flower becomes a Buddha, his monastic disciples will be too many to be counted, there will be more than hundreds, thousands, or koti nayuta; that will be immeasurable and boundless. You must know, Joyfully Celebrating One, when Bodhisattva Golden Flower becomes a Buddha, his land will not have the faults as I mention in prajna paramita sutras."

At that time, Joyfully Celebrating One asked the Buddha again, "Which Buddha did this heavenly lady encounter before so that her aspiration to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi was inspired, and because of this she could plant and transfer various virtuous roots, and now again encountered the Buddha, made offerings to him respectfully, and received the prophecy of nonregression by the Buddha?"

The Buddha replied to Joyfully Celebrating One, "This heavenly lady was first inspired by the Buddha Burning Lamp, and from that time on, she has planted various good roots and transferred the virtuous roots to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. Because of this cause and condition, she was able to meet me, made offerings to me respectfully, and received the prophecy of nonregression. You must know, Joyfully Celebrating One, in the past, I made five stems of flowers as offerings to spread to the Buddha Burning Lamp, and transferred them to an aspiration. The Thus-Comer Burning Lamp knew that my roots became mature, so conferred on me this prophecy: 'You will become a Buddha in the future with Benevolence and Tranquility (Śākyamuni) as your name, and the world you conduct is named Barely Tolerable, while the name of the kalpa is the Kalpa of the Sages.' When I was conferred the prophecy at

that time, this heavenly lady was excited and rejoiced; she danced and jumped and presented golden flowers to the Buddha. She was deeply inspired to look forward to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, so started to plant virtuous roots and transferred them to the wish that someday when I become a Buddha, she will be also conferred the prophecy of attaining the great bodhi as I was. This is why I conferred on her the prophecy today."

At that time, after hearing what the Buddha said, Joyfully Celebrating One rejoiced, danced, and jumped and said to the Buddha, "This heavenly lady has planted various virtuous roots for a very long time. Her transference and aspiration have become mature now, so it is the right time for the Thus-Comer, One Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened One to confer on her this prophecy."

The Buddha said to Joyfully Celebrating One, "Yes, it is as you say. Her virtuous roots are now fully developed. It is the time to confer on her the prophecy."

(A touching story shared by the Buddha to inspire and encourage great-vehicle pursuers.)

Chapter 23

Skillful Means

Section 1

(In the Third Assembly)

At that time, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "World-Honored One, when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, how do great bodhisattvas learn the samadhi of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration? How do they enter and cultivate these three kinds of samadhi? How do they learn the four bases of mindfulness, four correct

endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path? How do they learn the other factors for the bodhi? How do they cultivate the other factors for bodhisattva?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "When practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, great bodhisattvas should contemplate the emptiness of the aggregate of matter, feeling, and so forth, and consciousness. They should contemplate the emptiness of the eye sphere, ear sphere, and so forth, and conscious sphere. They should contemplate the emptiness of the sight sphere, sound sphere, and so forth, and mental-image sphere. They should contemplate the emptiness of the eye realm, ear realm, and so forth, and conscious realm. They should contemplate the emptiness of the sight realm, sound realm, and so forth, and mental-image realm. They should contemplate the emptiness of the eye consciousness realm, ear consciousness realm, and so forth, and conscious consciousness realm. They should contemplate the emptiness of the eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact. They should contemplate the emptiness of the feelings produced by eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact. They should contemplate the emptiness of the earth realm, water realm, and so forth, and consciousness realm. They should contemplate the emptiness of cause and condition, consecutive thoughts in sequence, the conditions that stimulate the mind, and the conditions that reinforce main causes. They should contemplate the emptiness of ignorance, action, consciousness, and so forth, and old age and death. They should contemplate the emptiness of giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita. They should contemplate the emptiness of internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature. They should contemplate the emptiness of realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable. They should contemplate the emptiness of the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering. They should contemplate the emptiness of the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path. They should contemplate the emptiness of the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations. They should contemplate the emptiness of the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations. They should contemplate the emptiness of the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration. They should contemplate the emptiness of the stage of pure contemplation, stage of eight-

forbearance, and so forth, and stage of Thus-Comer. They should contemplate the emptiness of the stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilement, and so forth, and stage of dharma cloud. They should contemplate the emptiness of all dharani gates and all samadhi gates. They should contemplate the emptiness of the five eyes and the six supernatural powers. They should contemplate the emptiness of the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and the eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power. They should contemplate the emptiness of great loving-kindness, great compassion, great joy, and great equanimity. They should contemplate the emptiness of the thirty-two perfect major marks and the eighty distinguishing minor features. They should contemplate the emptiness of staying in correct mindfulness and dwelling in equanimity at all times. They should contemplate the emptiness of the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena. They should contemplate the emptiness of stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi. They should contemplate the emptiness of all great bodhisattva actions and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas. They should contemplate the emptiness of the flawed and flawless dharmas. They should contemplate the emptiness of the dharmas of and beyond the world. They should contemplate the emptiness of the conditioned and unconditioned dharmas. They should contemplate the emptiness of the dharmas in the past, future, and the present. They should contemplate the emptiness of the virtuous, not virtuous, and neutral dharmas. They should contemplate the emptiness of the dharmas in the realm of desire, the realm of form, and the realm of formlessness.

"Well-Appearing One, you must know that the great bodhisattvas should not stay in restless mind when they contemplate. If their minds are restless, they will not see the dharmas. If they do not see the dharmas, they will not realize and attain the dharmas. Why? These great bodhisattvas should learn that the particular characteristics of all dharmas are empty, no dharma increases or decreases, and no dharma can be seen or realized. Why? In ultimate meanings of all dharmas, those who can realize, the dharmas can be realized, the place of realization, the time of realization, and the cause of the realization are unattainable, they cannot be seen generally or particularly."

(In response to Well-Appearing One, the Buddha taught that great bodhisattvas should contemplate with resting and concentrative mind the emptiness of five aggreges, inner and outer spheres, various feelings, fundamental elements of the world, twelve links of dependent origination, six paramitas, various kinds of emptiness, realness, four noble truths, meditations and concentrations, various liberations and samadhi, other superior holy dharmas, as well as the holy effects derived from cultivation, so that they can understand that the particular characteristics of all dharmas are empty and cannot be seen and realized.)

At that time, Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "How do great bodhisattvas contemplate the emptiness of dharmas without realizing and attaining them as the World-Honored One says?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "When contemplating the emptiness of the dharmas, great bodhisattvas must think, 'I should contemplate the phenomena of all dharmas as empty, but I should not realize and attain them. I contemplate all dharmas as they are empty for the sake of learning, not for the sake of realization. It is the time for learning not for realization.' Before entering concentrations, the great bodhisattvas' minds are stuck with the phenomena, while after entering concentrations, they will not. At that time, they must avoid withdrawing from the factors for enlightenment; they must also refrain from realizing and attaining the extinction of flaws. Why? To achieve such broad and great wisdom and always dwell in the emptiness of all dharmas and the factors for enlightenment, great bodhisattvas must keep this in mind, 'It is the time for learning instead of realization and attainment.' They should always think, 'I should learn but should not realize and attain giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita presently. I should learn but should not realize and attain internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature now. I should learn but should not realize and attain realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable now. I should learn but should not realize and attain the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering now. I should learn but should not realize and attain the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations now. I should learn but should not realize and attain the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations now. I should learn but should not realize and attain

the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path now. I should learn but should not realize and attain the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration now. I should learn but should not realize and attain the three vehicles and the ten stages of bodhisattva now. I should learn but should not realize and attain the dharani gates and the samadhi gates now. I should learn but should not realize and attain the five eyes and the six supernatural powers now. I should learn but should not realize and attain the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power now. I should learn but should not realize and attain the perfect features now. I should learn but should not realize and attain staying in correct mindfulness and dwelling in equanimity at all times now. I should learn but should not realize and attain the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena now. I should learn but should not realize and attain all great bodhisattva actions now. I should learn but should not realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi now. To learn the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, I should learn stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi expediently and skillfully but should not realize and attain them now.''

(The Buddha cautioned that great bodhisattvas should always keep this in mind: it is the time for leaning not for realization and achievement, to avoid falling into the two vehicles.)

"Well-Appearing One, you must know that when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, great bodhisattvas should learn, dwell in, and cultivate the samadhi of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration, but should not realize the reality. They should learn, dwell in, and cultivate the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and the noble eightfold path, but should not realize the reality. They should learn, dwell in, and cultivate the rest of the factors for the bodhi, but they should not realize the reality.

"You must know, Well-Appearing One, although these great bodhisattvas have learned, dwelled in, and cultivated the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration, they will not realize stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi. Although they have learned, dwelled in, and cultivated the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and the noble eightfold path, they will not realize stream-entry

effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi. Although they have learned, dwelled in, and cultivated the rest of the factors for the bodhi, they will not realize stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi. Because of this cause and condition, these great bodhisattvas will not fall into the stage of the voice-hearer or the stage of the self-enlightened one; rather, they will realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly.

"You must know, Well-Appearing One, there was a good-looking vigorous man with powerful strength and courage. All were joyful when they saw him. This man had a wonderful and pure family. He had thoroughly learned the art of war in various fields and was skillful in using weapons. He always stayed firmly in concentration and his mind was unmovable. He had studied the classics, the sixty-four texts thoroughly, and learned eighteen skills very well. He was popular and respected by people. Being very successful in running his business, he could always gain the most possible benefits by using least possible labor. People respected him, made offerings to him, and admired him, so he was pleased and felt satisfied. For a certain reason he had to take his parents, wife, and other family members to travel to other place, and had to take a route which was in wilderness and very dangerous because of many wild beasts, robbers, and rebellious people hiding and waiting to kill travelers. All his family members were so scared and terrified. Being confident with his powers and abilities, this heroic man soothed and assured his family that he would guard them all the way to the destination in safety, and he did it successfully, so all were finally relieved, happy, and thankful. The strange thing was that on the way, no animal, wild beast, or bad-tempered robber had any intention to do any harm to this man and his family. Why? It is because he had courage and good skills and was not afraid at all.

"Well-Appearing One, so do great bodhisattvas. They have aspired to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi because of their mercy and compassion to all sentient beings who are suffering in birth and death. They have universal empathy with all sentient beings and are determined to initiate and dwell in the four immeasurable minds. They further cultivate and learn bravely giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna paramitas to fulfill them quickly. At this moment, they have not fulfilled the six paramitas. To cultivate the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge without realizing the extinction of all flaws, they dwell in the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration without being dominated by

their powers. They are not hindered or dominated by the liberation gates, nor do they realize and attain them. Because they do not intend to realize and attain the three liberation gates, they will not fall into the stage of the voice-hearer or the stage of the self-enlightened one; rather, they definitely will progress toward the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.

"You must know, Well-Appearing One, like the birds with strong and powerful wings will fly high in empty space freely for a long time without falling. These birds ride on emptiness but do not occupy emptiness; they are not hindered or limited by emptiness either.

"Well-Appearing One, so do great bodhisattvas. They have consistently learned, dwelled in, and cultivated the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration, but they do not realize and attain them. Because they do not realize and attain them, they will not fall into the stage of the voice-hearer or the stage of the self-enlightened one. Before fulfilling the cultivation of the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, four unhindered understandings, great loving-kindness, great compassion, great joy, great equanimity, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power, they will not realize and attain the extinction of all flaws based on emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration. Well-Appearing One, like a vigorous master arrow shooter who intended to show his shooting skills. Targeting at empty space in the sky, he tried to keep the arrows from falling by continuously shooting at each last arrow, so all stayed in the sky until he stopped doing so.

"Well-Appearing One, so do great bodhisattvas. As great bodhisattvas practice the fathomless prajna paramita, they do not realize and attain the reality in the middle of working toward the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi until their virtuous roots are ripe.

(The Buddha used similes to revel this truth.)

"Therefore, Well-Appearing One, when great bodhisattvas practice the fathomless prajna paramita, they should contemplate and investigate carefully the real phenomena of all dharmas following the way mentioned earlier, to cultivate various great bodhisattva actions, and progress toward the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi."

At that time, Well-Appearing One said to the Buddha, "Great bodhisattvas are rare and unique; they can do very difficult things. They consistently cultivate and learn the real

phenomena of all dharmas. They also consistently cultivate and learn realness, dharma realm, dharma nature, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable; internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature; 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 three liberation gates and the rest of the factors for enlightenment, but they do not fall into the stage of voice-hearer or the stage of self-enlightened one in the middle of the way, so they will not get lost and withdraw in the pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi."

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, "The great bodhisattvas have promised never to renounce sentient beings by making this vow, 'I swear never to stop putting more efforts in practicing virtuous roots unless sentient beings are liberated from birth, old age, illness, and death.' Well-Appearing One, you must know that the great bodhisattvas have superior powers of aspiration and often think, 'I will never give up unless all sentient beings are liberated.' Because they have initiated such broad and great aspirations, they will not regress in the middle of the way. You must know, Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas always think, 'I should not abandon the sentient beings. I swear to liberate them all. Various sentient beings have practiced incorrectly, so I must initiate repeatedly the liberation gates of tranquil emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration. But I will not realize and attain these gates. Well-Appearing One, you must know, the great bodhisattvas have achieved superior expediency and skillfulness. Although they have initiated repeatedly the liberation gates of tranquil emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration, they will not realize and attain reality until attaining the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, great bodhisattvas love to contemplate and investigate the profound loci. They like to contemplate and investigate internal emptiness, external emptiness, internal-external emptiness, emptiness of emptiness, emptiness of space, emptiness of ultimate truth, emptiness of conditioned phenomena, emptiness of unconditioned reality, emptiness in the final analysis, emptiness of nontemporality, emptiness of deconstruction and nondeconstruction, emptiness of original nature, emptiness of particular and common characteristics, emptiness of all dharmas, emptiness of nonattainment, emptiness of selflessness, emptiness of self-nature, and emptiness of selfless self-nature. They also like to contemplate and

investigate the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, four bases of power, five roots, five powers, seven factors for enlightenment, and noble eightfold path, as well as the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration, observing that all their particular characteristics are empty. Well-Appearing One, you must know that after having such contemplations and investigations, they think, 'Because of the impact caused by evil friends, various sentient beings have been attached to the ideas of the 'I,' the sentient being, and so forth, and the knower and the viewer for a very long time. Due to these attachments, they have always acted with attainment and thus suffer in the reincarnation of birth and death. To cease such attachments, I should cultivate the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, teach various sentient beings the fathomless and wonderful dharma, so their attachments will be terminated, and they will get rid of the suffering in birth and death.'

"Although the great bodhisattvas have learned the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration, they do not realize and attain reality. They thus do not fall into stream-entry effect, once-return effect, nonreturn effect, arhat effect, or self-enlightenment bodhi. Well-Appearing One, because they have this thought, they practice the fathomless prajna paramita and achieve virtuous roots, but they do not realize and attain reality. Because they do not realize and attain reality, they do not regress or get lost in the cultivation of 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; 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 stages of bodhisattva; all dharani gates and all samadhi gates; the five eyes and the six supernatural powers; the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and the eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power; great loving-kindness, great compassion, great joy, and great equanimity; 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 numberless and boundless Buddha dharmas.

(The Buddha taught that because great bodhisattvas do not attain reality when they cultivate prajna paramita and achieve virtuous roots, they will not get lost or regress in the cultivation of various superior holy dharmas.)

"Well-Appearing One, these great bodhisattvas will achieve all factors for enlightenment at that time, their merits and virtues will not diminish or lose until attaining the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. When they practice the fathomless prajna paramita, their virtuous roots continue to grow swiftly and become sharper and more penetrating because of expedient skillfulness; they thus will transcend all voice-hearers and self-enlightened ones.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the great bodhisattvas often think, 'Various sentient beings have been attached to four kinds of incorrect understanding for a very long time. They embrace upside-down thoughts or views to mistake impermanence for permanence, pain for pleasure, selflessness for selfness, and impurity for purity. For the sake of these sentient beings, I should aspire to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, cultivate great bodhisattva actions, and realize the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal enlightenment quickly to teach them that in birth and death, all dharmas are impermanent, without pleasure, without selfness, and not pure. I will let them realize that the only real thing is the subtle, exquisite, and tranquil nirvana, in which various merits and virtues of permanence, pleasure, selfness, and purity are completely contained.' You must know, Well-Appearing One, these great bodhisattvas have possessed this thought in practicing the fathomless prajna paramita. Because they are absorbed by expedient skillfulness, they will not enter the superior concentrations of various Buddhas until fulfilling the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and the eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power.

"Well-Appearing One, you must know that although the great bodhisattvas have learned the three liberation gates and can enter and get out of them freely and at ease, they do not realize and attain reality for the time being. They will not realize and attain reality and the rest of the merits and virtues unless they have fulfilled the merits and virtues that serve as the causes for attaining the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. You must know, Well-Appearing One,

although these great bodhisattvas have not fulfilled the rest of various merits and virtues, they have fulfilled the samadhi of nonaspiration.”

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Chapter 23

Skillful Means

Section 2

(In the Third Assembly)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, some great bodhisattvas always think, 'Various sentient beings have for a long time practiced based on attainment; namely, they have been attached to the existence of the 'I,' the sentient being, and so forth, and the knower and the viewer; the existence of the aggregate of matter, feeling, and so forth, and consciousness; the existence of the eye sphere, ear sphere, and so forth, and conscious sphere; the existence of the sight sphere, sound sphere, and so forth, and mental-image sphere; the existence of the eye realm, ear realm, and so forth, and conscious realm; the existence of the sight realm, sound realm, and so forth, and mental-image realm; the existence of the eye consciousness realm, ear consciousness realm, and so forth, and conscious consciousness realm; the existence of the eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact; the existence of the feelings produced by eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact; the existence of the earth realm, water realm, and so forth, and consciousness realm; the existence of cause and condition, consecutive thoughts, conditions that stimulate the mind, and the conditions that reinforce main causes; the existence of ignorance, action, consciousness, and so forth, and old age and death; the existence of the path of the ten virtuous karmas; the existence of the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations; the existence of the four approaches of absorption; and the existence of the rest of superior dharmas. For the sake of these sentient beings, I should aspire to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, cultivate various great bodhisattva actions, and realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal enlightenment to help them terminate such attachments forever.' You must know, Well-Appearing One, because these great bodhisattvas have had such a thought, and because they have been absorbed by expedient skillfulness when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, they will not enter and

stay in the superior concentrations of the Buddhas until they fulfill the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power and the rest of numberless and boundless Buddha dharmas.

"You must know, Well-Appearing One, although these great bodhisattvas have learned the three liberation gates and can enter and get out of them freely and easily, they refrain from realizing reality for the time being. They will not realize and attain reality until fulfilling the merits and virtues leading to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. You must know, Well-Appearing One, although these great bodhisattvas have not fulfilled all merits and virtues, they do have fulfilled the samadhi gate of emptiness.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, some great bodhisattvas always think, 'Various sentient beings have for a long time practiced the forms; namely, they have been attached to the forms of man, woman, sight, sound, smell, taste, touch, mental-image, or the forms of the 'I' and the rest of dharmas. For the sake of these sentient beings, I should aspire to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, cultivate various great bodhisattva actions, and realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal enlightenment to help the sentient beings terminate attachment to such various forms forever.' You must know, Well-Appearing One, because these great bodhisattvas have had such a thought, and because they have been absorbed by expedient skillfulness when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, they will not enter and stay in the superior concentrations of the Buddhas until fulfilling the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power and the rest of numberless and boundless Buddha dharmas. You must know, Well-Appearing One, although these great bodhisattvas have learned and are able to enter and get out of the three liberation gates freely and easily, they are not in a hurry to realize reality for the time being. They will not realize and attain reality until fulfilling the merits and virtues leading to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. You must know, Well-Appearing One, although these great bodhisattvas have not fulfilled all merits and virtues, they have fulfilled the samadhi gate of formlessness.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, some great bodhisattvas have cultivated and learned very well giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita; dwelled

peacefully in internal emptiness, external emptiness and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature; dwelled peacefully in realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable; 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 and learned well the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path; cultivated and learned well the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration; cultivated and learned well the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations; cultivated and learned well the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations; cultivated and learned well various stages of bodhisattva; cultivated and learned well dharani gates and samadhi gates; cultivated and learned well the five eyes and six supernatural powers; cultivated and learned well the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power; cultivated and learned well great loving-kindness, great compassion, great joy, and great equanimity; and cultivated and learned well staying in correct mindfulness and dwelling in equanimity at all times, as well as numberless and boundless other Buddha dharmas. You must know, Well-Appearing One, as these great bodhisattvas have achieved such unique and superior knowledge and views, it is unreasonable to say that they will initiate an affectionate thought of birth and death and insist that birth and death is full of pleasure or maintain a strong desire to dwell in the three realms.

"You must know, Well-Appearing One, as great bodhisattvas have cultivated well the factors for the bodhi and the dharma of the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones and their disciples, they should ask themselves this question, 'Why do great bodhisattvas cultivate diligently prajna paramita without attachment but refrain from realizing emptiness, formlessness, nonaspiration, nonarising, nonextinction, nonmaking, nondoing, nonnature, and reality, and thus refrain from attaining stream-entry effect, once-return effect, nonreturn effect, arhat effect, and self-enlightenment bodhi when they cultivate the factors for the bodhi to realize the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi?' If great bodhisattvas reply, 'As great bodhisattvas would like to realize the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, they should reflect on emptiness, formlessness, nonaspiration, nonarising, nonextinction, nonmaking, nondoing, nonnature, reality, and the rest of the factors for the bodhi, but should not

cultivate or learn them,' then these great bodhisattvas must have not been conferred by the Buddha the prophecy of nonregression in the pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. Why? These great bodhisattvas cannot explicate, manifest, and reveal the characteristics of the cultivation and learning made by the great bodhisattvas of nonregression. You must know, Well-Appearing One, if the great bodhisattvas say, 'In order to realize the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, great bodhisattvas should reflect correctly on emptiness, formlessness, nonaspiration, nonarising, nonextinction, nonmaking, nondoing, nonnature, reality, and the rest of the factors for the bodhi, but they should also expediently and skillfully cultivate and learn them without intending to realize anything arbitrarily.' Then these great bodhisattvas must have been conferred by the Buddha the prophecy of nonregression in the pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. Why? They have explicated, recognized, and manifested the characteristics of the great bodhisattvas without regression.

(The Buddha explained why great bodhisattvas should cultivate various superior dharmas but should not realize reality until fulfilling all merits and virtues.)

"Well-Appearing One, if great bodhisattvas cannot explicate, recognize, and manifest the characteristics of the great bodhisattva of nonregression, you must know that these great bodhisattvas have not well cultivated and learned giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna paramitas and the rest of the factors for enlightenment. They have not reached the stage of slight vexations, thus cannot explicate, recognize, and manifest the characteristics of the great bodhisattvas who are dwelling peacefully in nonregression. If great bodhisattvas can explicate, recognize, and manifest the characteristics of the great bodhisattvas of nonregression, you must know that they have already cultivated and learned well giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna paramitas and the rest of the factors for enlightenment, and have reached the stage of slight vexations, so they can explicate, recognize, and manifest the characteristics of dwelling peacefully in nonregression that great bodhisattvas of nonregression possess."

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked, "World-Honored One, will some great bodhisattvas who have not reached nonregression also respond this way?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “Some great bodhisattvas will reply to this question this way although they have not attained nonregression yet. You must know, Well-Appearing One, although these great bodhisattvas have not attained nonregression, they cultivate and learn well giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna paramitas and the rest of the factors for enlightenment; they have also developed a sharp and clever wisdom of enlightenment, so they can reply as the great bodhisattvas of nonregression do whether they have or have not heard about it.”

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One said to the Buddha again, “Many great bodhisattvas pursue the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, but few can reply as the great bodhisattvas of nonregression do, and confess which stages they have mastered or not, and remain content in their current stage.”

The Buddha said, “Yes, it is. Why? Very few great bodhisattvas have been conferred the prophecy of attaining the unique and superior wisdom of nonregression. Those who have been so conferred are able to reply like this. Well-Appearing One, those capable of responding this way must have planted the most brilliant and sharpest virtuous roots. They have cultivated very profound and broad knowledge and wisdom that cannot be stolen or destroyed by heavenly beings, human beings, asuras, and so forth of the world. They certainly will attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.

(The Buddha described the characteristics of the great bodhisattvas who would achieve the unsurpassed bodhi.)

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, these great bodhisattvas will not love and praise the dharmas in the stage of the voice-hearer or the stage of the self-enlightened one even in their dreams. They will not initiate a mind to love and praise the dharmas in the three realms. They always contemplate various dharmas as the dreams, echoes, and so forth, and mirages. They will contemplate and investigate this way, but they will not realize the reality. You must know that these bodhisattvas have possessed the characteristics of nonregression.

(The Buddha described the characters of the great bodhisattvas without regression.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, some great bodhisattvas saw in their dreams that the Thus-Comer, One Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened One was teaching the dharma to numberless hundreds of thousands of koti nayuta people. They surrounded the Buddha respectfully. After listening to the dharma, they all understood the essential meanings well and started to practice and cultivate diligently the dharma and correspondent virtues. They entered the samadhi and initiated actions in accord with the dharma. You must know that these bodhisattvas have also possessed the characteristics of nonregression.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, some great bodhisattvas saw in their dreams that the Thus-Comer, One Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened One was teaching the essential meanings of the dharma to numberless audience through his supernatural powers. The Thus-Comer had thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features. The brilliant lights constantly shone around the Buddha's body and expanded to as far as one yojana, while the audience jumped high up and stayed in the sky when they were listening to the Buddha. The great bodhisattvas also dreamed that the Thus-Comer was making transformed people and sent them to boundless Buddha lands to offer Buddhist services. You must know that these great bodhisattvas have already possessed the characteristics of nonregression.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, some great bodhisattvas dreamed that crazy robbers were destroying the village. They saw that the village was on fire and lions, tigers, wolves, fierce animals, poisonous snakes, and evil scorpions came out to harm people. They also dreamed that their enemies came to kill them by cutting their heads, saw that their parents, brothers, sisters, wives, and relatives were dying, or saw they themselves were very cold, hot, hungry, thirsty and overwhelmed by other vexations and suffering. When seeing these terrible things, they were not shocked, scared, terrified, worried, or annoyed. After they woke up, they immediately fell in reflection. They thought that three realms are not real; they are as illusory as dreams. They also thought that when they attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal enlightenment, they will teach sentient beings that all dharmas in the three realms are unreal and as illusory as dreams. You must know that these great bodhisattvas have possessed the characteristics of nonregression.

(The Buddha described the characteristics of great bodhisattvas of nonregression in these paragraphs.)

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, some great bodhisattvas in dreams saw the inferior destinies, such as hells, the realm of animals, and the realm of ghosts, and thought, ‘I should cultivate various great bodhisattva actions diligently and assiduously to achieve the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly. In my Buddha land, there will be no hells, the realm of animals, the realm of ghosts and their names.’ When they woke up, they also had the same thought. You must know, Well-Appearing One, when these great bodhisattvas become the Buddhas, there will be no inferior destinies in their Buddha lands. Why? All dharmas are not different or separate whether one is awake or dreaming. You must know that these bodhisattvas have already possessed the characteristics of nonregression.

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, some great bodhisattvas saw in their dreams that various sentient beings were living in burning hells or in burning villages and cities, so they vowed, ‘If I have been conferred the prophecy of nonregression and definitely will realize the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, I wish the burning fires will be put out immediately and all will become nice and cool.’ When the great bodhisattvas were making this vow in their dreams and the fires ceased immediately, you must know that these great bodhisattvas have been conferred the prophecy of nonregression. If the fires did not cease in their dreams, you must know that these great bodhisattvas have not been conferred the prophecy of nonregression.

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, some great bodhisattvas saw that the fires arose abruptly and expanded to other cities and villages when they were awake. They thus thought, ‘I have seen in my dreams or when I am awake that I have possessed the characteristics of nonregression, but I am not sure if it is true. If what I have seen is true, I hope these fires will be put out immediately and all become nice and cool.’ If these great bodhisattvas make this wish and the fires cease immediately, you must know that they have been conferred the prophecy of nonregression. Otherwise, they have not been conferred the prophecy of nonregression.

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, saw great bodhisattvas saw that various cities and villages were on fire when they were awake, so they thought, ‘I have in my dreams or when I am awake seen that I have possessed the characteristics of nonregression. If what I saw was true and it is certain that I will realize the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, I hope these fires will cease at once and all become nice and cool.’ If the fires do not cease at once, but continue to

burn one more house but skip the next house, burn one more alley but skip the next alley, and so forth, and then cease gradually, then these great bodhisattvas must know that they definitely have been conferred the prophecy of nonregression, while the sentient beings who suffered the fires had made bad karmas to hinder correct dharma in previous lives. They had once fell into bad destinies and suffered for numberless kalpas and their negative karmas remain inexhaustible in this life, or they are receiving a minor retribution in present life but will suffer more severely in the future for numberless kalpas because of the negative karmas they committed in previous lives.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, owing to these causes and conditions, we can identify the great bodhisattvas of nonregression. There are other characteristics that can distinguish the great bodhisattvas of nonregression from the regression ones. Let me explain to you respectively. Please listen to me and reflect on them carefully!"

(The Buddha would teach more about the features of nonregressive bodhisattvas.)

Well-Appearing One replied, "Yes, we are looking forward to your teaching!"

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, "Some great bodhisattvas observe that some men or women are captivated by mischievous nonhuman spirits and suffer and cannot get rid of them. So the great bodhisattvas thought, 'If the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones, knowing I have achieved pure pleasant intentions, decide to confer on me the prophecy of nonregression in pursuing the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. If I have initiated pure intentions to aspire to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi for a long time, stayed far away from any intentions in accord with the voice-hearers and the self-enlightened ones; if I definitely will attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi and bring benefits and happiness to various sentient beings for the endless futures; if there are really numberless Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones in the ten directions who are currently teaching the subtle, exquisite, and wonderful dharma to bring benefits and happiness to all sentient beings, and all these Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones can see everything, know everything, understand everything, and realize everything and can know, see, and awake intuitively to the differences of intentions and preferences of all sentient beings, I

am begging your compassion to look at my heart and listen to my sincerest words. If I can really cultivate great bodhisattva actions and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi to relieve all sentient beings from the suffering in birth and death, I hope these men and women will get rid of the harassment and annoyance caused by nonhuman spirits immediately upon my words.' If the nonhuman spirits do not leave immediately when the great bodhisattvas make this wish, you must know that they have not been conferred the prophecy of nonregression yet. If the nonhuman spirits do leave immediately, you must know that these great bodhisattvas have been conferred the prophecy of nonregression.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, some great bodhisattvas have not cultivated and learned well giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna paramitas; have not dwelled peacefully in internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature; have not dwelled peacefully in realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable; have not dwelled peacefully in the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering; have not cultivated and learned well the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path; have not cultivated and learned well the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations; have not cultivated and learned well the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations; have not cultivated and learned well the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration; have not cultivated and learned well the dharani gates and samadhi gates; have not entered onto the bodhisattva path of nonarising; and have not cultivated and possessed all Buddha dharmas so they are far away from the expedient skillfulness of bodhisattva, then they cannot avoid harassment and annoyance of evil demons, nor are they aware of the demonic hindrances. Without really knowing their own strengths and weaknesses and how many virtuous roots they have accumulated, these great bodhisattvas rush to imitate other great bodhisattvas by giving sincere words to make wishes, the demons will take advantage of these bodhisattvas' lack of knowledge to deceive them. When seeing that some men or women are captivated by nonhuman spirits, these great bodhisattvas will make vow, 'If I had been conferred by the Buddhas in the past the prophecy of nonregression in pursuing the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, these men or women will get rid of the nonhuman spirits

immediately upon my words.' At that time, the evil demons tried to deceive these great bodhisattvas by driving the nonhuman spirits away because they had stronger powers of magic than the spirits.

"Seeing what happened to these men and women, the great bodhisattvas rejoiced, danced, and jumped. They thought, 'Now the nonhuman spirits were gone. This is evidently because of my powers. Why? The nonhuman spirits let the men and women go when they heard my words. This is the only reason that they did this.' These great bodhisattvas were not aware of what the demons did and mistook that for their own powers and felt delighted out of this delusion. They thus disdain other bodhisattvas and said, 'I had been conferred by the Buddhas in the past the prophecy of nonregression in pursuing the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, so all vows I make will not be in vain. Since you have not been conferred the prophecy, you should not imitate me to make vows because what you do will be in vain.' Because these great bodhisattvas slander other bodhisattvas with contempt and exaggerate their own abilities, their various merits and virtues are contaminated by arrogance. They thus stay far away from the attainment of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. Because these great bodhisattvas do not have expedient and skillful powers, because their arrogance caused by overestimating self-achievement grows and increases, and because they slander other bodhisattvas with contempt, they will fall into the stage of voice-hearer or self-enlightened one even if they have worked diligently. Their blessings and virtues lost and become much less, and their virtuous karmas and sincere words become correspondent with demonic hindrances and contaminated, they thus cannot stay in intimate connection with or make offerings respectfully to esteem and acclaim the real virtuous intellectuals, nor inquire about the characteristics of the bodhisattva of nonregression or receive the messages about demonic affairs, their demonic bondages will become tighter. Why? These great bodhisattvas have cultivated giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna paramitas not long enough, they have also stayed far away from expedient skillfulness, so they are easily deceived and puzzled by evil demons. Therefore, Well-Appearing One, various great bodhisattvas should learn to know well about demonic hindrances.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, if great bodhisattvas have not cultivated giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna paramitas long enough, and stayed far

away from expedient skillfulness, they will be easily deceived and puzzled by evil demons, therefore, they should be aware of demonic hindrances. Why? Evil demons frequently disguise themselves as different figures, approach great bodhisattvas and say, ‘Hi, good gentleman, do you know what? You had been conferred by various Buddhas in the past the prophecy of attaining the great bodhi, so you will not regress in the pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. I know the names of your parents, brothers, sisters, relatives, friends, family members, and associates across your seven past lives. I know even the details, including the places, years, months, days, and hours of your births, and the names of the villages, cities, or the rulers.’ The demons saw the great bodhisattvas were soft in their hearts and dull in their minds, so said to them, ‘You were so before.’ If they saw their hearts were stubborn and minds were clever, they would also say, ‘You were so before.’ If the demons saw that the great bodhisattvas liked to live in quiet forests and sleep on grounds, begged for one meal a day, ate one meal a day, ate one bowl a day, stayed in graveyards on grounds or under trees, wore ragged clothes made of patches or owned only three pieces of clothes, never lied down, liked used bed mats, desired very little for living and were easily satisfied, preferred to get far away and tranquility and concentration, stayed in correct mindfulness, possessed exquisite wisdom, did not value benefits and offerings, did not treasure good reputation, loved simple and frugal life, did not rub oil on feet, slept a little, stayed away from restlessness and wandering, talked a little or liked to speak kind words, then the demons would cheat them by saying, ‘I knew you were already so and so in your previous lives. Why? You have achieved such superior and unique merits and virtues in this life; many people have seen that. You must have already achieved such superior and unique merits and virtues in your previous lives. You should be proud of yourself and do not underestimate yourself.’

“After hearing what the demons said about the great bodhisattvas’ merits and virtues in the past and future, the names of their relatives and friends, and the acclamations about their unique and superior merits and virtues, the great bodhisattvas rejoiced and danced and jumped, their self-pride and arrogance increased, and they started to disdain and slander other bodhisattvas. At that time, the evil demons knew what happened to them, so said to them, ‘You will for sure achieve unique and superior merits and virtues. The Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones in the past had conferred on you the

prophecy of nonregression in the pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. We can see the good omen of that.' At that time, in order to deceive the great bodhisattvas, the evil demons would disguise themselves as monks, laypersons, parents, brothers, sisters, relatives, friends, pure celibacy practitioners, teachers, masters, deities, dragons, yaksas, humans, or nonhumans and appeared before the great bodhisattvas, and said, 'The Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones had long time ago conferred on you the prophecy of attaining the great bodhi. You will not regress in the pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. Why? You have already possessed the characteristics of great bodhisattvas of nonregression. You should value yourself without hesitation!' Hearing this, the great bodhisattvas grew more arrogant.

"Well-Appearing One, these great bodhisattvas did not have the characteristics of nonregression. They were captivated and hindered by the demons and could not act freely and at ease. Why? They did not learn and develop the characteristics that great bodhisattvas of nonregression should possess. They easily believed demons' words, became more arrogant, and started to disdain and slander other bodhisattvas. Therefore, Well-Appearing One, if great bodhisattvas would like to attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, they should be well aware of the demonic obstacles.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, some great bodhisattvas were captivated and bewitched by demons. Once hearing the names mentioned by the demons, they became attached to their own delusions. Why? These great bodhisattvas had not cultivated giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna paramitas as well as the rest of numberless and boundless Buddha dharmas before, so demons found this as an opportunity. These great bodhisattvas could not understand the mental images of aggregate demon, death demon, heavenly demon, and vexation demon, because of this cause and condition, the demons would also find this as an opportunity. These great bodhisattvas could not understand the aggregates of matter, feeling, thinking, action, and consciousness as well as the rest of numberless dharma gates, nor could they understand the real forms of the names of various sentient beings. Because of this cause and condition, the demons would take advantage of this opportunity to transform themselves as different figures and said to bodhisattvas, 'You have fulfilled the cultivation that you have aspired to, and will attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. When you

become a Buddha, you will obtain a venerable name and other names that represent your superior and wonderful merits and virtues.' These bodhisattvas had thought about those names for a long time, and the demons could read their minds. In the meantime, because these great bodhisattvas were far away from prajna paramita and did not have expedient skillfulness, once hearing what the demons said, they would think, 'This person is very special. His prophecy of the names of the Buddha that I will become is the same as I have long thought about. It is for sure that various Buddhas in the past had conferred on me the prophecy of the attainment of the great bodhi. I will thus never regress in my pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. When I become a Buddha in the future, I will attain these noble names that denote my various merits and virtues.' These great bodhisattvas were captivated by evil demons and their followers, or the transformed sramanas, and wrongly believed that they had been conferred the prophecy of becoming a Buddha with such and such names, so their arrogance increased and thought, 'I will become a Buddha in the future and gain such names that denote my merits and virtues. No other bodhisattvas can compare to me.'

"You must know, Well-Appearing One, these great bodhisattvas did not possess the characteristics of the great bodhisattvas of nonregression. They became so arrogant that they disdained and slandered other bodhisattvas only because they heard the demon's deceptive words. Because of their arrogance, slander, and contempt for other bodhisattvas, they would stay far away from the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi and could not adopt expedient skillfulness, thus they would turn away from virtuous friends, and would be always absorbed by not virtuous friends. They would fall into the stage of voice-hearer or self-enlightened one. You must know, Well-Appearing One, it is likely that someday they will return to correct mindfulness, sincerely repent and regret what they did, and again stay connected with virtuous friends and frequently make offerings respectfully to esteem and acclaim them. After drifting in the cycle of birth and death for such a long time, now they return to cultivate and learn the fathomless prajna paramita step by step, they are possibly able to realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. If these great bodhisattvas do not return to correct mindfulness, do not repent and regret what they did, nor stay connected with virtuous friends and frequently make offerings respectfully to esteem and acclaim them, then they will fall into the stage of voice-hearer or self-enlightened one even if they can cultivate various virtuous karmas

diligently after drifting in the cycle of birth and death for a long time. If a monk as a voice-hearer pursuer commits one of the four grievous sins, he will be no more a sramana or the son of Sakya; he will not be able to attain stream-entry effect presently. So do the bodhisattvas who are attached to faulty reputations. Once hearing the lies given by demons that they will become the Buddha, their arrogance increases and starts to slander and disdain the rest of the great bodhisattvas. You must know that the sin they commit is more serious than the four grievous sins by many times. Let's put the four grievous sins aside. This sin is even more serious than the five uninterrupted sins of bodhisattva by immeasurable times. Why? These great bodhisattvas have not truly achieved superior merits and virtues but become arrogant upon hearing demon's deceptive words that they will become Buddha; their sin thus is more serious than the five uninterrupted sins. Therefore, to attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, great bodhisattvas should stay in alert to and be aware of the subtle demonic hindrances, such as illusory names and so forth, while working diligently toward the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, a great bodhisattva has cultivated getting far away; namely, living as a recluse in mountains, woods, vast and dried swamps, and wilderness or practicing meditation and contemplation in quiet forests. In the meantime, an evil demon came to this bodhisattva's place and said with respect and admiration, 'Excellent, great bodhisattva, you are able to cultivate such a real getting far away. All the Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones will admire and acclaim you. Heavenly Emperor Indra and all heavenly deities will always protect and make offerings to esteem you. You should always stay here, don't move elsewhere!' You must know, Well-Appearing One, I will not especially admire and acclaim the great bodhisattvas who go to stay in quiet forests, wilderness, or mountains and meditate there to cultivate the so-called getting far away."

At that time, Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "What kinds of getting far away does the Buddha not admire when great bodhisattvas stay alone in quiet forests, wilderness, and mountains and keep siting and meditating?"

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, "Whether great bodhisattvas live in mountains, forests, vast and dried swamps, wilderness, and any other quiet places, or in the crowded and

noisy cities, villages, or capitals, what really matters is if they can get far away from negative karmas of vexations and the intentions in accord with voice-hearers and self-enlightened ones. If they practice the fathomless prajna paramita and the rest of the superior and wonderful merits and virtues, they are the real faraway practitioners. All Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones will approve and admire such faraway actions. Great bodhisattvas should cultivate and learn this way. If they correctly reflect on and cultivate this kind of getting far away diligently day and night without an aspiration to voice-hearer and self-enlightened one, and can get rid of all negative karmas of vexations, noises, and restlessness, they indeed practice the faraway actions of the bodhisattva. This enables great bodhisattvas to realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly to bring benefits and happiness to all sentient beings incessantly and endlessly. You must know, Well-Appearing One, the way that evil demons admire to live as a recluse in mountains, forests, vast and dried swamps, wilderness, or other quiet places and sit and meditate without lying down is not the real getting far away of bodhisattva. Why? In this kind of getting far away, noises and restlessness along with negative karmas of vexations and intentions in accord with voice-hearers and self-enlightened ones still remain, so great bodhisattvas will not believe in, cultivate, and learn diligently and assiduously the fathomless prajna paramita; they will be hindered from fulfilling the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge.

(The Buddha explained the real getting far away approved by Buddhas.)

"You must know, Well-Appearing One, some great bodhisattvas prefer to practice getting far away the way that the demons admire, thus initiate an impure arrogant mind to look down on, disdain, and slander other great bodhisattvas. Those who are slandered and disdained live in cities, villages, or capitals, but their minds are pure, and they do not have negative karmas of vexations or intentions in accord with voice-hearers or self-enlightened ones. They cultivate and learn diligently and attentively giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna paramitas, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena. They dignify and purify Buddha lands and assist sentient beings to mature. Although they live in noisy and restless environments, their minds are tranquil, and they always practice real getting far away. These are the great bodhisattvas the arrogant great bodhisattvas have disdained, slandered, and insulted with contempt.

"You must know, Well-Appearing One, these great bodhisattvas have been far away from prajna paramita, and far away from expedient skillfulness. They live in the wilderness that is as expensive as one hundred yojanas, where there are no fierce beasts, snakes, scorpions, or robbers, but ghosts, devas, and rakshasas (the malignant spirits) stay and wander. These great bodhisattvas have stayed in the quiet places for one, five, ten, one hundred, one thousand, or koti nayuta years, and are said they cultivate faraway actions although they do not. They do not understand what getting far away really means. While other great bodhisattvas living in noisiness have tranquil minds. They are far away from negative karmas of vexations and the intention correspondent with the voice-hearer and the self-enlightened one. They are aspiring wholeheartedly to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. You must know, Well-Appearing One, the former great bodhisattvas have lived in the wilderness for a very long time, but they have not been rid of the intentions correspondent with the voice-hearer and the self-enlightened one; rather, they have cultivated the faraway actions based on and thus are deeply imbued with the stages of the voice-hearer and the self-enlightened one. Although they have cultivated the so-called getting far away for a long time, the Buddhas do not agree with their actions.

"You must know, Well-Appearing One, these great bodhisattvas have not achieved the faraway actions that I admire. They even do not have the characteristics close to the real faraway actions. Why? They do not like the real faraway actions; they only love to cultivate the unreal faraway actions of the voice-hearer and the self-enlightened one. Well-Appearing One, you must know that when the great bodhisattvas cultivate the unreal getting far away, demons come from sky and delightedly acclaim, 'Great bodhisattva, excellent, excellent! You really can cultivate the genuine getting far away that all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones admire. You have cultivated and learned this getting far away diligently, so you will attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi before long.' You must know, Well-Appearing One, because these great bodhisattvas are attached to the faraway actions based on the two vehicles and regard them as superior, they will look down on, disdain, and slander those who dwell in the bodhisattva vehicle or the monks who live in noisy cities, but can adjust well and keep their minds in tranquility.

(The Buddha distinguished the genuine getting far away from unreal one.)

"You must know, Well-Appearing One, these great bodhisattvas criticize and slander genuine faraway practitioners admired by the Buddhas, claiming that they are too chaotic and lack tranquility. Instead, they praise those not approved by Thus-Comers for their quietness, mistakenly calling them genuine faraway practitioners. What they should do is staying in close connection with and make offerings respectfully to the genuine practitioners that the Buddhas admire, but they look down on, disdain, and slander them. They should stay far away from the not virtuous friends, but they stay with them intimately and make offerings respectfully to them as if they were the World-Honored One. You must know, Well-Appearing One, these great bodhisattvas have stayed far away from prajna paramita and cannot act expediently and skillfully; they have allowed various differentiations and attachments to arise in delusions. Why? They think they have cultivated and learned genuine getting far away, so nonhumans admire and protect them, and keep them in mind. They further think who will respect and protect those who live in noisy and chaotic cities? Because of this cause and condition, their arrogance grows, and when they disdain and slander other great bodhisattvas, their vexations and negative karmas also grow and increase continuously.

"Well-Appearing One, you must know, the fake great bodhisattvas are candela (violent and rude people of very low social class), who have polluted all bodhisattvas. They appear in the form of great bodhisattva but are more like the thieves to all heavenly and human beings. They have deceived all heavenly beings, human beings, asuras, and so forth, by wrapping themselves with the robes of a sramana (monk), but they are more like robbers. All bodhisattva-vehicle practitioners should stay away from them and should not make offerings to esteem or acclaim them. Why? They are so arrogant that they look like a bodhisattva, but inside they are full of defiled vexations.

(The Buddha strongly disapproved the fake bodhisattvas.)

"Therefore, Well-Appearing One, if great bodhisattvas are very reluctant to abandon the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge or give up the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, and if they are deeply dedicated to pursuing the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge and to attaining the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi so that they are able to

bring benefits and happiness to all sentient beings, they should not stay with these fake bodhisattvas, nor should they make offerings to esteem and acclaim these evil ones.

"You must know, Well-Appearing One, great bodhisattvas should cultivate diligently their own business and karmas but should not be attached to birth and death and the three realms. To those evil robbers and candala, they should have empathy with loving-kindness, compassion, joy, and equanimity. They should think, 'I must not do as those evil ones do. If I get lost and do something wrong, I should wake up and stop it immediately.' Therefore, Well-Appearing One, to realize the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, great bodhisattvas should be always in alert and get to know various demonic hindrances. They should progress diligently and stay far away from the faults the fake great bodhisattvas do, and work hard to pursue the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, if great bodhisattvas would like to foster aspiration for realizing the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, they should always stay with and make offerings respectfully to esteem and acclaim the real, pure, and virtuous friends."

At t that time, Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "What are the real, pure, and virtuous friends for great bodhisattvas?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "All Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones are the real, pure, and virtuous friends for various bodhisattvas. All great bodhisattvas are the real, pure, and virtuous friends for bodhisattvas. The voice-hearers and the rest of the virtuous gentlepersons who can lecture on, explain, analyze, and manifest the dharma gates correspondent with giving, pure precept, forbearance, diligence, meditation, and prajna paramitas for bodhisattvas so that they can easily understand are also the real, pure, and virtuous friends of the bodhisattvas.

(The Buddha explained the meaning of the real, pure, and virtuous friends for great bodhisattvas.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita are the real, pure, and virtuous friends of bodhisattvas. The four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path are the real, pure, and

virtuous friends of bodhisattvas. The four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations are the real, pure, and virtuous friends of bodhisattvas. The eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations are the real, pure, and virtuous friends of bodhisattvas. The liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration are the real, pure, and virtuous friends of bodhisattvas. The stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilement, and so forth, and the stage of dharma cloud are the real, pure, and virtuous friends of bodhisattvas. The dharani gates and samadhi gates are the real, pure, and virtuous friends of bodhisattvas. The five eyes and six supernatural powers are the real, pure, and virtuous friends of bodhisattvas. The Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power are the real, pure, and virtuous friends of bodhisattvas. Great loving-kindness, great compassion, great joy, and great equanimity are the real, pure, and virtuous friends of bodhisattvas. Staying in correct mindfulness and dwelling in equanimity at all times are the real, pure, and virtuous friends of bodhisattvas. The perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena are the real, pure, and virtuous friends of bodhisattvas. Permanent termination of all enduring negative dispositions is the real, pure, and virtuous friend of bodhisattvas. All great bodhisattva actions are the real, pure, and virtuous friends of bodhisattvas. The unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas is the real, pure, and virtuous friend of bodhisattvas.

(The Buddha enumerated more real, pure, and virtuous friends for great bodhisattvas.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering are the real, pure, and virtuous friends of the bodhisattvas. Various factors of dependent origination are the real, pure, and virtuous friends of bodhisattvas. Internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature are the real, pure, and virtuous friends of bodhisattva. Realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable are also the real, pure, and virtuous friends of bodhisattvas.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita are the guiding teachers, brilliant torches, illuminating lamps, explanation

and awakening, knowledge and wisdom, rescue and protection, abodes and houses, continents and islands, objectives and destinations, and fathers and mothers for great bodhisattvas. The four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena are the guiding teachers, brilliant torches, illuminating lamps, explanation and awakening, knowledge and wisdom, rescue and protection, abodes and houses, continents and islands, objectives and destinations, and fathers and mothers for great bodhisattvas. The permanent termination of all enduring negative dispositions, all great bodhisattva actions, and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas are the guiding teachers, brilliant torches, illuminating lamps, explication and awakening, knowledge and wisdom, rescue and protection, abodes and houses, continents and isles, objectives and destinations, and fathers and mothers for great bodhisattvas.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering are the guiding teachers, brilliant torches, illuminating lamps, explanation and awakening, knowledge and wisdom, rescue and protection, abodes and houses, continents and islands, objectives and destinations, and fathers and mothers for great bodhisattvas. The dependent origination of all dharmas and its factors are the guiding teachers, brilliant torches, illuminating lamps, explanation and awakening, knowledge and wisdom, rescue and protection, abodes and houses, continents and islands, objectives and destinations, and fathers and mothers for great bodhisattvas. Internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature are the guiding teachers, brilliant torches, illuminating lamps, explanation and awakening, knowledge and wisdom, rescue and protection, abodes and houses, continents and islands, objectives and destinations, and fathers and mothers for great bodhisattvas. Realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable are also the guiding teachers, brilliant torches, illuminating lamps, explanation and awakening, knowledge and wisdom, rescue and protection, abodes and houses, continents and islands, objectives and destinations, and fathers and mothers for great bodhisattvas. Why? All Buddhas, the World-Honored Ones in the past, future, and present, had adopted, will adopt, and are adopting giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita, and realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable as the guiding teachers, brilliant torches, illuminating lamps, explanation and

awakening, knowledge and wisdom, rescue and protection, abodes and houses, continents and islands, objectives and destinations, and fathers and mothers. Why? All Buddhas, the World-Honored Ones in the past, future, and present are born and grown from giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita. They are also born and grown from realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable.

"Therefore, Well-Appearing One, if great bodhisattvas with enhanced motivation would like to realize the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, assist sentient beings to mature, and dignify and purify Buddha lands, they should learn giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable. After learning giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable, they should further absorb sentient beings by means of the four approaches. What are they? They are unconditional generous giving, speaking virtuous and kind words, doing actions beneficial for others, and getting along with others in harmony and empathy. Well-Appearing One, I have contemplated all these meanings, so I will say that giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable are the guiding teachers, brilliant torches, and so forth, and the fathers and mothers for the great bodhisattvas. Therefore, Well-Appearing One, in order to act without following the words other than the Buddha's, dwell without following the words other than the Buddha's, solve the doubts of all sentient beings, satisfy all sentient beings' wishes, dignify and purify Buddha lands, and assist sentient beings to mature, great bodhisattvas should learn prajna paramita. Why? Well-Appearing One, in the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita, all dharmas that great bodhisattvas should learn are extensively taught. Therefore, all great bodhisattvas must cultivate and learn them diligently."

(The Buddha explained why great bodhisattvas should learn prajna paramita.)

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Chapter 23

Skillful Means

Section 3

(In the Third Assembly)

At that time, the long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, “World-Honored One, what forms does the fathomless prajna paramita adopt?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “The fathomless prajna paramita adopts emptiness, nonattachment, formlessness, tranquility, and getting far away as its forms. Why? In these fathomless forms of prajna paramita, the forms of all dharmas are unattainable and nonexistent.”

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, “Are there the causes and conditions that allow us to say that the rest of the dharmas have also the wonderful forms as the prajna paramita does?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “Yes, there are the causes and conditions that allow us to say that the rest of the dharmas have also the wonderful forms as prajna paramita does. Why? As the fathomless prajna paramita adopts empty nature as its form, so the rest of the dharmas also adopt empty nature as their form. As the fathomless prajna paramita adopts nonattainment as its form, so the rest of the dharmas also adopt nonattainment as their form. As the fathomless prajna paramita adopts formlessness as its form, so the rest of the dharmas also adopt formlessness as its form. As the fathomless prajna paramita adopts tranquility as its form, so the rest of the dharmas also adopt tranquility as their form. As the fathomless prajna paramita adopts getting far away as its form, so the rest of the dharmas also adopt getting far away as their form. Based on these causes and conditions, it is reasonable to say that the rest of the dharmas

also have the wonderful forms as the fathomless prajna paramita does. It is because the self-natures of all dharmas are empty and far away."

(The Buddha taught that not only prajna paramita but also other dharmas adopt emptiness, nonattachment, formlessness, tranquility, and getting far away as their forms.)

At that time, Well-Appearing One said to the Buddha, "If the self-natures of all dharmas are empty and far away, then all dharmas are empty and far away. If this is the case, how can sentient beings be established as contaminated and purified? The dharmas with empty self-natures do not have contamination and purification; the faraway dharmas do not have contamination and purification either. The dharmas with empty self-natures cannot realize the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi; the faraway dharmas cannot realize the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi either. There are no attainable dharmas in the empty natures or in the faraway natures. In the empty and faraway natures, no great bodhisattvas can realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. How can I understand such profound essential meanings that the Buddha teaches?"

The Buddha asked Well-Appearing One, "What do you think about this? Do sentient beings have the 'I' and the associated images? Have they been attached to the 'I' and the associated images for a very long time?"

Well-Appearing One replied, "Yes, World-Honored One. Yes, Well-Gone One. The sentient beings have the 'I' and the associated images and have been attached to them for a very long time."

The Buddha asked Well-Appearing One, "What do you think about this? Are the 'I' and the associated images that sentient beings are attached to empty and far away?"

Well-Appearing One replied, "Yes, World-Honored One. Yes, Well-Gone One. The 'I' and the associated images that sentient beings are attached to are empty and far away."

The Buddha asked Well-Appearing One, "What do you think about this? Do sentient beings drift in birth and death because they are attached to the 'I' and the associated images?"

Well-Appearing One replied, “Yes, World-Honored One. Yes, Well-Gone One. The sentient beings have drifted in birth and death because they have been attached to the ‘I’ and the associated images.”

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, “The sentient beings have drifted in birth and death because they are contaminated. Contamination is established because of sentient beings. If the minds of sentient beings are not contaminated, the ‘I’ and the associated images are not contaminated either. If there is no such contamination, there will be no drifting in birth and death. As the drifting in birth and death is unattainable, you must know that sentient beings are far away from contamination. Based on noncontamination, purification is established. Therefore, Well-Appearing One, although the self-natures of all dharmas are empty and far away, sentient beings can be established as contaminated and purified.”

(The Buddha explained why sentient beings can be established as contaminated and purified as the self-natures of all dharmas are empty and far away.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One said to the Buddha, “If great bodhisattvas can practice the fathomless prajna paramita and the empty and faraway natures of all dharmas this way, then they do not practice the aggregate 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. They do not practice the earth realm, water realm, and so forth, and consciousness realm; the cause and condition, and so forth, and the conditions that reinforce main causes; ignorance, action, and so forth, and old age and death; giving 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 four noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, cessation of suffering, and the path for 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; no killing, no stealing, and so forth, and no incorrect views; the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration; the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, 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 defilement, and so forth, and stage of dharma cloud; the dharani gates and the samadhi gates; the five eyes and the six supernatural powers; the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power; great loving-kindness, great compassion, great joy, and great equanimity; the thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features; staying in correct mindfulness and dwelling in equanimity at all times; stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi; all great bodhisattva actions, the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal Bodhi of various Buddhas, and the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena. Why? All these dharmas are unattainable; the one who can practice, the dharma practiced, the time of practice, the place of practice, and the cause of practice are all nonexistent.

"World-Honored One, if great bodhisattvas can practice this way, they will not be subjugated by all heavenly beings, human beings, asuras, and so forth in the world, or by all voice-hearers and self-enlightened ones. Why? These great bodhisattvas have dwelled peacefully in the state of invincibility; namely, the bodhisattva path of nonarising. World-Honored One, these great bodhisattvas have always dwelled in an intention correspondent with the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, so they are invincible. World-Honored One, if great bodhisattvas practice this way, they will stay close to the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, and thus will realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi before long, and turn the wonderful dharma wheel to deliver all sentient beings."

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, "Yes, it is as you say. As great bodhisattvas practice the fathomless prajna paramita and the forms of all dharmas as empty and faraway, they equally do not practice the aggregate of matter, feeling, and so forth, and the perfect knowledge of all phenomena. If they practice this way, they will stay close to the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge and thus will realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi before long, and turn the wonderful dharma wheel to deliver all sentient beings.

(The Buddha affirmed Well-Appearing One's statement that great bodhisattvas should practice various dharmas with the realization that the fathomless prajna paramita and the natures of all dharmas are empty and faraway, so that they can achieve the unsurpassed bodhi swiftly to deliver all sentient beings. They then will be invincible.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, suppose that all sentient beings in the continent of Jambudvipa are reborn as human beings. They all have aspired to cultivate and learn various great bodhisattva actions, and have all realized and attained the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. Meanwhile, some good gentlemen and gentlewomen have in the rest of their lives made the most wonderful offerings respectfully to esteem and acclaim all these Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones, and further transfer all virtuous roots thus accumulated along with sentient beings equally toward the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. What do you think about this? Will these good gentlemen and gentlewomen be much blessed?"

Well-Appearing One replied, "They will be very much blessed, World-Honored One. They will be very much blessed, Well-Gone One."

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, "If some good gentlemen and gentlewomen lecture publicly on such fathomless prajna paramita, and organize, analyze, and explain it to make it understandable, so sentient beings can dwell in a mind correspondent with the fathomless prajna paramita, the merits and virtues thus derived will be much more than the former ones by innumerable times.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, suppose that all sentient beings of the large threefold thousand-world are reborn as human beings. They have all aspired to cultivate and learn various great bodhisattva actions, and have realized and attained the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. Meanwhile, some good gentlemen and gentlewomen in the rest of their lives have made the most wonderful offerings respectfully to esteem and acclaim all these Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones, and further transfer all virtuous roots thus accumulated along with sentient beings equally toward the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. What do you think about this? Will these good gentlemen and gentlewomen be much blessed?"

Well-Appearing One replied, “They will be very much blessed, World-Honored One. They will be very much blessed, Well-Gone One.”

The Buddha further said to Well-Appearing One, “If some good gentlemen and gentlewomen lecture publicly on such fathomless prajna paramita and organize, analyze, and explain respectively to make it understandable, so sentient beings can dwell in a mind correspondent with the fathomless prajna paramita, the merits and virtues thus derived will be much more than the former ones by innumerable times.

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, suppose that all sentient beings of this continent of Jambudvipa are reborn as human beings simultaneously, and in the meantime some good gentlemen and gentlewomen have expediently taught and guided these human beings so they are able to dwell peacefully in the path of the ten virtuous karmas; the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations; the five supernatural powers; the stream-entry effect, once-return effect, nonreturn effect, arhat effect, or self-enlightenment bodhi; and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. Furthermore, they will transfer all virtuous roots thus accumulated along with all sentient beings equally toward the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. What do you think about this? Will these good gentlemen and gentlewomen be much blessed because of this cause and condition?”

Well-Appearing One replied, “They will be very much blessed, World-Honored One. They will be very much blessed, Well-Gone One.”

The Buddha further said to Well-Appearing One, “If some good gentlemen and gentlewomen lecture publicly on such fathomless prajna paramita and organize, analyze, and explain respectively to make it understandable, so sentient beings can dwell in a mind correspondent with the fathomless prajna paramita, the merits and virtues thus derived will be much more than the former ones by innumerable times.

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, suppose that all sentient beings of the large threefold thousand-world are reborn as human beings simultaneously, and in the meantime, some good gentlemen and gentlewomen expediently teach and guide these human beings to dwell peacefully in the path of the ten virtuous karmas; the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four

formless concentrations; the five supernatural powers; the stream-entry effect, once-return effect, nonreturn effect, arhat effect, or self-enlightenment bodhi, or the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, and further transfer all virtuous roots thus accumulated along with all sentient beings equally toward the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. What do you think about this? Will these good gentlemen and gentlewomen be much blessed because of this cause and condition?"

Well-Appearing One replied, "They will be very much blessed, World-Honored One. They will be very much blessed, Well-Gone One."

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, "If some good gentlemen and gentlewomen lecture publicly on such fathomless prajna paramita and organize, analyze, and explain respectively to make it understandable, so sentient beings can dwell in a mind correspondent with the fathomless prajna paramita, the merits and virtues thus derived will be much more than the former ones by innumerable times.

"Well-Appearing One, you must know that these great bodhisattvas will help sentient beings cross the river to the blessed other shore because of their strengthened powers of diligence. Why? These great bodhisattvas have worked diligently on the dharma; their powers increase and no other sentient beings can catch up except the Thus-Comer, One Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened One. Why? When cultivating prajna paramita, the great bodhisattvas see that sentient beings do not have benefits and happiness, so their minds of great loving-kindness arise. Seeing that sentient beings are weak and in suffering, their minds of great compassion arise. Seeing that sentient beings have gained benefits and happiness, their minds of great joy arise. Seeing that sentient beings are apart from nature and forms, their minds of great equanimity arise. They are doing what the voice-hearers and self-enlightened ones cannot do. Although these great bodhisattvas have great loving-kindness, great compassion, great joy, and great equanimity and treat all sentient beings equally, they are not attached to them. That is why they are so different from ordinary sentient beings, voice-hearers, and self-enlightened ones. They are not attached to all, while the ordinary sentient beings, voice-hearers, and the self-enlightened ones have attainment and attachment in their minds.

(The Buddha emphasized that great bodhisattvas are unique because they are free from attachment and attainment when helping sentient beings.)

"Well-Appearing One, you must know that these great bodhisattvas have practiced the fathomless prajna paramita and thus attained great brightness, namely, the great brightness of giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita. Although they have not realized the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, they have achieved nonregression in the pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, so they can reach the other shore, the blessed field of sentient beings, and deserve the offerings of clothing, food, drinks, beds, chairs, medicines, and other living supplies. These great bodhisattvas have always stayed in a mind in accord with prajna paramita. This is the way that they return the favor with gratitude to the givers, and this is why they can stay close to the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. Therefore, Well-Appearing One, if great bodhisattvas would like to really repay the favors and the trusts granted by the kings, high-ranking officials, and the rest of the sentient beings; if they would like to reveal a real and pure way for sentient beings; if they would like to become a great bright illumination for sentient beings; if they would like to liberate all sentient beings from the prisons of the three realms; and if they would like to bring pure dharma eye to sentient beings, they should always dwell peacefully in a mind correspondent with the fathomless prajna paramita.

(The Buddha reiterated the importance of the fathomless prajna paramita for great bodhisattvas.)

"Well-Appearing One, you must know that these great bodhisattvas have always dwelled in an intention correspondent with prajna paramita, so other intentions than this will not be allowed to arise even for an instant. You must know, Well-Appearing One, these great bodhisattvas have worked diligently day and night to dwell peacefully and firmly in an intention correspondent with prajna paramita without interruption, even briefly. Well-Appearing One, like a man who was used to have no jewels. One day he got one and so enjoyed and treasured it. But later he lost it and was extremely painful, thinking, 'It is such a great pity! When can I have that lost jewel returned to me?' This thought always remained in his mind. Well-Appearing One, so do the great bodhisattvas who work diligently and dwell peacefully in a mind correspondent with

prajna paramita. If they stay away from the intention correspondent with prajna paramita, they will also lose the intention correspondent with the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge."

At that time, Well-Appearing One said to the Buddha, "The self-natures of all intentions are empty; the self-natures of all intentions are far away. So do various dharmas. In empty and faraway self-natures of all dharmas, great bodhisattvas, prajna paramita, the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, and various intentions are unattainable. How do great bodhisattvas not stay far away from the intentions correspondent with prajna paramita and the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "If great bodhisattvas realize that the self-natures of all dharmas and the self-natures of intentions are empty and far away, and that such empty nature and faraway nature are not made by voice-hearers, self-enlightened ones, bodhisattvas, Thus-Comers, or the rest of sentient beings; if they realize that dharma concentration, dharma dwelling, dharma nature, dharma realm, the nature of nonillusion, nature of changelessness, nature of equality, nature of nonarising, realness, reality, the realm of empty space, and the realm of the inconceivable of all dharmas always dwell as they have done, then these great bodhisattvas are not apart from the intentions correspondent with prajna paramita and the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. Why? The self-nature of the fathomless prajna paramita, the self-nature of the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, and the self-nature of the intentions are far away and empty. Such empty nature and faraway nature do not increase or decrease. Correctly and fully understanding this truth is called not staying away from the intentions correspondent with prajna paramita and the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge."

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, "If the self-nature of the fathomless prajna paramita is also empty and far away, how can great bodhisattvas cultivate and realize the nature of equality of prajna paramita and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "When cultivating the nature of equality of prajna paramita, great bodhisattvas realize that Buddha dharmas do not increase or decrease. They also realize that dharma concentration, dharma dwelling, dharma nature, dharma realm, the

nature of nonillusion, nature of changelessness, nature of equality, nature of nonarising, realness, reality, the realm of empty space, and the realm of the inconceivable of all dharmas do not increase or decrease. Why? The fathomless prajna paramita is not one, two, or many. You must know, Well-Appearing One, if great bodhisattvas do not become shocked, scared, frightened, sinking, drowned, and hesitant upon hearing the fathomless prajna paramita, they must have cultivated the fathomless prajna paramita to its ultimate stage; they have dwelled peacefully in the state of nonregression and will realize the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi before long."

(The Buddha described the great bodhisattvas who have achieved nonregression and are very close to the unsurpassed bodhi.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again: "World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita with the fathomless prajna paramita?"

"No, Well-Appearing One."

"World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita apart from the attainment of the fathomless prajna paramita?"

"No, Well-Appearing One."

"World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita with the empty, nonexistent, not easy, and not solid nature of the fathomless prajna paramita?"

"No, Well-Appearing One."

"World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita apart from the attainment of the empty, nonexistent, not easy, and not solid nature of prajna paramita?"

"No, Well-Appearing One."

"World-Honored One, can one practice emptiness with empty nature?"

"No, Well-Appearing One."

“World-Honored One, can one practice emptiness apart from the attainment of empty nature?”

“No, Well-Appearing One.”

“World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita with the aggregate of matter, feeling, and so forth, and consciousness?”

“No, Well-Appearing One.”

“World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita apart from the attainment of the aggregate of matter, feeling, and so forth, and consciousness?”

“No, Well-Appearing One.”

“World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita with the eye sphere, ear sphere, and so forth, and conscious sphere?”

“No, Well-Appearing One.”

“World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita apart from the attainment of the eye sphere, ear sphere, and so forth, and conscious sphere?”

“No, Well-Appearing One.”

“World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita with the sight sphere, sound sphere, and so forth, and mental-image sphere?”

“No, Well-Appearing One.”

“World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita apart from the attainment of the sight sphere, sound sphere, and so forth, and mental-image sphere?”

“No, Well-Appearing One.”

“World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita with the eye realm, ear realm, and so forth, and conscious realm?”

"No, Well-Appearing One."

"World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita apart from the attainment of the eye realm, ear realm, and so forth, and conscious realm?"

"No, Well-Appearing One."

"World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita with the sight realm, sound realm, and so forth, and mental-image realm?"

"No, Well-Appearing One."

"World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita apart from the attainment of the sight realm, sound realm, and so forth, and mental-image realm?"

"No, Well-Appearing One."

"World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita with the eye consciousness realm, ear consciousness realm, and so forth, and conscious consciousness realm?"

"No, Well-Appearing One."

"World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita apart from the attainment of the eye consciousness realm, ear consciousness realm, and so forth, and conscious consciousness realm?"

"No, Well-Appearing One."

"World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita with the eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact?"

"No, Well-Appearing One."

"World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita apart from the attainment of the eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact?"

"No, Well-Appearing One."

"World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita with the feelings produced by eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact?"

"No, Well-Appearing One."

"World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita apart from the attainment of the feelings produced by eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact?"

"No, Well-Appearing One."

"World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita with the earth realm, water realm, and so forth, and consciousness realm?"

"No, Well-Appearing One."

"World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita apart from the attainment of the earth realm, water realm, and so forth, and consciousness realm?"

"No, Well-Appearing One."

"World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita with cause and condition, consecutive thoughts, conditions that stimulate the mind, and the conditions that reinforce main causes?"

"No, Well-Appearing One."

"World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita apart from the attainment of cause and condition, consecutive thoughts, conditions that stimulate the mind, and the conditions that reinforce main causes?"

"No, Well-Appearing One."

"World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita with ignorance, action, consciousness, and so forth, and old age and death?"

"No, Well-Appearing One."

"World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita apart from the attainment of ignorance, action, consciousness, and so forth, and old age and death?"

"No, Well-Appearing One."

"World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita with giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita?"

"No, Well-Appearing One."

"World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita apart from the attainment of giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita?"

"No, Well-Appearing One."

"World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita with internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature?"

"No, Well-Appearing One."

"World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajan paramita apart from the attainment of internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature?"

"No, Well-Appearing One."

"World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita with realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable?"

"No, Well-Appearing One."

"World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita apart from the attainment of realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable?"

"No, Well-Appearing One."

"World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita with the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering?"

"No, Well-Appearing One."

"World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita apart from the attainment of the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering?"

"No, Well-Appearing One."

"World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita with the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path?"

"No, Well-Appearing One."

"World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita apart from the attainment of the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path?"

"No, Well-Appearing One."

"World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita with the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations?"

"No, Well-Appearing One."

"World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita apart from the attainment of the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations?"

"No, Well-Appearing One."

"World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita with the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations?"

“No, Well-Appearing One.”

“World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita apart from the attainment of the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations?”

“No, Well-Appearing One.”

“World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita with the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration?”

“No, Well-Appearing One.”

“World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita apart from the attainment of the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration?”

“No, Well-Appearing One.”

“World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita with the stage of pure contemplation, stage of eight-forbearance, and so forth, and stage of Thus-Comer?”

“No, Well-Appearing One.”

“World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita apart from the attainment of the stage of pure contemplation, stage of eight-forbearance, and so forth, and stage of Thus-Comer?”

“No, Well-Appearing One.”

“World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita with the stage of ecstasy, the stage of freedom from defilement, and so forth, and stage of dharma cloud?”

“No, Well-Appearing One.”

“World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita apart from the attainment of the stage of ecstasy, the stage of freedom from defilement, and so forth, and stage of dharma cloud?”

"No, Well-Appearing One."

"World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita with the dharani gates and samadhi gates?"

"No, Well-Appearing One."

"World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita apart from the attainment of the dharani gates and samadhi gates?"

"No, Well-Appearing One."

"World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita with the five eyes and six supernatural powers?"

"No, Well-Appearing One."

"World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita apart from the attainment of the five eyes and six supernatural powers?"

"No, Well-Appearing One."

"World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita with the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power?"

"No, Well-Appearing One."

"World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita apart from the attainment of the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power?"

"No, Well-Appearing One."

"World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita with great loving-kindness, great compassion, great joy, and great equanimity?"

"No, Well-Appearing One."

“World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita apart from the attainment of great loving-kindness, great compassion, great joy, and great equanimity?”

“No, Well-Appearing One.”

“World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita with the thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features?”

“No, Well-Appearing One.”

“World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita apart from the attainment of the thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features?”

“No, Well-Appearing One.”

“World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita with staying in correct mindfulness and dwelling in equanimity at all times?”

“No, Well-Appearing One.”

“World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita apart from the attainment of staying in correct mindfulness and dwelling in equanimity at all times?”

“No, Well-Appearing One.”

“World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita with stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi?”

“No, Well-Appearing One.”

“World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita apart from the attainment of stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi?”

“No, Well-Appearing One.”

“World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita with all great bodhisattva actions?”

“No, Well-Appearing One.”

“World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita apart from the attainment of all great bodhisattva actions?”

“No, Well-Appearing One.”

“World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita with the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas?”

“No, Well-Appearing One.”

“World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita apart from the attainment of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas?”

“No, Well-Appearing One.”

“World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita with the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena?”

“No, Well-Appearing One.”

“World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita apart from the attainment of the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena?”

“No, Well-Appearing One.”

“World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita with the empty, nonexistent, not easy, and not solid natures of the aggregate of matter, feeling, and so forth, and consciousness?”

“No, Well-Appearing One.”

“World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita apart from the attainment of the empty, nonexistent, not easy, and not solid natures of the aggregate of matter, feeling, and so forth, and consciousness?”

“No, Well-Appearing One.”

“World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita with the empty, nonexistent, not easy, and not solid natures of perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena?”

“No, Well-Appearing One.”

“World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita apart from the attainment of the empty, nonexistent, not easy, and not solid natures of perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena?”

“No, Well-Appearing One.”

“World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita with the realness, dharma realm, dharma nature, the nature of nonillusion, nature of changelessness, nature of equality, nature of nonarising, dharma concentration, dharma dwelling, reality, the realm of empty space, and the realm of the inconceivable of the aggregate of matter, feeling, and so forth, and consciousness?”

“No, Well-Appearing One.”

“World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita apart from the attainment of the realness, dharma realm, dharma nature, the nature of nonillusion, nature of changelessness, nature of equality, nature of nonarising, dharma concentration, dharma dwelling, reality, the realm of empty space, and the realm of the inconceivable of the aggregate of matter, feeling, and so forth, and consciousness?”

“No, Well-Appearing One.”

"World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita with the realness, dharma realm, dharma nature, the nature of nonillusion, nature of changelessness, nature of equality, nature of nonarising, dharma concentration, dharma dwelling, reality, the realm of empty space, and the realm of the inconceivable of the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena?"

"No, Well-Appearing One."

"World-Honored One, can one practice the fathomless prajna paramita apart from the attainment of the realness, dharma realm, dharma nature, the nature of nonillusion, nature of changelessness, nature of equality, nature of nonarising, dharma concentration, dharma dwelling, reality, the realm of empty space, and the realm of the inconceivable of the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena?"

"No, Well-Appearing One."

"World-Honored One, if one cannot practice the fathomless prajna paramita with all these dharmas, then how can great bodhisattvas practice the fathomless prajna paramita?"

The Buddha asked Well-Appearing One, "What do you think about this? Do you see any dharma practice the fathomless prajna paramita?"

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

The Buddha asked Well-Appearing One, "What do you think about this? Do you see great bodhisattvas practice within the fathomless prajna paramita?"

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

The Buddha asked Well-Appearing One, "What do you think about this? Are the unseen dharmas attainable?"

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

The Buddha asked Well-Appearing One, “What do you think about this? Do the unattainable dharmas arise?”

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

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, “The real natures of various dharmas that you see are the dharma forbearance of bodhisattva. If great bodhisattvas achieve this dharma forbearance of nonarising, they are entitled to the prophecy conferred on them by the Buddha for attaining the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. You must know, Well-Appearing One, these great bodhisattvas are the real practitioners of the Buddha’s ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, four unhindered understandings, great loving-kindness, great compassion, great joy, great equanimity, and the eighteen distinctive features of Buddha’s wisdom and power, all of which enable them to achieve immeasurable and boundless superior merits and virtues. It is unreasonable to say that these diligent and attentive practitioners cannot attain the knowledge of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal enlightenment, the perfect knowledge of all phenomena, the great knowledge, and the wonderful knowledge. Why? These great bodhisattvas have realized the dharma forbearance of nonarising, and even have realized the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi without regression and diminution.”

(The Buddha explained the concept of dharma forbearance for great bodhisattvas.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, “World-Honored One, can great bodhisattvas be conferred by the Buddha the prophecy of attaining the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi because of realizing the nonarising nature of all dharmas?”

“No, Well-Appearing One.”

“World-Honored One, can great bodhisattvas be conferred by the Buddha the prophecy of attaining the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi because of realizing the arising nature of all dharmas?”

“No, Well-Appearing One.”

"World-Honored One, can great bodhisattvas be conferred by the Buddha the prophecy of attaining the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi because of realizing the arising and nonarising natures of all dharmas?"

"No, Well-Appearing One."

"World-Honored One, can great bodhisattvas be conferred by the Buddha the prophecy of attaining the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi because of realizing the neither arising nor not nonarising natures of all dharmas?"

"No, Well-Appearing One."

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha again, "Then how can great bodhisattvas be conferred by the Buddha the prophecy of attaining the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi?"

The Buddha replied by asking Well-Appearing One, "What do you think about this? Have you seen any dharma conferred by Buddha the prophecy of attaining the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi?"

Well-Appearing One said, "No, World-Honored One. I have never seen any dharma that is conferred the prophecy of attaining the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, or any dharma realize the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. The time, the place, and the cause of the realization are unattainable."

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, "Yes, it is as you say. If great bodhisattvas do not intend to attain, they will not think, 'I can realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. I will realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi by this means, at this time, and in this place.' Why? When practicing the fathomless prajna paramita, great bodhisattvas do not have such differentiations. Why? The fathomless prajna paramita is apart from various differentiations. To differentiate is not practicing prajna paramita."

(Prajna paramita is characterized by nondifferentiation.)

At that time, Heavenly Emperor Indra said to the Buddha, “World-Honored One, this prajna paramita is very profound. It is difficult to see and be awakened to. It is beyond one’s imagination. It transcends the level of reflection. It is so subtle and mystic that only the wise and intelligent ones can realize. Various phenomena are apart from differentiation in the final analysis. If sentient beings love to listen to, accept, embrace, read, recite, understand thoroughly, reflect reasonably on, cultivate, and lecture correctly for others on it without getting involved in other minds and associated images until attaining the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, you must know that these sentient beings definitely will be able to achieve numberless virtuous roots and accomplish all these things in cultivation.”

At that time, the Buddha said to Heavenly Emperor Indra, “Yes, it is as you say. Kausika, if sentient beings love to listen to, accept, embrace, read, recite, understand thoroughly, reflect reasonably on, cultivate, and lecture correctly for others on it without getting involved in other minds and associated images until attaining the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, you must know that these sentient beings definitely will be able to achieve numberless virtuous roots and accomplish all these things in cultivation. Kausika, suppose that the sentient beings in continent of Jambudvipa, continent of Aparagodaniya, and so forth, and the large threefold thousand-world have achieved numberless merits and virtues caused by the path of the ten virtuous karmas, four meditations, four immeasurable minds, four formless concentrations, and five supernatural powers. In the meantime, some good gentlemen and gentlewomen love to listen to, accept, embrace, read, recite, understand thoroughly, reflect reasonably on, cultivate, and lecture correctly for others on the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita, the blessings thus accumulated will be more than the former ones by one hundred times, one thousand times, and so forth, and upanisadam times.”

At that time, a bhiksu (monk) said to Heavenly Emperor Indra, “Kausika, if good gentlemen and gentlewomen love to hear, accept, embrace, read, recite, understand thoroughly, reflect reasonably on, cultivate, and lecture for others on the profound sutras of prajna paramita with deep concentration without involving other minds and associated images until attaining the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, the merits and virtues thus derived will be much more than those gained by all sentient beings in continent of Jambudvipa, continent of Aparagodaniya, and so forth, and the large threefold thousand-world who have achieved numberless merits and

virtues caused by the path of the ten virtuous karmas, four meditations, four immeasurable minds, four formless concentrations, and five supernatural powers."

In the meantime, Heavenly Emperor Indra said to the bhiksu, 'The moment as these good gentlemen and gentlewomen began to initiate a mind correspondent with the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, their merits and virtues were already much more than those acquired by all sentient beings in continent of Jambudvipa, continent of Aparagodaniya, and so forth, and the large threefold thousand-world who have achieved the merits and virtues caused by the path of the ten virtuous karmas, four meditations, four immeasurable minds, four formless concentrations, and five supernatural powers by hundreds of thousands of times, not to mention if these good gentlemen and gentlewomen can hear, accept, embrace, read, recite, understand thoroughly, reflect reasonably on, cultivate, and lecture for others on the very profound sutras of prajna paramita with deep concentration without involving other minds and associated images until attaining the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.

"You must know, bhiksu, the merits and virtues accumulated by these good gentlemen and gentlewomen are not only much more than those acquired by all the sentient beings in the continent of Jambudvipa, continent of Aparagodaniya, and so forth, and the threefold thousand-world who have achieved the path of the ten virtuous karmas, four meditations, and so forth, but also more than the merits and virtues of all heavenly beings, human beings, asuras, and so forth of the world. Why? These good gentlemen and gentlewomen will realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly to bring endless benefits and happiness to all sentient beings.

"You must know, bhiksu, the merits, virtues, knowledge, and wisdom of these good gentlemen and gentlewomen are not only superior to all merits and virtues of the heavenly beings, human beings, asuras, and so forth of the world, but also superior to all merits and virtues of the stream-enterers, once-returners, nonreturners, arhats, and self-enlightened ones. Why? These good gentlemen and gentlewomen will realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi soon to bring endless benefits and happiness to all sentient beings.

"You must know, bhiksu, the merits, virtues, knowledge, and wisdom of these good gentlemen and gentlewomen are not only superior to all merits and virtues of the stream-enterers,

once-returners, nonreturners, arhats, and self-enlightened ones, but also superior to the great bodhisattvas who stay far away from the expedient skillfulness of prajna paramita when they 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 defilement, 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 great loving-kindness, great compassion, great joy, and great equanimity; 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 the contemplation of the twelve links of dependent origination from cause to effect and vice versa; assist sentient beings to mature, dignify and purify Buddha lands; and cultivate all great bodhisattva actions and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas. Why? These good gentlemen and gentlewomen will realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi soon to bring endless benefits and happiness to all sentient beings.

"You must know bhiksu, the merits, virtues, knowledge, and wisdom of these good gentlemen and gentlewomen are also superior to all great bodhisattvas who stay far away from expedient skillfulness when cultivating all merits and virtues of prajna paramita. Why? These good gentlemen and gentlewomen will realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly to bring endless benefits and happiness to all sentient beings.

"Furthermore, bhiksu, these good gentlemen and gentlewomen are great bodhisattvas. These great bodhisattvas have cultivated the fathomless prajna paramita by following the

teachings given by the Buddha. Because they have expedient skillfulness, they will not be subjugated by all heavenly beings, human beings, asuras, and so forth, and the rest of bodhisattvas, self-enlightened ones, and voice-hearers. They will inherit the seeds and natures of the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge and keep them from discontinuation. They have never stayed far away from the real and pure virtuous friends, namely, the Buddhas and the bodhisattvas. They will sit on the throne of the wonderful bodhi before long, overcome all evil demons and their associates, realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, turn the wonderful dharma wheel, relieve sentient beings from the suffering of birth and death, and lead them to ultimate and permanent happiness of nirvana. You must know, bhiksu, these great bodhisattvas have cultivated the fathomless prajna paramita by following the Buddha's teaching. Because they have expedient skillfulness, they always learn the dharmas that great bodhisattvas should learn; they do not learn the dharmas that voice-hearers and the self-enlightened ones learn.

(Heavenly Emperor Indra admired the great bodhisattvas who cultivate various holy dharmas with expedient skillfulness of prajna paramita, because they can bring limitless benefits and happiness to sentient beings.)

"You must know, bhiksu, because these great bodhisattvas have practiced the expedient skillfulness of the fathomless prajna paramita and have always learned what great bodhisattvas should learn, the four heavenly kings will lead their heavenly beings to visit with them and make offerings respectfully to esteem and acclaim them. They will all say, 'Excellent, great bodhisattvas! You should learn diligently the dharmas that various great bodhisattvas should learn. Do not learn the dharmas that voice-hearers and self-enlightened ones learn. If you learn this way, you will sit on the throne of the wonderful bodhi quickly, and realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi soon. You then will receive the four bowls just as the Thus-Comer, One Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened One did from the four heavenly kings. We will also present the four bowls to you in the same manner.'

"You must know, bhiksu, because these great bodhisattvas have practiced the expedient skillfulness of the fathomless prajna paramita and have always learned what great bodhisattvas should learn, Heavenly Emperor will also lead heavenly beings to visit with them and make

offerings respectfully to esteem and acclaim them, and will say, ‘Excellent, great bodhisattvas! You should learn diligently the dharmas that various great bodhisattvas should learn. Do not learn the dharmas that voice-hearers and self-enlightened ones learn. If you learn this way, you will sit on the throne of the wonderful bodhi quickly, realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi soon, and turn the wonderful dharma wheel to deliver all sentient beings.’

“You must know, bhiksu, because these great bodhisattvas have practiced the expedient skillfulness of the fathomless prajna paramita and have always learned what great bodhisattvas should learn, the heavenly sons from the Heaven of Yama (The Heaven of Wonderful Times), Heaven of Tusita (Heaven of Joyful Satisfaction), Heaven of Enjoying Self-Made Changes, and Heaven of Enjoying Other-Made Changes will lead all their associates to visit with them and make offerings respectfully to esteem and acclaim them, and will say, ‘Excellent, great bodhisattvas! You should learn diligently the dharmas that various great bodhisattvas should learn. Do not learn the dharmas that voice-hearers and self-enlightened ones learn. If you learn this way, you will sit on the throne of the wonderful bodhi quickly, realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi soon, and turn the wonderful dharma wheel to deliver all sentient beings.’

“You must know, bhiksu, because these great bodhisattvas have practiced the expedient skillfulness of the fathomless prajna paramita and have always learned what great bodhisattvas should learn, the lord of the barely tolerable realm, King of Great Brahma, will lead all his followers to visit with them and make offerings respectfully to esteem and acclaim them, and will say, ‘Excellent, great bodhisattvas! You should learn diligently the dharmas that various great bodhisattvas should learn. Do not learn the dharmas that voice-hearers and self-enlightened ones learn. If you learn this way, you will sit on the throne of the wonderful bodhi quickly, realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi soon, and turn the wonderful dharma wheel to deliver all sentient beings.’

“You must know, bhiksu, because these great bodhisattvas have practiced the expedient skillfulness of the fathomless prajna paramita and have always learned what great bodhisattvas should learn, the lords of the Heaven of Extremely Great Brightness and Purity, Heaven of Universal Purity, and so forth, and Heaven of Ultimate Form will lead all their followers to visit

with them and make offerings respectfully to esteem and acclaim them, and will say, ‘Excellent, great bodhisattvas! You should learn diligently the dharmas that various great bodhisattvas should learn. Do not learn the dharmas that voice-hearers and self-enlightened ones learn. If you learn this way, you will sit on the throne of the wonderful bodhi quickly, realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi soon, and turn the wonderful dharma wheel to deliver all sentient beings.’

“You must know, bhiksu, because these great bodhisattvas have practiced the expedient skillfulness of the fathomless prajna paramita as often as great bodhisattvas should do, they will always be protected by and kept in the minds of all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones various great bodhisattvas, and all heavenly deities, dragons, asuras, and so forth. Because of this cause and condition, these great bodhisattvas will not be invaded or damaged by all difficulties, dangers, and bad lucks of the world, and their bodies and minds will be always free from all worries and pains. All four hundred and four kinds of illness caused by the disharmony of the four basic elements in the world, such as the illness of the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and limbs, will be removed from them permanently except the retribution caused by very serious negative karmas made in previous lives that they have to receive in present life but with a very slight degree in suffering.

“You must know, bhiksu, if these great bodhisattvas cultivate the expedient skillfulness of the fathomless prajna paramita, they can acquire such wonderful merits and virtues in their present lives, while the merits and virtues they will acquire in the future are numberless and boundless.”

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Chapter 23

Skillful Means

Section 4

(In the Third Assembly)

At that time, Ananda thought to himself, “Today as Heavenly Emperor Indra admired and acclaimed the merits, virtues, and the superior benefits of the fathomless prajna paramita, was it because of his own talent of debate or because of the compelling mighty powers of the Thus-Comer?”

Heavenly Emperor Indra knew what Ananda thought, so said to him, “Great virtuous one, it is because of the compelling mighty powers of the Thus-Comer that I could admire the merits, virtues, and the superior benefits of the fathomless prajna paramita.”

At that time, the Buddha said to Ananda, “Yes, it is. Today as Heavenly Emperor Indra praised the merits, virtues, and the superior benefits of the fathomless prajna paramita, it is because of the supernatural powers of the Thus-Comer instead of Indra’s own talent of debate. Why? All heavenly beings, human beings, asuras, and so forth cannot speak or praise the merits, virtues, and the superior benefits of the fathomless prajna paramita. You must know, Joyfully Celebrating One, as great bodhisattvas diligently learn, reflect on, and cultivate this fathomless prajna paramita, all evil demons in the large threefold thousand-world are puzzled; they wonder and think, ‘Will these great bodhisattvas withdraw to dwell in stream-entry effect, once-return effect, nonreturn effect, arhat effect, or self-enlightenment bodhi to realize and attain the reality, or will they move forward to aspire to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi to turn the wonderful dharma wheel and deliver all sentient beings?’

“Furthermore, Joyfully Celebrating One, if great bodhisattvas stay with the fathomless prajna paramita, evil demons will be extremely worried and painful as they were shot by

poisonous arrows. Furthermore, Joyfully Celebrating One, if great bodhisattvas practice the fathomless prajna paramita, evil demons will come to their places and transform themselves into various terrible things, such as knives, swords, poisonous snakes, and radically burning fires that explode in four directions. They do these to scare great bodhisattvas, disrupt their pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal enlightenment, and prevent them from reaching the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. This is exactly what demons desire.

At that time, Joyfully Celebrating One asked the Buddha, "When great bodhisattvas practice the fathomless prajna paramita, will they be disturbed and harassed by evil demons? Are some not disturbed and harassed by evil demons?"

The Buddha replied to Joyfully Celebrating One, "When they practice the fathomless prajna paramita, some will be disturbed and harassed by evil demons, while some are not."

The long-lived Joyfully Celebrating One asked the Buddha, "Which great bodhisattvas will be free from, and which will not be free from disturbance and harassment?"

The Buddha replied to Joyfully Celebrating One, "If great bodhisattvas, in their previous lives, did not believe in and understand the fathomless prajna paramita when they heard it, but disdained and slandered it, then these great bodhisattvas will be disturbed and harassed by evil demons when they practice the fathomless prajna paramita. On the other hand, if great bodhisattvas believed in, understood, and admired the fathomless prajna paramita without disdaining or slandering it when they heard it in their previous lives, these great bodhisattvas will not be disturbed or harassed by evil demons when they practice the fathomless prajna paramita.

(The Buddha distinguished between great bodhisattvas who are free from demonic hindrances and those who may encounter such hinderances when practicing prajna paramita.)

"Furthermore, Joyfully Celebrating One, if great bodhisattvas, in their previous lives, were skeptical and hesitant when hearing the fathomless prajna paramita, and thought, 'Is it so? Is it not so? Is it real? Is it not real?' Then these great bodhisattvas will be disturbed and harassed by evil demons when they practice the fathomless prajna paramita. If great bodhisattvas, in their previous lives, did not doubt or hesitate when hearing the fathomless prajna paramita; rather,

they would deeply believe that it is real and existent, then these great bodhisattvas will not be disturbed or harassed by evil demons when they practice the fathomless prajna paramita.

"Furthermore, Joyfully Celebrating One, if great bodhisattvas stay far away from virtuous friends and are absorbed and captivated by not virtuous friends, they will not hear the fathomless prajna paramita. Because they do not hear the fathomless prajna paramita, they cannot understand it. Because they do not understand it, they will not cultivate and learn it. Because they do not cultivate and learn it, they will not inquire about it. Because they do not inquire about it, they will not practice as they are taught. Because they do not practice as they are taught, they will not be able to realize the fathomless prajna paramita. These great bodhisattvas will be disturbed and harassed by evil demons when they practice the fathomless prajna paramita. If great bodhisattvas stay close to virtuous friends and are not absorbed or captivated by not virtuous friends, they will be able to understand the fathomless prajna paramita when upon hearing it. Because they can understand it, they are able to cultivate and learn it. Because they can cultivate and learn it, they will inquire about it and practice as they are taught. Because they can practice as they are taught, they will be able to realize the fathomless prajna paramita. These great bodhisattvas will not be disturbed or harassed by evil demons when they practice the fathomless prajna paramita.

"Furthermore, Joyfully Celebrating One, if great bodhisattvas stay far away from prajna paramita but accept and acclaim fake dharma, these great bodhisattvas will be disturbed and harassed by evil demons when they practice the fathomless prajna paramita. If great bodhisattvas stay close to prajna paramita and do not accept or acclaim fake dharma, they will not be disturbed or harassed by evil demons when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita.

"Furthermore, Joyfully Celebrating One, if great bodhisattvas stay far away from prajna paramita and slander and disdain the real wonderful dharma, the evil demons will think, 'These bodhisattvas have become my good company now. Because they have slandered the real wonderful dharma, numberless good gentlepersons who are dwelling in the bodhisattva vehicle will also slander the real wonderful dharma. Because of this cause and condition, my wishes will be fulfilled.' As these good gentlepersons, as bodhisattva vehicle riders, cultivate diligently various virtuous dharmas and fall into the stage of voice-hearer or self-enlightened one, more

bodhisattvas will also follow them to do so. These great bodhisattvas will be disturbed and harassed by evil demons when they practice the fathomless prajna paramita. If great bodhisattvas stay closely with prajna paramita, admire, acclaim, believe in, and accept this real wonderful dharma, and further encourage numberless good gentlepersons who are dwelling in the bodhisattva vehicle to do so, evil demons will be frightened and worried. Even if these good gentlepersons who are dwelling in the bodhisattva vehicle do not cultivate diligently various virtuous dharmas, they certainly will not fall into the stage of voice-hearer or self-enlightened one; rather, they will realize the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. These great bodhisattvas will not be disturbed or harassed by evil demons when they practice the fathomless prajna paramita.

"Furthermore, Joyfully Celebrating One, some great bodhisattvas, when hearing the teaching of the fathomless sutras of prajna paramita, say, 'The essential meanings of this prajna paramita are too profound to see and become awakened to. So, why should one lecture on, listen to, accept, embrace, read, recite, reflect on, cultivate diligently, write, and disseminate these sutras? As we cannot understand their ultimate meanings, how can those less blessed and intelligent ones?' Numberless good gentlepersons who are dwelling in the bodhisattva vehicle will be frightened when hearing what they say, and will withdraw from the aspiration to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal enlightenment. They thus fall into the stage of voice-hearer or self-enlightened one. These great bodhisattvas will be disturbed and harassed by evil demons when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita. If great bodhisattvas hear the teaching of the profound sutras of prajna paramita and say, 'The essential meanings of prajna paramita are too profound to see and become awakened to. But there will be no way to realize the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi if we do not lecture on, listen to, accept, embrace, read, recite, reflect on, cultivate and learn diligently, write, and disseminate them.' Upon hearing these words, numberless good gentlepersons dwelling in the bodhisattva vehicle rejoice and are excited, they will follow what they heard to listen to, accept, embrace, read, recite, understand thoroughly, reflect reasonably on, cultivate and learn diligently, lecture for others on, write, and disseminate these profound sutras of prajna paramita, to reach the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. These great bodhisattvas will not be disturbed and harassed by evil demons when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita.

"Furthermore, Joyfully Celebrating One, some great bodhisattvas exaggerate their own merits, virtues, and virtuous roots and look down on other great bodhisattvas, and say, 'I can cultivate giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita, but you cannot. I can dwell peacefully in internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature, but you cannot. I can dwell peacefully in realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable, but you cannot. I can dwell peacefully in the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering, but you cannot. I can cultivate the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path, but you cannot. I can cultivate the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations, but you cannot. I can cultivate the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration, but you cannot. I can cultivate the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations, but you cannot. I can cultivate the knowledge of the stage of pure contemplation, stage of embryonic Buddha nature, and so forth, and stage of Thus-Comer, but you cannot. I can practice the stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilement, and so forth, and stage of dharma cloud, but you cannot. I can cultivate the dharani gates and samadhi gates, but you cannot. I can cultivate five eyes and six supernatural powers, but you cannot. I can cultivate the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power, but you cannot. I can cultivate great loving-kindness, great compassion, great joy, and great equanimity, but you cannot. I can cultivate the thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features, but you cannot. I can cultivate staying in correct mindfulness and dwelling in equanimity, but you cannot. I can cultivate the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena, but you cannot. I can cultivate samatha and vipasyana, but you cannot. I can contemplate the twelve links of dependent origination with both directions, but you cannot. I can contemplate and investigate particular and common characteristics of all dharmas, but you cannot. I can assist sentient beings to mature and dignify and purify Buddha lands, but you cannot. I can cultivate all great bodhisattva actions, but you cannot. I can cultivate the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas, but you cannot.' Upon hearing these words, evil demons are excited and thrilled, 'These great bodhisattvas are my good company. They will drift in birth and death and cannot get out of it

forever.' These great bodhisattvas will be disturbed and harassed by evil demons when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita. If great bodhisattvas do not exaggerate their own merits, virtues, and virtuous roots, do not disdain and look down on other great bodhisattvas; if they further cultivate various virtuous dharmas diligently without attachment to the forms of the virtuous dharmas, they will not be disturbed and harassed by evil demons when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita.

"Furthermore, Joyfully Celebrating One, some great bodhisattvas presume that their names are well known, so they often boast their own virtues and slander and disdain those bodhisattvas who are cultivating the virtuous dharmas. They do not possess the characteristics of great bodhisattvas of nonregression, but they think they do. So, their vexations arise, and start to admire themselves and disdain others, saying, 'You do not own the title of bodhisattva. I am the only one who does.' As their arrogance increases, they will criticize and slander other bodhisattvas more. At that time, evil demons say, 'These bodhisattvas are now making my land and palace prosperous, and also create more hells, realm of animals, and realm of ghosts in my country.' In the meantime, the demons assist these bodhisattvas by giving them supernatural powers to enhance their talent of debate and increase their authority and strength. More people thus turn to believe in these bodhisattvas and encourage even more to learn incorrect views. Their vexations thus increase radically. Due to their upside-down views, their negative karma in body, speech, and mind brings them pain, failure, and decay. Because of this cause and condition, hells, realm of animals, and realm of ghosts expand and demonic palaces and lands become full and crowded. Evil demons are happy and satisfied, they can do whatever they like freely and easily now. These great bodhisattvas thus will be disturbed and harassed by evil demons when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita. If great bodhisattvas do not presume that they have good reputation, do not disdain and slander other bodhisattvas who are cultivating various virtuous dharmas, do not exaggerate their own merits and virtues, do not always admire themselves and criticize others, and are aware of various demonic affairs, they will not be disturbed and harassed by evil demons when practicing the fathomless prajna paramita.

"Furthermore, Joyfully Celebrating One, some bodhisattvas argued with pursuers of voice-hearer or self-enlightened one vehicle, they slandered and fought each other. At that time, evil demons were happy seeing what is happening, and thought, 'Now these great bodhisattvas

have stayed far away from the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. They are much closer to hells, the realm of animals, or the realm of ghosts. Why? What they do is not the path leading to the bodhi; rather, it is a perilous way leading hells, the realm of animals, or the realm of ghosts.' After having this thought, evil demons were excited and thrilled, so they assisted the bodhisattvas by giving them more power and authority. What the demons did made numberless people increase their negative karmas. These great bodhisattvas thus will be disturbed and harassed by evil demons when they practice the fathomless prajna paramita. If great bodhisattvas do not argue against, slander, and fight with the pursuers of voice-hearer or self-enlightened one vehicle; rather, they expediently guide and convert them to the great vehicle, or make them cultivate various virtuous dharmas in their own vehicles, then these great bodhisattvas will not be disturbed and harassed by evil demons when they practice the fathomless prajna paramita.

"Furthermore, Joyfully Celebrating One, some great bodhisattvas argued with other good gentlepersons who are pursuing the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. They slandered and even fought each other. Seeing what was happening, demons thought, 'These two groups of bodhisattvas have been far away from the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi; they are instead very close to hells, the realm of animals, or the realm of ghosts. Why? Arguing, slandering, or fighting is not the path of the bodhi; it is rather the perilous way leading to hells, the realm of animals, or the realm of ghosts.' After having this thought, evil demons were excited and thrilled, so they assisted both groups of bodhisattvas by giving them more power and authority and let argument and fighting between them continue endlessly. These great bodhisattvas thus will be disturbed and harassed by evil demons when they practice the fathomless prajna paramita. If great bodhisattvas and good gentleperson who pursue the unsurpassed bodhi do not argue or slander and fight each other, rather, they assist each other to cultivate virtuous dharmas and realize the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly, these great bodhisattvas will not be disturbed and harassed by evil demons when they practice the fathomless prajna paramita.

"Furthermore, Joyfully Celebrating One, some great bodhisattvas have not been conferred the prophecy of nonregression in the pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. They are jealous and start to harm, argue with, disdain, slander, and insult other great bodhisattvas who have been conferred the prophecy of nonregression. These great bodhisattvas

thus will regress and lose superior actions depending on how much they are influenced by their harmful intentions. Even if they do not abandon the aspiration to the great bodhi, it may take them many kalpas to recover from the suffering of separating from virtuous friends and being trapped in the cycle of birth and death; they need to work much harder to put on the armor and cultivate superior actions uninterruptedly before they can catch up and return to where they had once reached."

At that time, Joyfully Celebrating One asked the Buddha, "World-Honored One, how long will great bodhisattvas drift and suffer in birth and death because of their vicious minds? Is it possible to be relieved in the middle of the way? How many kalpas of hard work will these great bodhisattvas spend to make up for the superior actions they lost? Is it possible to return to their previous level of cultivation?"

The Buddha replied to Joyfully Celebrating One, "I have taught you the way how bodhisattvas, self-enlightened ones, and voice-hearers repent their wrongdoings and make compensation.

"You must know, Joyfully Celebrating One, if great bodhisattvas who have not been conferred the prophecy of nonregression in the pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi try to do harm to the great bodhisattvas who have been conferred the prophecy of nonregression in the pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, and argue and fight against, disdain, slander, and insult them, and after that, they do not feel shameful and their hatred continues, they will not have relief in the middle of the way, but will drift in birth and death for many kalpas, separate from virtuous friends and trapped in suffering. Even if they do not abandon the aspiration to the great bodhi, they must wear the armor for many kalpas and diligently cultivate superior virtuous actions unceasingly to make up for the merits and virtues they lost. If the great bodhisattvas who have not been conferred the prophecy of nonregression have tried to do harm to the great bodhisattvas who have been conferred the prophecy of nonregression, and argue and fight against, disdain, slander, and insult them, but after that, they fell shameful, cease hatred immediately, repent their wrongdoings, and think, 'I have already possessed human body that is very difficult to obtain, why can I do such evil things to lose great virtuous benefits? I should bring benefits to all sentient beings, why can I do things contrary to

this? I should serve all sentient beings as a servant does to his master, why can I disdain, slander, and insult them? I should accept beatings and scolding given by all sentient beings, why can I fight back with violent speeches and bodily actions? I should harmonize all sentient beings so they will respect and love each other, why can I argue with them with rude and vicious words? I should be patient to serve as roads or bridges for all sentient beings every day, why can I insult them instead? I should aspire to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi to relieve all sentient beings from the severe suffering in birth and death, so they can attain ultimate peace and happiness in nirvana, why can I bring them painfulness instead? I should act as idiot, dumb, deaf, or blind, and from now on until endless future, treat all sentient beings without differentiation. If they want to cut my head, hand, foot, ear, nose, or tongue off, dig my eyeball out, or cut my body and limbs with a saw, I will not have a tiny thought of hatred toward them. If I have a thought of hatred, I will immediately destroy my aspiration to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal enlightenment and hinder my pursuit of the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, and all will result in my inability to bring benefits, peace, and happiness to all sentient beings.' You must know, Joyfully Celebrating One, these great bodhisattvas thus can be relieved in the middle of the way by repenting their sins and making up for the loss of virtuous merits, so they do not need to reincarnate in birth and death for more kalpas. They will not be disturbed and harassed by evil demons; instead, they will realize the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly.

(The Buddha described the merits and benefits caused by repenting wrongdoings.)

"Furthermore, Joyfully Celebrating One, great bodhisattvas should not have connection with the pursuers of the vehicle of voice-hearer or self-enlightened one. If they do, they should not live with them. If they live with them, they should not discuss or ask for their opinions when making decisions. Why? If they discuss or ask for their opinions when making decisions, it is very likely to burst out in angry arguments or rude and vicious words; but great bodhisattvas should not be angry or speak rude and vicious words. Even if someone wants to cut their heads or feet, they should not lose temper and speak rude words. Why? Great bodhisattvas should think, 'I am pursuing the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi to relieve sentient beings from various kinds of suffering and bring ultimate benefits, happiness, and peace to them. I should not turn such a beautiful thing into an ugly, evil one.' You must know, Joyfully Celebrating One, once great bodhisattvas initiate anger and hatred in their minds and burst out in

rude and vicious words, their pursuit in the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi will be hindered and their bodhisattva actions will be ruined. Therefore, to attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, great bodhisattvas should refrain from anger and hatred, should not burst out in rude and vicious words."

(The Buddha instructed why great bodhisattvas should refrain from hatred and anger, and how.)

At that time, Joyfully Celebrating One asked the Buddha, "How should great bodhisattvas behave if they live with other great bodhisattvas?"

The Buddha replied to Joyfully Celebrating One, "Great bodhisattvas should treat other great bodhisattvas as they treat the World-Honored One. Why? When looking at other bodhisattvas, they should think, 'They are the real virtuous intellectuals of mine. They are my companions and we are sailing in the same boat. Between us, the time of learning, the place of learning, the way of learning, and the cause of learning are the same. As they should learn giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita, I should do the same. As they should learn internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature, I should do the same. As they should learn realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable, I should do the same. As they should learn the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering, I should do the same. As they should learn the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path, I should do the same. As they should learn the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations, I should do the same. As they should learn the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration, I should do the same. As they should learn the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations, I should do the same. As they should learn the stage of pure contemplation, stage of embryonic Buddha nature, and so forth, and stage of Thus-Comer, I should do the same. As they should learn the stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilement, and so forth, and stage of dharma cloud, I should do the same. As they should learn the dharani gates and samadhi gates, I should do the same. As they should learn the five eyes and the six supernatural powers, I should do the same. As they should learn the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen

distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power, I should do the same. As they should learn great loving-kindness, great compassion, great joy, and great equanimity, I should do the same. As they should learn the thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features, I should do the same. As they should learn staying in correct mindfulness and dwelling in equanimity at all times, I should do the same. As they should learn to assist sentient beings to mature and dignify and purify Buddha lands, I should do the same. As they should learn the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena, I should do the same.'

(The Buddha taught how great bodhisattvas live with other bodhisattvas.)

"As other bodhisattvas lecture on the path of the great bodhi for me, they are my good companions and mentors. But if they dwell in a mixture of intentions other than the pure one-vehicle and stay away from a mind correspondent with the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, I should stop learning with them. If they stay away from a mixture of intentions and concentrate on the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, I will learn with them frequently.'

"You must know, Joyfully Celebrating One, if great bodhisattvas learn this way, they will be well nurtured and will fulfill learning quickly. If great bodhisattvas learn this way, they are named learning equally with other great bodhisattvas."

Chapter 24

Learning Equality

(In the Third Assembly)

At that time, Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, “What is the nature of equality for great bodhisattvas? Why are great bodhisattvas named learning equality when learning the nature of equality?”

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, “Internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature are the nature of equality for great bodhisattvas. If great bodhisattvas learn from them, they are named learning equality. Because of this learning, they will realize the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly.

“Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the emptiness of the aggregate of matter, feeling, and so forth, and consciousness is the nature of equality for great bodhisattvas. The emptiness of the eye sphere, ear sphere, and so forth, and conscious sphere is the nature of equality for great bodhisattvas. The emptiness of the sight sphere, sound sphere, and so forth, and mental-image sphere is the nature of equality for great bodhisattvas. The emptiness of the eye realm, ear realm, and so forth, and conscious realm is the nature of equality for great bodhisattvas. The emptiness of the sight realm, sound realm, and so forth, and mental-image realm is the nature of equality for great bodhisattvas. The emptiness of the eye consciousness realm, ear consciousness realm, and so forth, and conscious consciousness realm is the nature of equality for great bodhisattvas. The emptiness of the eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact is the nature of equality for great bodhisattvas. The emptiness of the feelings produced by eye contact, ear contact, and so forth, and conscious contact is the nature of equality for great bodhisattvas. The emptiness of the earth realm, water realm, and so forth, and consciousness realm is the nature of equality for great bodhisattvas. The emptiness of cause and condition, consecutive thoughts, conditions that stimulate the mind, and the conditions that reinforce main causes is the nature of equality for great bodhisattvas. The emptiness of ignorance, action, consciousness, and so forth, and old age and death is the nature of equality for great bodhisattvas. The emptiness of giving

paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita is the nature of equality for great bodhisattvas. The emptiness of internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature is the nature of equality for great bodhisattvas. The emptiness of realness, dharma realm, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable is the nature of equality for great bodhisattvas. The emptiness of the noble truth of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering is the nature of equality for great bodhisattvas. The emptiness of the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path is the nature of equality for great bodhisattvas. The emptiness of the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations is the nature of equality for great bodhisattvas. The emptiness of the liberation gates of emptiness, formlessness, and nonaspiration is the nature of equality for great bodhisattvas. The emptiness of the eight liberations, eight vexation-overcoming meditations, nine concentrations in sequence, and ten universal contemplations is the nature of equality for great bodhisattvas. The emptiness of the stage of pure contemplation, stage of embryonic Buddha nature, and so forth, and stage of Thus-Comer is the nature of equality for great bodhisattvas. The emptiness of the stage of ecstasy, stage of freedom from defilement, and so forth, and stage of dharma cloud is the nature of equality for great bodhisattvas. The emptiness of dharani gates and samadhi gates is the nature of equality for great bodhisattvas. The emptiness of the five eyes and six supernatural powers is the nature of equality for great bodhisattvas. 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 is the nature of equality for great bodhisattvas. The emptiness of great loving-kindness, great compassion, great joy, and great equanimity is the nature of equality for great bodhisattvas. The emptiness of the thirty-two perfect major marks and eighty distinguishing minor features is the nature of equality for great bodhisattvas. The emptiness of staying in correct mindfulness and dwelling in equanimity at all times is the nature of equality for great bodhisattvas. The emptiness of the perfect knowledge of everything, perfect knowledge of the forms of the paths, and perfect knowledge of all phenomena is the nature of equality for great bodhisattvas. The emptiness of stream-entry effect, once-return effect, and so forth, and self-enlightenment bodhi is the nature of equality for great bodhisattvas. The emptiness of all great bodhisattva actions and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas is the nature of equality for great

bodhisattvas. As great bodhisattvas learn from these, they are named learning the equality. Because of this learning, they will realize the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly."

(The Buddha explained the meaning of the nature of equality for great bodhisattvas.)

The long-lived sage Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "If great bodhisattvas learn for the sake of the exhaustion of matter, feeling, and so forth, and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas, do they learn the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge? If great bodhisattvas learn for the sake of the departure of matter, feeling, and so forth, and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas, do they learn the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge? If great bodhisattvas learn for the sake of the extinction of matter, feeling, and so forth, and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas, do they learn the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge? If great bodhisattvas learn for the sake of the nonarising of matter, feeling, and so forth, and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas, do they learn the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "As to your question, 'If great bodhisattvas learn for the sake of the exhaustion, departure, extinction, and nonarising of matter, feeling, and so forth, and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas, do they learn the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge?' Let me ask you, Well-Appearing One, does the realness of matter, feeling, and so forth, and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas exhaust, depart, extinguish, and discontinue?"

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

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, "If great bodhisattvas can learn the realness of various dharmas this way, they do learn the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. You must know, Well-Appearing One, realness is without exhaustion, departure, extinction, and discontinuation; it cannot be realized either. If great bodhisattvas can learn the realness of various dharmas this way, they do learn the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, if great bodhisattvas learn this way, they do learn giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and prajna paramita; internal emptiness, external emptiness, and so forth, and emptiness of selfless self-nature; realness, dharma realm,

and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable; the noble truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for the cessation of suffering; the four bases of mindfulness, four correct endeavors, and so forth, and noble eightfold path; the four meditations, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations; the 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 defilement, and so forth, and stage of dharma cloud; the dharani gates and samadhi gates; the five eyes and six supernatural powers; the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, and so forth, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power; great loving-kindness, great compassion, great joy, and great equanimity; 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. You must know, Well-Appearing One, if great bodhisattvas can learn giving paramita, pure-precept paramita, and so forth, and the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas this way, they do learn the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge.

(The Buddha taught that when cultivating various dharmas, great bodhisattvas should realize that the realness of the dharmas is without exhaustion, departure, extinction, and discontinuation. If they learn this way, they do learn the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, if great bodhisattvas learn this way, they will learn all dharmas perfectly and ultimately to reach the other shore. If great bodhisattvas learn this way, they will not be subjugated by all heavenly demons and other-path practitioners. If great bodhisattvas learn this way, they will reach the nonregressive stage of bodhisattva soon. If great bodhisattvas learn this way, they will walk the way as all Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones. If great bodhisattvas learn this way, they will protect the dharma from turning upside down and will act appropriately to get out of darkness. If great bodhisattvas learn this way, they will perfectly assist sentient beings to mature and skillfully dignify and purify Buddha lands. If great bodhisattvas learn this way, they are named good learners of great loving-kindness, great compassion, great joy, and great equanimity

and the rest of numberless and boundless Buddha dharma. If great bodhisattvas learn this way, they will learn the four noble truths through twelve categories in three steps to turn the dharma wheel and establish hundreds of thousands of koti nayuta sentient beings in nirvana without remainder. If great bodhisattvas learn this way, they will nurture the seeds of Thus-Comer to prevent them from discontinuation. If great bodhisattvas learn this way, they will learn from various Buddhas to open the gate of nectar leading to nirvana, establish numberless, countless, and boundless sentient beings to dwell in the dharmas of the three vehicles, show for all sentient beings the unconditioned realm of ultimate tranquility, and will learn and cultivate the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge. Only the superior sentient beings can learn this way; the inferior ones cannot learn this way. You must know, Well-Appearing One, if great bodhisattvas would like to deliver all sentient beings and relieve them from the suffering of birth and death, they should learn this way.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, if great bodhisattvas learn this way, they will not fall into hells, the realm of animals, or the realm of ghosts. If great bodhisattvas learn this way, they will not be reborn as human beings living in borderland, or as shallow-minded ones. If great bodhisattvas learn this way, they will not be reborn in a family of candāla, pulkasa, poverty, low class, or in a family earning living not in accord with precepts. If great bodhisattvas learn this way, they will not be reborn as deaf, blind, or dumb; with contracted hands and feet, incomplete limbs, bent back, epilepsy, carbuncle, ulcers, scabies, piles, or any filthy and ugly boils; nor will they be reborn as a very short, tall, or dark one.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, if great bodhisattvas learn this way, they will always have perfect family and associates in all future lives to come. They will have perfect appearances and physical features, speak solemnly and with authority, and are respected and loved by people. Wherever they are reborn, they will stay away from killing, stealing, and so forth, and incorrect views. They do not accept or absorb deluded incorrect dharmas, earn a living through improper means. In addition, they avoid befriending those who violate precepts, embrace incorrect views, and slander correct dharma.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, if great bodhisattvas learn this way, they will not be reborn in the heaven of longevity where pleasures are abundant while wisdom is rare. Why?

These great bodhisattvas have already achieved the powers of skillful expedience, and because of these powers, they are able to enter the meditations, immeasurable mind, and formless concentrations frequently without being dominated by their influence when they are reborn. Being absorbed by fathomless prajna paramita, they have attained skillful means, so they are able to enter and exit various concentrations freely without being affected by their powers to be reborn in the heaven of longevity. This allows them to continue cultivating the bodhisattva actions.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, if great bodhisattvas learn this way, they will attain purity in all dharmas. Because of the purity, they will not fall into the stage of voice-hearer or self-enlightened one."

At that time, Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "If the original nature of all dharmas is pure, why do great bodhisattvas regain the purity of all dharmas when they learn this way?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "You have asked a good question. The self-nature of all dharmas is inherently pure. As great bodhisattvas diligently and attentively cultivate and learn the fathomless prajna paramita, and fully and accurately understand them without sinking or stagnation, they will be far away from all vexations and contaminations. It is said these bodhisattvas have regained purity.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, the original nature of all dharmas is pure. But ordinary sentient beings do not know, see, or become awakened to this truth. Intending to assist them to know, see, and become awakened to it, great bodhisattvas 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.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, if great bodhisattvas learn this way, they will attain perfect and ultimate purity of the Buddha's ten abilities, four kinds of fearlessness, four unhindered understandings, great loving-kindness, great compassion, great joy, great equanimity, and eighteen distinctive features of Buddha's wisdom and power.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, if great bodhisattvas learn this way, they will thoroughly know different minds and actions of sentient beings perfectly and ultimately. They will also skillfully and expediently guide sentient beings to know the purity of the original nature of all dharmas, let them realize and attain the ultimate tranquil nirvana. You must know, Well-Appearing One, on this vast earth, gold, silver, and other jewels are found only in rare places, while sands, rocks, and rubble are everywhere. So are sentient beings. Very few of them are dedicated to learning the fathomless prajna paramita, while many are only interested in the path of voice-hearer or self-enlightened one.

"Well-Appearing One, you must know, like in the realm of human beings, very few are dedicated to cultivating the actions leading to wheel-turning king, while much more are interested in the karmas leading to small kings. Very few sentient beings are dedicated to cultivating the path of the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, while many are interested in the path of voice-hearer or self-enlightened one.

"Well-Appearing One, you must know that among the bodhisattvas who are pursuing the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, very few will attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, while many will fall into the stage of voice-hearer or self-enlightened one. You must know, Well-Appearing One, if good gentlepersons dwelling in bodhisattva vehicle do not stay far away from the expedient skillfulness of the fathomless prajna paramita, they certainly will achieve nonregression. If they stay far away from the expedient skillfulness of the fathomless prajna paramita, they will regress in the pursuit of the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. Therefore, if great bodhisattvas would like to reach the state of nonregression and become one of the great bodhisattvas of nonregression, they should diligently cultivate the expedient skillfulness of the fathomless prajna paramita.

(The Buddha taught that those, who would like to achieve nonregression in pursuing the unsurpassed bodhi, should diligently cultivate the expedient skillfulness of prajna paramita.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, if great bodhisattvas cultivate the expedient skillfulness of the fathomless prajna paramita this way, they will never allow a mind of greed and stinginess, precept violation, anger and hatred, tiredness and laziness, restlessness, and wisdom abuse to be initiated concomitantly; a mind of greed, anger, ignorance, and arrogance to

be initiated concomitantly; a mind of no self-restraint, fallacy, and other mistakes to be initiated concomitantly; or a mind attached to the aggregate of matter, feeling, and so forth, and the aggregate of consciousness to be initiated. Additionally, they will not allow a mind attached to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi of the Buddhas to be initiated. Why? Because these great bodhisattvas have practiced the expedient skillfulness of the fathomless prajna paramita, they do not see any dharma attainable. Because no dharma is attainable, they are not attached to the mind correspondent with all dharmas, including matter, feeling, and so forth.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, if great bodhisattvas cultivate the expedient skillfulness of the fathomless prajna paramita this way, they can absorb, assemble, and guide all paramitas. Why? In the fathomless prajna paramita, all paramitas are contained. Well-Appearing One, like the incorrect knowledge which insists that one's body is real and permanent, within which sixty-two incorrect views are included, so the fathomless prajna paramita contains all paramitas. Well-Appearing One, like a dying person, whose fundamental root of life extinguishes preceding all other roots, so the fathomless prajna paramita disappears preceding all other paramitas. As prajna paramita disappears, no other paramitas can exist. Therefore, Well-Appearing One, if great bodhisattvas would like to reach the ultimate other shore of all paramitas, they should cultivate and learn diligently the fathomless prajna paramita.

(The Buddha said that great bodhisattvas should cultivate prajna paramita before they can reach the other shore.)

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, if great bodhisattvas can diligently cultivate and learn the fathomless prajna paramita, they will be the uppermost and superior ones among all sentient beings. Why? These great bodhisattvas have diligently cultivated and learned the unsurpassed dharma.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, what do you think about this? Are sentient beings in this threefold thousand-world many?"

Well-Appearing One replied, "The sentient beings in the continent of Jambudvipa are numberless, not to mention the number of sentient beings in entire threefold thousand-world."

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, “It is as you say. You must know, Well-Appearing One, suppose that the sentient beings of the threefold thousand-world are reborn as human beings simultaneously; after that, they all initiate to aspire to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal enlightenment simultaneously and cultivate various bodhisattva actions. After cultivating them perfectly, they all attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi simultaneously. In the meantime, some great bodhisattvas make various kinds of most wonderful offerings respectfully to esteem and acclaim these Thus-Comers, Ones Worthy of Offerings, Perfectly and Universally Enlightened Ones. What do you think about this? Will these great bodhisattvas be much blessed because of this cause and condition?”

Well-Appearing One replied, “They will be very much blessed, World-Honored One. They will be very much blessed, Well-Gone One.”

The Buddha said to Well-Appearing One, “If some good gentlepersons of bodhisattva vehicle love to hear, listen to, accept, embrace, read, recite, understand thoroughly, reflect reasonably on, cultivate, write, and disseminate the fathomless prajna paramita, the blessing thus acquired will be much more than the former ones by numberless and countless times. Why? The fathomless prajna paramita has great justice and benefits and thus can assist great bodhisattvas to realize the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi quickly.

“Therefore, Well-Appearing One, if great bodhisattvas would like to become the leaders of all sentient beings, benefit them universally, and serve as rescuers, protectors, refuges, homes, eyes, bright lights, correct path, and nirvana for those in need, they should learn this fathomless prajna paramita.

“You must know, Well-Appearing One, if great bodhisattvas would like to attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi, practice at the same spiritual level of the Buddhas, play in where the Buddhas play, roar as great lion of the Thus-Comer roars, hit the unsurpassed dharma drum of the Buddhas, strike the unsurpassed dharma bell of the Buddhas, blow the unsurpassed dharma shell of the Buddhas, ascend to sit on the unsurpassed dharma throne of the Buddhas, lecture on the unsurpassed dharma meanings of the Buddhas, remove the net of puzzles of all sentient beings, enter the nectar-like dharma realm of the Buddhas, receive and enjoy the

subtle and exquisite dharma pleasure of the Buddhas, and realize the perfect and pure merits and virtues of the Thus-Comers, they should learn this fathomless prajna paramita.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, if great bodhisattvas learn the fathomless prajna paramita this way, there are no merits, virtues, and virtuous roots that they cannot acquire. Why? The fathomless prajna paramita is the locus on which all kinds of merits, virtues, and virtuous roots can rely and in which they can dwell."

At that time, Well-Appearing One asked the Buddha, "If great bodhisattvas cultivate and learn such fathomless prajna paramita, can they also attain the merits, virtues, and virtuous roots of voice-hearer and self-enlightened one?"

The Buddha replied to Well-Appearing One, "They can also attain the merits, virtues, and virtuous roots of voice-hearer and self-enlightened one, but they will not dwell in or be attached to them. They will contemplate and investigate with superior knowledge and views, transcend the stages of voice-hearer and self-enlightened one, and enter onto the bodhisattva path of nonarising. These great bodhisattvas can acquire all kinds of merits, virtues, and virtuous roots.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, if great bodhisattvas learn this way, they will be very close to the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge, and will realize the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi soon.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, if great bodhisattvas learn this way, they will serve as the genuine fields of bliss for all heavenly beings, human beings, asuras, and so forth. They will go beyond the fields of bliss of sramanas, celibacy practitioners, voice-hearers, and self-enlightened ones of the world and will realize the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge soon.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, if great bodhisattvas learn this way, they will never discard or turn away from the fathomless prajna paramita wherever they are reborn. Rather, they will always practice such fathomless prajna paramita.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, if great bodhisattvas learn the fathomless prajna paramita this way, they must have attained nonregression in the pursuit of the perfect knowledge

of all perfect knowledge. They understand and are correctly awakened to all dharmas. They will stay far away from the stage of voice-hearer or self-enlightened one, but stay close to the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, if great bodhisattvas practice the fathomless prajna paramita and think, 'This is prajna paramita. This is the time of cultivation. This is the place of cultivation. I can cultivate this fathomless prajna paramita. I have discarded all dharmas that I should discard because of this fathomless prajna paramita; I will realize and attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge.' Then these great bodhisattvas do not practice prajna paramita, nor do they understand prajna paramita. Why? The fathomless prajna paramita does not think, 'I am prajna paramita. This is the time of cultivation. This is the place of cultivation. These are the dharmas that prajna paramita has stayed far away from. These are the dharmas that prajna paramita has illuminated. This is the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi that prajna paramita realizes.' Knowing this way, one is practicing prajna paramita.

"Furthermore, Well-Appearing One, some great bodhisattvas have practiced the fathomless prajna paramita and think, 'This is not prajna paramita. This is not the time of cultivation. This is not the place of cultivation. This is not the practitioner. It is not because of prajna paramita that one should stay far away from the dharmas that must be discarded. It is not because of prajna paramita that one can realize and attain the unsurpassed, perfect, and universal bodhi. Why? All dharmas dwell in realness, dharma realm, dharma nature, and so forth, and the realm of the inconceivable. Among them, no dharma is different.' You must know, Well-Appearing One, if great bodhisattvas can learn this way, they do practice prajna paramita and will realize and attain the perfect knowledge of all perfect knowledge quickly."

(The Buddha concluded that great bodhisattvas should realize that all dharmas dwell in realness when they practice prajna paramita.)