

Source of this English Sutra:

Luk Kuan Yu (Charles Luk), 1987. Ch'an and Zen teaching (Third Series). London: Century.

The Sutra of Complete Enlightenment

Translated into Chinese by Master Buddhadrata of Kabul

Translated from Chinese into English by Lu Kuan Yu

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Chapter One Prologue

Thus have I heard.

Once the Bhagavan was enjoying samadhi correctly in the great supernatural effulgent store-house which was the bright and glorious resting place upheld by all Tathagatas and (also) the pure and clean enlightened stage (attainable by) all living beings.

(This is where) both body and mind are in (a state of) calmness and extinction of passions, the fundamental region is universal, the function is complete and all-embracing and non-duality prevails. From this undivided land, He caused all pure lands to appear.

(The Buddha) was accompanied by great Bodhisattvas and Mahasattvas who with their followers numbered one hundred thousand. The chiefs among them were Manjushri Bodhisattva, Samantabhadra Bodhisattva, the Bodhisattva of Universal Eyes, Vajragarbha Bodhisattva, Maitreya Bodhisattva, the Bodhisattva of Pure and Clean Wisdom, the Respect Inspiring Sovereign Bodhisattva, the Sound Distinguishing Bodhisattva, the Bodhisattva of Clean Karma, the Bodhisattva of Universal Enlightenment, the Bodhisattva of Complete Enlightenment and the Sage Leader Bodhisattva.

They all entered into samadhi and abode in the Tathagata's assembly of universal Dharma.

Chapter Two Manjusri Bodhisattva

Manjusri bodhisattva who was in the assembly rose from his seat, prostrated himself with his head at the feet of the Buddha, circled Him thrice from the right, bow down upon his knees, brought together his two palms with crossed fingers and said: "O World Honoured One of great compassion,

may you expound to this assembly the Dharma of the Tathagata's (self-awakening from) the self-moving pure and clean cause-ground and of a Bodhisattva's development of the pure and clean Mahayana mind for riddance of all impurities so that they can teach future living beings in the period of the Dharma's termination how not to fall into perverted views in their search for the Great Vehicle."

After saying these words, he again made the same prostration and the same request for a second and a third time.

Thereupon the World Honoured One said to Manjusri Bodhisattva: "Excellent, excellent! (It is good that) for the benefit of all Bodhisattvas you are able to ask about the Dharma of the Tathagata's (self-awakening) from the self-moving cause-ground and also for that of future living beings in the period of the Dharma's termination about how to abide and what to hold on to in their quest of Mahayana in order not to fall into perverted views. Listen attentively to what I now tell you."

Manjusri was filled with joy upon hearing this; he and the assembly kept silent to hear (the teaching).

(The Buddha said:) "Virtuous man, the Supreme Dharmaraja has the method of a Dharani door called Complete Enlightenment out of which stream all pure and clean Bhutatathata, Bodhi and Nirvana as well as paramitas to teach Bodhisattvas about all Tthagatas' (self-awakening from) the self-moving cause-ground, by entire reliance on perfect insight into pure and clean enlightenment for the permanent eradication of ignorance and ultimate attainment of Buddhahood.

What is ignorance? Virtuous man, since the time without beginning, all living beings holding inverted views are like wanderers who lose their way, they mistake the (union of) the four elements for their bodies and the shadows of the six conditioned sense data for their minds. They are like one who, by an optical illusion, sees a flower in the sky or a second moon.

'Virtuous man, actually there is no flower in the void but the man suffering (from optical illusion) wrongly clings to it. Because of his wrong clinging, he deceives himself not only as to the nature of the void but also as to where the flower really comes from. This false existence (to which he clings) is the cause of the round of births and deaths; hence ignorance.'

'Virtuous man, this ignorance actually has no real substance and is like a man seen in a dream; this man exists in the dream but not in the waking state. It is like an (illusory) flower in the sky; when it vanishes, it cannot be said that there is the fixed place in the void where it actually disappears. Why? Because there was no (fixed) place where it was created. In the uncreated, all living beings wrongly perceive creation and destruction. Hence the round of births and deaths.'

‘Virtuous man, the Tathagata’s cultivation of complete enlightenment from the cause-ground consisted in His cognition of an (illusory) flower in the sky, which cognition put an end to samsara (wherein) there is neither body nor mind that can be subject to birth and death. The non-existence (of body and mind) does not result from any (particular) deed for fundamentally they are not immanent in the self-nature.’

‘(Objective) enlightenment so cognized is also like space and (subjective) knowing of space is but an (illusory) flower in the sky. Even the nature of enlightenment and of knowing cannot be said to be non-existent, thus eliminating the duality of existence and non-existence to be in accord with pure enlightenment.’

‘Why is it so? Because it is of immaterial nature, it is always unmoving and, in the Tathagata store, it is beyond creation and annihilation and is free from intellection. It is called Dharma nature for it is ultimate, wholly complete and all-embracing. Therefore, this is the method of practice from the cause-ground.’

‘All Bodhisattvas by reason (of this cause-ground), in their (practice of) Mahayana, develop a pure and clean mind. In the period of the Dharma’s termination, if future living beings practise their self-cultivation accordingly, they will not fall into perverted views.’

To repeat His instruction, the World Honoured One read the following gatha:

‘Manjushri, you should know that
all Tathagatas
started from the casual-ground
with the wisdom of enlightenment
ignorance to understand.
Once ignorance is known as a sky-flower,
birth and death come to an end (at last):
They are like a man seen in a dream,
who disappears when one awakes.
Enlightenment is like (empty) space
universal and unmoving;
If it pervades the ten directions
buddhahood is then attained.
Illusions have no place to vanish in;
Nothing is won when truth is realized

for the self-nature wholly is complete.
By reason of this (casual-ground) Bodhisattvas
develop Bodhi mind.
Future living beings in the Dharma ending age
should practise it and so avoid false views.'

Chapter Three Samantabhadra Bodhisattva

Samantabhadra Bodhisattva who was in the assembly rose from his seat, prostrated himself with his head at the feet of the Buddha, circled Him thrice from the right, bowed down upon his knees, brought together his two palms with crossed fingers and said: 'O World Honoured One of great compassion, for the benefit of the Bodhisattvas in this assembly and of future living beings practising Mahayana in the period of the Dharma's termination, may you explain what they should practise upon hearing about this pure and clean Complete Enlightenment.

World Honoured One, if these living beings know that like illusory knowledge, both body and mind are also illusions, how will the illusory subject practise by means of the illusory object? If all is of an illusory nature, there is total annihilation of things. There will be no mind and (so) who will be the practiser? Why do you speak of practice which is like an illusion? If fundamentally there is no practice, all living beings would always abide in samsaric illusions without knowing them. In this illusory realm, how can their discriminating minds be liberated? May you teach the expedient method of gradual practice so that future living beings in the period of the Dharma's termination can keep from all illusions for ever.'

After saying these words, he again made the same prostration and the same request for a second and a third time.

The World Honoured One then said to Samantabhadra Bodhisattva: 'Excellent, excellent! Virtuous man, (it is good that) for the benefit of Bodhisattvas and also of future living beings in the period of the Dharma's termination you are able to ask for the expedient method of a Bodhisattva's gradual practice of the samadhi (attained after cognition) of illusions to enable them to keep from illusions. Listen attentively to what I now tell you.'

After saying these words, he again made the same prostration and the same request for a second and a third time.

The World Honoured One then said to Samantabhadra Bodhisattva: 'Excellent, excellent! Virtuous man, (it is good that) for the benefit of Bodhisattvas and also of future living beings in the period of

the Dharma's termination you are able to ask for the expedient method of a Bodhisattva's gradual practice of the samadhi (attained after cognition) of illusions to enable them to keep from illusions. Listen attentively to what I now tell you.'

Samantabhadra Bodhisattva was filled with joy upon hearing this; he and the assembly kept silent to hear (the teaching).

(The Buddha said:) 'Virtuous man, all kinds of illusions of living beings arise from the wondrous mind of the Tathagata's Complete Enlightenment. They are like flowers in the sky which come from the void. When these illusory flowers vanish, the nature of the void is undamaged. The illusory minds of all living beings will disappear as their illusions vanish, and when all their illusions vanish completely, their enlightened minds remain immutable. To speak of enlightenment while clinging to illusions is also (to create) an illusion. To say that enlightenment exists is to fail to keep from illusions. Likewise to say that there is no enlightenment (is also to create an illusion). Therefore, the disappearance of illusions means immutability (of mind).'

'Virtuous man, all Bodhisattvas and future living beings in the period of the Dharma's termination should keep from all illusions. The realm of illusions (continues to exist) because the mind clings firmly to the idea of avoiding them. This mind is an illusion and should also be kept away.'

'(The idea of) keeping from (this mind) is an illusion and should also be avoided.' 'The (new idea of) avoiding the (illusion of) keeping from the mind should also be avoided.' 'When there is nothing further to avoid, all illusions vanish. By way of illustration, after a fire obtained from wood by friction has completely burned the two pieces of wood which produced it and when there is no more smoke, the ashes will scatter (in the wind). Likewise, the practice by the illusory subject (by means of) the illusory object does not lead to the annihilation of anything after the disappearance of all illusions.'

'Virtuous man, when illusions are known as such, one will keep from them without using any expedients. When one keeps from illusions, one is enlightened without passing through any gradual stages.'

'All Bodhisattvas and future living beings in the period of the Dharma's termination should practise self-cultivation accordingly so that they can be rid of illusions for ever.'

To repeat His instruction, the World Honoured One read the following gatha:

'Samantabhadra, you should know that
since time without beginning the dreamlike ignorance of

living beings
came from the Tathagata's
completely enlightened mind.
'Tis like a flower in the sky
appearing in the void.
When in the sky it vanishes
space actually does not change.
Illusions come from incomplete awareness which,
when they vanish, become perfect,
for the enlightened mind ne'er changes.
Therefore all Bodhisattvas
and those who live in the Dharma ending age
should always avoid illusions
which vanish
like a fire produced by friction of (two sticks) of wood:
When these burn out, fire also vanishes.
There is no gradual enlightenment
and there are no expedients.'

Chapter Four The Bodhisattva with Universal Eyes

Thereupon, The Bodhisattva with Universal Eyes, who was in the assembly, rose from his seat, prostrated himself with his head at the feet of the Buddha, circled him thrice from the right, bowed down upon his knees, brought together his two palms with crossed fingers and said: 'O World Honoured One of great compassion, may you teach all Bodhisattvas of this assembly and also all future living beings in the period of the Dharma's termination how a Bodhisattva should think (rightly), where (his mind) should abide when he practises gradual self-cultivation and what expedients an unenlightened living being should use to secure his awakening. World Honoured One, if these living beings do not know the correct expedient method and do not think rightly, they will be confused and stupefied when they hear about how the Buddha expounded this samadhi and will be unable to be awakened to complete enlightenment. Will you be compassionate enough expediently to expound a method for our benefit and for that of future living beings in the period of the Dharma's termination?'

After saying this, he again made the same prostration and the same request for a second and third time.

Thereupon, the World Honoured One said to the Bodhisattva with Universal Eyes: 'Excellent,

excellent! Virtuous man, (it is good that) for the benefit of Bodhisattvas and future living beings in the period of the Dharma's termination you are able to ask about the Tathagata's (method of) gradual self-cultivation in how to think correctly and where to abide and about the expedient expounding of various methods of practice. Listen attentively to what I now tell you.'

The Bodhisattva with Universal Eyes was filled with joy upon hearing this; he and the assembly kept silent to hear (the teaching).

(The Buddha said:) 'Virtuous man, all newly initiated Bodhisattvas and future living beings in the period of the Dharma's termination in quest of the Tathagata's pure mind of complete enlightenment should hold the right thought in order to keep from illusions.

'First, practise the Tathagata's samatha by strictly observing the prohibitions of sila, providing accommodation for fellow practisers and sitting in meditation in a quiet hall. You should always think: "My body is a union of four elements: all impure things such as hair, nails, teeth, skin, flesh, tendons, bones, marrow and brain come from the element earth; all spittle, snot, pus, blood, saliva, sweat, water, phlegm, tears, semen, urine and excrement come from the element water; all warmth (and heat) come from the element fire; and all motion comes from the element wind. When the four elements scatter, where is this false body of mine?" You will immediately realize that this physical body really has no substance and owes its form to the union of four elements. It is but an illusion created by the seeming union of four (conditioning) causes and is wrongly (regarded as) having six sense organs.

'The complete union of the six inner sense organs and the four outer elements creates the false existence of causal conditions, the accumulation of which takes a seeming aspect called mind.'

'Virtuous man, this unreal mind cannot exist in the absence of the six sense data. When the four elements scatter, the sense data no longer exist and when the conditioned sense data scatter and vanish, the clinging mind cannot be found.'

'Virtuous man, when the illusory bodies of these living beings disappear, their illusory minds also vanish. Because their illusory minds vanish, the illusory sense data also disappear. Because the illusory sense data disappear, the illusory disappearance (of illusions) also vanishes. Because this illusory disappearance vanishes, that which is not illusory does not disappear. For example, when a mirror is rubbed, after all the dust has been wiped off, its brightness appears.'

'Virtuous man, you should know that body and mind are illusory impurities and when these illusory impurities vanish for ever, there will remain (only) purity and cleanness in the ten directions of space.

‘Virtuous man, (when) for instance the pure and clean mani crystal reflects the five colours as they appear before it, the ignorant hold to the view that this crystal really possesses these five colours. Virtuous man, likewise, when the pure nature of perfect enlightenment which is responsive to all appearances, reflects the body and mind, the ignorant say that it really possesses this body and mind; for this reason, they are unable to keep from illusions and transformations. Therefore, I say that body and mind are illusory impurities and that he who keeps from them is called a Bodhisattva. When (objective) impurities are eradicated and subjective (wisdom that avoids them) is eliminated, there are also neither (the Bodhisattva) confronting impurities nor the one calling (him by) that name.’

‘Virtuous man, this Bodhisattva and any living being in the period of the Dharma’s termination who succeeds in awakening from all illusions and thereby eliminating all appearances, will experience unlimited purity and cleanness as well as infinite voidness as revealed by his enlightenment. As this enlightenment is complete and clear, it reveals the mind in its purity and cleanness.

‘Because the mind is pure and clean, the seeing (impurity called) dust is pure and clean. Because the seeing is pure and clean, the organ of sight is pure and clean. Because the organ (of sight) is pure and clean, the sight perception is pure and clean. Because the (sight-)perception is pure and clean, **(the hearing (impurity called) dust is pure and clean. Because the hearing is pure and clean,)**¹ the organ of hearing [ear]² is pure and clean. Because the organ (of hearing [ear]³) is pure and clean, the ear-perception is pure and clean. Because the (ear-)perception is pure and clean, the impure awareness [awareness (impurity called) dust]⁴ is pure and clean. Likewise, the (other sense organs such as) nose, tongue, body and intellect are also (pure and clean).

1. We have added this red sentence. Please be aware the original Ch'an and Zen teaching (Third Series) does not contain this.

2. It would be more accurate to use ‘ear’ instead of ‘hearing’.

3. It would be more accurate to use ‘ear’ instead of ‘hearing’.

4. It would be more accurate to use ‘awareness (impurity called) dust’ instead of ‘impure awareness’.

After a careful comparison between Taishō Tripiṭaka and Charles Luk’s English version, we would like to slightly amend the English version.

It is possible that Charles Luk used a different Chinese version from other sources which may differ from the Taishō Tripiṭaka Chinese version. The original Taishō Tripiṭaka Chinese text are presented here: 心清淨故見塵清淨，見清淨故眼根清淨，根清淨故眼識清淨，識清淨故聞塵清淨，聞清淨故耳根清淨，根清淨故耳識清淨，識清淨故覺塵清淨；如是乃至鼻、舌、身、意亦復如是。

‘Virtuous man, because the sense organs are pure and clean, all forms are pure and clean. Because all forms are pure and clean, all sounds are pure and clean. Likewise, smell, taste, touch, and thoughts are also (pure and clean).

'Virtuous man, because the six sense data are pure and clean, the element earth is pure and clean. Because the element earth is pure and clean, the element water is pure and clean. Likewise, the elements fire and wind are also (pure and clean).'

'Virtuous man, because the four elements are pure and clean, the twelve entrances, the eighteen dhatus and the twenty-five forms of existence are all pure and clean.'

'Because the above (four elements, twelve entrances, eighteen realms of sense (dhatu) and twenty-five forms of existence) are pure and clean, the ten powers of knowledge, the four kinds of fearlessness, the four unhindered powers of interpretation, the eighteen characteristics which distinguish a Buddha from the other three states of sainthood, the thirty-seven contributory conditions leading to Buddhahood up to the 84,000 dharani doors are all pure and clean.

'Virtuous man, all things are in the absolute state of reality. Because their nature is pure and clean, so is a body. Because a body is pure and clean, so are all bodies. Because all bodies are pure and clean, all living beings in the ten directions of space are in the purity and cleanness of complete enlightenment.

'Virtuous man, because one universe is pure and clean, so are all universes. Because all universes are pure and clean, all things within them in the past, present and future are pure, clean and unchanging in their universal condition.

'Virtuous man, since space is so universal and unchanging, you should know that the nature of knowing and feeling is universal and unchanging. Since the four elements are unchanging, you should know that the nature of knowing and feeling is universal and unchanging. Since all things (from the above) up to the 84,000 dharani doors (to absolute control of passions) are universal and unchanging, you should know that the nature of knowing and feeling is universal and unchanging.

'Virtuous man, as the nature of enlightenment is all-embracing, pure, clean, unchanging and boundless, you should know that the six sense organs are everywhere in the dharmadhatu. Because the sense organs are all-embracing, the six sense data are everywhere in the dharmadhatu. Because the sense data are all embracing, the four elements are everywhere in the dharmadhatu. Thus (all things from the above) up to the dharani doors are everywhere in the dharmadhatu.

'Virtuous man, because the nature of wonderful enlightenment is all-embracing, the nature of the sense organs and sense data is indestructible and unmixable. Because of this indestructibility (and unmixability all things from the above) up to the dharani doors are indestructible and unmixable.

They are like hundreds and thousands of lamps which light a room, the whole of which is filled with the light that is indestructible and unmixable.'

'Virtuous man, you should know that in his realization of enlightenment, a Bodhisattva neither ties himself to nor frees himself from a doctrine (Dharma), neither dislikes birth and death nor likes nirvana, neither respects those observing the precepts nor hates those breaking them and neither respects experienced practisers nor slights beginners. Why so? Because his complete enlightenment on all things is likened to the light of his eyes which is complete and does not like or dislike anything in front of him. What is the reason? Because this light is non-dual, neither liking nor disliking anything.'

'Virtuous man, this Bodhisattva or any living being in the period of the Dharma's termination who cultivates this mind and achieves this attainment, neither practises (any) cultivation nor achieves (any) attainment. In the Buddha realms as uncountable as sand grains in the Ganges rivers which are as innumerable as hundreds, thousands, tens of thousands and hundreds of thousands of asankhyas, even universal illuminating complete enlightenment in its non-dual nirvanic condition is still like a flower in the sky, aimlessly rising and falling, because it is neither enlightenment itself nor something apart and is neither bound nor liberated. Therefore, fundamentally all living beings are in the condition of Buddhahood (wherein) samsara and nirvana are like (things seen in) yesterday's dream.'

'Virtuous man, as they are like (things seen in) yesterday's dream, you should know that samsara and nirvana neither rise nor fall and neither come nor go. The (objective) realization can be neither gained nor lost and neither grasped nor rejected. The (subjective) realizer neither makes nor unmakes it and neither bears nor drops it. Subject and object do not exist in this realization wherein ultimately nothing is realized and wherein there is not even a realizer, for all things are only nature (dharmata) which is universal and indestructible.'

'Virtuous man, if these Bodhisattvas so practise self-cultivation by gradual steps, so rightly think and so abide in these expedients, so open up (their minds) for their awakening and so seek the Dharma, they will not be confused and stupefied.'

To repeat His instruction, the World Honoured One read the following gatha:

'Universal Eye, you should know
that the minds and bodies of all living beings are illusory,
(with) body made from the four elements
and mind reducible to six sense data,
when the four elements disperse

who is it that unites them?
So by gradual cultivation, step by step,
all things will be pure and clean.
Embracing all dharmadhatu, the unchanging
neither makes nor unmakes, bears nor drops;
nor is there one to realize (it).
The realms of all the Buddhas
are like flowers in the sky.
Since the three times are uniform,
there is no coming and no going.
All newly initiated Bodhisattvas
and beings in the Dharma ending age
seeking the Buddha Way to enter
should thus practise self-cultivation.'

Chapter Five Vajragarbha Bodhisattva

Thereupon, Vajragarbha Bodhisattva, who was in the assembly arose from his seat, prostrated himself with his head at the feet of the Buddha, circled Him thrice from the right, bowed down upon his knees, brought together his two palms with crossed fingers and said: 'O World Honoured One of great compassion, you have (so) well expounded to all Bodhisattvas the expedient method of gradual practice, from the cause-ground of the great Dharani door to the Tathagata's pure and clean complete enlightenment so that they and all living beings can be rid of their ignorance. After hearing your teaching, all those in the assembly are free from obstructing illusions and their wisdom eyes are now pure and clean. World Honoured One, if all living beings are fundamentally in the state of Buddhahood, how can there be all sorts of ignorance? If all living beings fundamentally are ignorant in all sorts of ways, why does the Tathagata now say that they are fundamentally in the state of Buddhahood? If different beings in the ten directions (of space) were fundamentally in the state of Buddhahood first and afterwards gave rise to ignorance, when would all the Tathagatas give rise to passions (klesa) again? May you not forsake your kindness; pray open the secret treasury (of profound wisdom) for the benefit of Bodhisattvas and all future living beings in the period of the Dharma's termination so that when they hear the teaching of this sutra, they will not give rise to further doubts about its revelation of the whole truth.'

After saying these words, he again made the same prostration and the same request for a second and a third time.

Thereupon, the World Honoured One said to Vajragarbha Bodhisattva: 'Excellent, excellent! Virtuous

man (it is good that) for the benefit of Bodhisattvas and of future living beings in the period of the Dharma's termination you are able to ask the Tathagata about the expedient (method of practice) of the very secret and profound ultimate (whole truth). It is the highest teaching of the Mahayana's whole truth (reserved) for Bodhisattvas so that all learning and practising Bodhisattvas in the ten directions and all future living beings in the period of the Dharma's termination can develop a decisive faith and cut off their doubts for ever. Listen attentively to what I now tell you.'

Vajragarbha Bodhisattva was filled with joy upon hearing this; he and the assembly kept silent to hear (the teaching).

(The Buddha said:) 'Virtuous man, all realms whose beginning and end, creation and annihilation, precedence and subsequence, existence and non-existence, production and dissolution, rise and cessation succeed one another in every moment of thought and replace one another by rotation, with all kinds of attachment and detachment, are but samsara. If those who are still on samsara's wheel discuss complete enlightenment, then even the latter rotates as well and cannot yet escape from samsara.'

'For instance when sight is disturbed one can see waves in still water and when sight is steady one can see the ring of fire drawn by a circling torch. In the same way the moon (appears to) move past floating clouds and the banks (of a river) past a boat which is sailing (by them).

'Virtuous man, while there is this movement, even those objects which were unchanging (before) cannot be found. 'Still less can the impure mind which fluctuates in samsara and is still not pure and clean, (succeed in) looking into the Buddha's complete enlightenment without moving in a circle. Because of this you give rise to three kinds of illusion.'

'Virtuous man, for instance, because of an optical illusion, a flower is falsely seen in the sky. If the illusion vanishes it cannot be asked: "This optical illusion has vanished, when will others appear?" Why? Because the flower and the optical illusion are not mutually dependent. Likewise, when the (illusory) flower disappears in the sky, it cannot be asked when it will appear again. Why? Because fundamentally there is no flower in the sky which is beyond creation and extinction. Samsara and nirvana are identical with creation and extinction (but) perfect insight into wonderful enlightenment is beyond both flower and optical illusion.'

'Virtuous man, you should know that space neither exists nor is non-existent for an instant. How much more so is (the case with) the Tathagata's complete enlightenment which, in accord with space, is its fundamental universal nature? Virtuous man, when for instance gold ore is smelted, the fine gold (obtained) does not exist because of the smelting. As it is (fine) gold now, it will be so

permanently and will never decay. Therefore, it cannot be said that gold fundamentally does not exist. The Tathagata's complete enlightenment is like (fine) gold.

'Virtuous man, the completely enlightened minds of all Tathagatas are neither bodhi nor nirvana, neither attain nor do not attain Buddhahood and are neither samsara nor not samsara.'

'Virtuous man, even the sravakas who have succeeded in realizing a state where body, mind, word and speech are entirely extinct, are still unable to enter nirvana, the appearance of which has been evident to them; how much more so are those who use their discriminating minds to fathom the state of the Tathagata's complete enlightenment? (The futility of their attempt to do so is) comparable to the use of the fire of fireflies to scorch Mount Sumeru. He who uses samsaric mind and samsaric conceptions (in his attempt) to enter the Tathagata's great ocean of stillness and extinction will never succeed. Therefore, I say that all Bodhisattvas and future living beings in the period of the Dharma's termination, should first cut off the basic cause of samsara which has no beginning.

'Virtuous man, all (mental) activity and thinking arise in the discriminating mind and cause the deceptive reflection of the six sense data; they are not really the substance of mind. If this thinking which is already (like) a flower in the sky, is used to discuss the state of Buddhahood, (the result will be that state) which is already an illusory flower, will produce an illusory fruit and will increase false thoughts. Virtuous man, in spite of its cunning views, this unreal floating mind cannot succeed in the expedient (cultivation) of complete enlightenment. Because of this discrimination, your question is not proper.'

To repeat His instruction, the World Honoured One read the following gatha:

'Vajragarbha, you should know that
the tathagata's nirvanic nature
has no end and no beginning.
If samsaric mind is used,
its thoughts are they recur
reach only to samsara,
they enter not the Buddha ocean.
Thus when gold ore is smelted,
gold does not exist because of that.
Though it regains its real nature
it needed smelting to be refined.
Once it becomes true gold

it cannot be ore again.
Samsara and nirvana,
all beings and all Buddhas
are but flowers in the sky.
Since thinking is but transformation,
what from falsity can be expected?
If this mind clearly is cognized
true enlightenment can then be sought.'

Chapter Six Maitreya Bodhisattva

Thereupon, Maitreya Bodhisattva who was in the assembly, arose from his seat, prostrated himself with his head at the feet of the Buddha, circled Him thrice from the right, bowed down upon his knees, brought together his two palms with crossed fingers and said: 'O World Honoured One of great compassion, you have opened wide the secret store (of profound wisdom) to enable this assembly to awaken from samsara, to discern between wrong and right, to be capable of bestowing the fearless eye of truth upon all future living beings in the period of the Dharma's termination, to give rise to a decisive faith in the great nirvana and to avoid falling again into samsara where they (are bound to) give rise to recurring false thoughts. World Honoured One, if the Bodhisattvas and future living beings in the period of the Dharma's termination desire to sail on the Tathagata's great ocean of nirvana, how should they cut off the basic roots of samsara? How many samsaric natures are there, what are the differences in the cultivation of Buddha-bodhi and how many expedient methods should they use when returning to samsara to liberate living beings? May you not forsake the great compassion out of which you are saving the world. Pray (teach) all practising Bodhisattvas and future living beings in the period of the Dharma's termination so that their wisdom eyes can be cleansed, their mind mirrors will shine and they will be completely awakened to the Tathagata's unsurpassed omniscience.'

After saying these words, he again made the same prostration and the same request for a second and a third time.

The World Honoured One said to Maitreya Bodhisattva: 'Excellent, excellent! Virtuous man, (it is good that) for the benefit of Bodhisattvas and future living beings in the period of the Dharma's termination, you can ask about the Tathagata's profound, secret and abstruse (whole truth) so that these Bodhisattvas' wisdom eyes can become pure and that all future beings in the period of the Dharma's termination can cut off (the basic roots of) samsara for ever, can be awakened to Reality and can rest in the patient endurance of the uncreate. Listen attentively to what I now tell you.'

Maitreya Bodhisattva was filled with joy upon hearing this; he and the assembly kept silent to hear (the teaching).

(The Buddha said:) 'Virtuous man, there is samsara because since the time without beginning, all living beings have been indulging in all sorts of love (kama) and desire. In the samsaric world, all kinds of nature born from womb, from egg, from humidity and by transformation are caused by sexual desire which alone justifies the life (of conscious beings). You should know that love is the basic root of samsara.

'Because there are all sorts of desire which are an incentive to love, births and deaths are in unending succession.

'Desire originates from love (and) life originates from desire. A living being who loves his life, relies on the basic desire for it. (Therefore), the love of desire is cause and the love of life is effect.'

'The field of desire may be either favourable or adverse. If the situation is adverse, the rise of feelings of dislike and envy will cause all sorts of evil karmic deeds resulting in rebirth in the worlds of (animals), hungry ghost and hells.'

'The forsaking of evil and delight in doing good will result in rebirths in the worlds of men and gods (deva).'

'If love is known as objectionable, the (subsequent) forsaking of love and the delight in so doing will again stimulate basic love and will result in developing good fruit which is (fundamentally) samsaric and does not (ensure the) attainment of sainthood.'

'Therefore, all living beings who want to be liberated from birth and death and to escape from samsara should first cut off their desire and eradicate their love.'

'Virtuous man, a Bodhisattva appearing in the world to convert others, does not do so by love. His is (uncaused) benevolence and compassion, the object of which is to teach others to forsake love. He enters the realm of birth and death by expediently showing desire (for it). In the period of the Dharma's termination, if all living beings can forsake desire and eradicate love, they will (be able to) put an end to samsara for ever. In their keen quest of the Tathagata's state of complete enlightenment, they will be awakened to the pure and clean mind.'

'Virtuous man, because of their desires, all living beings fall into ignorance and thus betray five different natures, the shallowness and profundity of which depend on two kinds of hindrance which

are, firstly the noumenal hindrance which obstructs their correct view, and secondly the phenomenal hindrance causing the continuance of their births and deaths.'

'What are these five natures? Virtuous man, those who cannot eliminate these two hindrances, will not attain Buddhahood.'

'If living beings who have forsaken all desires for ever, eradicate (only) the phenomenal hindrance without wiping out the noumenal one, they can (only) attain the realms of sravakas and pratyekabuddhas but are unable to reach the state of Bodhisattvas.

'Virtuous man, if future living beings in the period of the Dharma's termination wish to sail on the Tathagata's great ocean of complete enlightenment, they should first vow diligently to destroy the two hindrances. After these hindrances have been overcome they will be able to enter the realm of Bodhisattvas.

'If the noumenal and phenomenal hindrances have been destroyed for ever, they will enter into the Tathagata's profound Complete Enlightenment and fully realize bodhi and the great nirvana.

'Virtuous man, complete enlightenment is attainable by all living beings. If they meet an enlightened person and follow his method of practice from the cause-ground, their attainment will be either gradual or instantaneous. If they come across the Tathagata's (teaching on) unsurpassed bodhi and follow its right way of self-cultivation, they will all realize the Buddha fruit, irrespective of their small or great roots.'

'If in their quest of a learned teacher, living beings meet one who holds heterodox views and has not been awakened to the real, their resultant nature will be that of heretical seed. This is due to the teacher's falsehood and not to their faults.

'The above are the five different natures of all living beings.'

'Virtuous man, a Bodhisattva only uses the expedient of his great compassion to enter the realms of existence for the purpose of opening up (the minds of) those who are not awakened and of appearing friendly in various forms and in favourable or adverse situations to co-operate with and convert them so that they can all become Buddhas. In so doing, he relies entirely on the power of his pure and clean vow (taken) since the time without beginning.'

'If future living beings in the period of the Dharma's termination wish to strengthen the power of their developed minds set on complete enlightenment they should take the Bodhisattva's pure and

clean great vow, declaring: “May we from now on dwell in the Buddha’s complete enlightenment and may we not in our search for teachers meet heretics and men of Hinayana.” By strictly adhering to the vow in their self-cultivation, they will be able gradually to wipe out all hindrances. When all obstructions are completely overcome, their vows will be entirely fulfilled. They are thus bound to ascend to the pure and clean Dharma temple of liberation and will experience complete enlightenment in the wonderful region of glory.’

To repeat His instruction, the World Honoured One read the following gatha:

‘Maitreya, you should know that
all living beings
are not liberated
because of (their) desires
which cause both birth and death.
If like, dislike,
stupidity, greed and hate are (all) uprooted,
no matter how their natures differ
they will all attain to Buddhahood.
When the two hindrances are killed for good,
the quest of (right) teachers to awakening
leads by keeping to a Bodhisattva’s vow
and abiding in the last nirvana.
All Bodhisattvas everywhere
rely on the vow of their compassion
to appear in realms of birth and death.
Those now practising self-cultivation
and living in the Dharma ending age
should strive with vigilance to cut off love:
then they will realize complete enlightenment.’

Chapter Seven The Bodhisattva of Pure and Clean Wisdom

The Bodhisattva of Pure and Clean Wisdom, who was in the assembly, rose from his seat and prostrated himself with his head at the feet of the Buddha, circled Him thrice from the right, bowed down upon his knees, brought together his two palms with crossed fingers and said: ‘O World Honoured One of great compassion, you have fully expounded to us an inconceivable thing which we never saw or heard before. Because of the Buddha’s excellent guidance, our bodies and minds are now settled and we have derived great profit therefrom. May you again expound for the benefit of

all practisers of the Dharma the nature of the Dharma-rajā's complete enlightenment and (explain) why there are differences in experiencing and attainment by all living beings, by Bodhisattvas and by the World Honoured Tathagata, so that all those in the period of the Dharma's termination will, after hearing the holy teaching, open up their minds, awaken and gradually enter into it.'

After saying these words, he again made the same prostration and request for a second and a third time.

Thereupon, the World Honoured One said to the Bodhisattva of Pure and Clean Wisdom: 'Excellent, excellent! Virtuous man, (it is good that) you are able to ask the Tathagata about the differences in gradual (experiencing and attainment) for the benefit of future living beings in the period of the Dharma's termination. Listen attentively to what I now tell you.'

The Bodhisattva of Pure and Clean Wisdom was filled with joy upon hearing this; he and the assembly kept silent to hear (the teaching).

(The Buddha said:) 'Virtuous man, the nature of complete enlightenment is not the (same as the above different) natures. It is self-existent but follows their rise (to manifest itself). It cannot be grasped and realized. In the absolute fundamental reality, there are neither Bodhisattvas nor living beings. Why? Because Bodhisattvas and living beings are all illusions and transformations. When illusions and transformations vanish, there are neither graspers nor realizers. For instance, the organ of sight does not see itself. (Likewise) the self-nature is impartial by itself for it does not (require) a subject to make it so.

'Living beings who are deluded and perverted, are unable to wipe out all kinds of illusions and transformations. Before these are wiped out, their wrong practice (of self-cultivation) betrays these differences. If the Tathagata's (teaching on) nirvana is followed (by them) and if they are in accord with it, there is in reality neither nirvana nor the subject (realizing it).

'Virtuous man, since the time without beginning, all living beings have been thinking wrongly of the I and of the one loving the I. As they do not know that they are just the rise and fall of consecutive thoughts, they give rise to love and hate and indulge in the five desires.'

'If they meet an enlightened master who teaches them, they will open up (their minds) and will be awakened. (They will realize that) the nature of pure Complete Enlightenment alone gives rise to births and deaths and they will know that these rises and falls come from the self-nature inflicting troubles and anxieties on itself.'

'If a man succeeds in wiping out all troubles and anxieties for ever, he will realize the Dharmadhatu in its purity. If he holds on to this interpretation of purity, he will hinder himself and will not be a sovereign (enjoyer) of complete enlightenment. He is just a worldly follower of the nature of enlightenment.'

'Virtuous man, all Bodhisattvas are hindered by their views and understanding. Though the understanding which hinders them has been removed the feeling of their views still remains. Because this feeling hinders them, they do not enjoy their independence. They are Bodhisattvas who have not entered Dasabhumi and are followers of the nature of enlightenment.'

'Virtuous man, both objective purity and subjective awareness of its hindrance are obstructions. For this reason, a Bodhisattva does not abide in his non-discriminating eternal awareness; thus the object introspected and the subjective introspection are simultaneously in the (nirvanic) condition of calmness and extinction.'

'For instance, if a man beheads himself, no (subjective) executioner remains after the head has been cut off. Therefore, the mind which is hindered should destroy its own hindrances and after all hindrances have been destroyed, no (subjective) destroyer remains.'

'The teaching of the sutra is like a finger pointing at the moon which, when it is seen, is not in fact the indicator. Likewise, all words and expressions used by the Tathagata to teach Bodhisattvas are only pointers.' 'This is so with a Bodhisattva who has entered the (last ten) stages of development and is now in accord with the nature of enlightenment.'

'Virtuous man, all hindrances are identical with the (nature of) ultimate enlightenment: both immutable and wandering mind are liberation: both creation and annihilation are nirvana; both wisdom and stupidity are prajna; both the Dharma realized by Bodhisattvas and by heretics are bodhi; both ignorance and Bhutatathata are one undifferentiated condition; both sila, dhyana and prajna and fleshly indulgence, hatred and stupidity are pure living; all worlds of existence are of one Dharma nature; both heavens and hells are the pure land; both those with and without propensities attain Buddhahood; all passions (klesa) are ultimately liberated. When the ocean wisdom in the Dharmadhatu reflects all phenomena, the latter are (empty) like space. This is the Tathagata in accord with the nature of enlightenment.'

'Virtuous man, what all Bodhisattvas and future living beings in the period of the Dharma's termination should do at all times is only not to give rise to wrong thoughts and also not to extinguish their false minds; in the field of wrong thinking, they should not be aware of it and in their unawareness of it, they should not discern Reality.'

‘These (future) living beings who (happen to) hear of this Dharma door, will believe in, understand, accept and observe it and will not be filled with alarm and fear (because of it); they will be adherents who are in accord with the nature of enlightenment’.

‘Virtuous man, you should know that these living beings will have made offerings to Buddhas and great Bodhisattvas as many as there are sandgrains in a hundred, a thousand and ten thousand million Ganges rivers and will have thus planted (the seeds of) all basic merits; the Buddha says that these persons will realize omniscience.’

To repeat His instruction, the World Honoured One read the following gatha:

‘Pure Wisdom, you should know that
the nature of complete enlightenment
cannot be grasped or realized;
it has no room for Bodhisattvas or for beings.
Between enlightenment and (the states) before it
are differences due to progressive stages.
Wordlings seek to overcome their hindrances,
(while) Bodhisattvas do not stray from bodhi.
The entering stages are calm and passionless,
because of non-abiding in externals.
The great bodhi which is thus perfected
is called adherence all-embracing.
If beings in the Dharma ending age
do not give rise to falsehood,
the Buddha will say that they are
Bodhisattvas in their lifetime;
by offerings made to countless Buddhas
their merits are acquired in full.
Though expedients be many
all with wisdom are attuned.’

Chapter Eight The Respect Inspiring Sovereign Bodhisattva

The Respect Inspiring Sovereign Bodhisattva, who was in the assembly, rose from his seat, prostrated himself with his head at the feet of the Buddha, circled Him thrice from the right, bowed down upon his knees, brought together his two palms with crossed fingers and said: ‘O World Honoured One of

great compassion, you have gone into detail concerning (the proper attitude in) conformity with the nature of enlightenment so that all Bodhisattvas can brighten their bodhi minds and that, upon hearing the Buddha's perfect words, they can derive great profit therefrom without the aid of practice and usage.'

'World Honoured One, this is like a great town having four gates which can be entered from the direction of each comer; its entrance is, therefore, not through one single gate. Likewise, all Bodhisattvas who embellish the Buddha lands, do not do so by means of one single expedient method. May the World Honoured One teach us all the expedient methods of gradual self-cultivation and enlighten us on the (different) categories of practisers so that the Bodhisattvas in this assembly and future living beings in the period of the Dharma's termination can be quickly awakened in their quest of Mahayana and sail quietly over the Tathagata's great nirvana ocean.'

After saying these words, he again made the same prostration and same request for a second and third time.

The World Honoured One then said to the Respect Inspiring Sovereign Bodhisattva: 'Excellent, excellent! Virtuous man, (it is good that) you are able to ask the Tathagata about these expedient methods for the benefit of Bodhisattvas (here) and future living beings in the period of the Dharma's termination. Listen attentively to what I now tell you.'

The Respect Inspiring Sovereign Bodhisattva was filled with joy upon hearing this; he and the assembly kept silent to hear (the teaching).

(The Buddha said:) 'Virtuous man, the supreme Wonderful Enlightenment which pervades all the ten directions of space and begets all Tathagatas, is of the same substance as all things (dharma) and is one as regards all practices and conducts.' '(Although) accordant expedients are boundless, there are three which by exercising a perfect influence (over people of various potentialities) are suitable for all different natures.'

'Virtuous man, if Bodhisattvas, after awakening to the pure (nature of) complete enlightenment use this pure bodhi mind to concentrate on stillness, they will succeed in stopping all thoughts and in exposing the agitating consciousness. With the appearing wisdom begotten by stillness, both body and mind which are (like) foreign dust will vanish for ever.'

'Inwardly they will feel at ease because they will experience a lightness (of body and mind) in this state of stillness wherein appear the minds of all Tathagatas in the ten directions of space, like reflections in a mirror.' 'This expedient is called samatha.'

'Virtuous man, if after awakening to the pure nature of complete enlightenment, the Bodhisattvas use this pure bodhi mind to understand that all consciousnesses as well as sense organs and sense data are but illusions and transformations, they will give rise to all kinds of illusory wisdom to eradicate illusory (basic) ignorance. While transforming illusions, they convert illusory beings. By giving rise to illusory wisdoms, they feel at ease inwardly because they experience a lightness (of body and mind) in their great compassion.'

'By so starting and by making gradual progress in this meditative study, (they will realize that) that which looks into illusions differs from these illusions and also from the illusory meditation, wherein all involved are but illusions; (thus) all illusions are permanently kept away.'

'Thus these Bodhisattvas bring their meditation to perfection like the ground from which the sprout springs up.' 'This expedient is called samapatti.'

'Virtuous man, if after awakening to the pure (nature of) complete enlightenment, these Bodhisattvas in the use of this pure Bodhi mind, grasp neither illusions and transformations nor all states of stillness, they will see clearly that body and mind are hindrances, they will be free from basic ignorance, they will not cling to obstructions and they will be beyond both the hindering and non-hindering states for ever. They will feel at ease and comfortable in the use of body, mind and universe, and while still in the phenomenal world, they will be like the far-reaching sound of a musical instrument, for neither klesa nor nirvana can obstruct them (any longer).'

'Then inwardly they will experience a lightness (of body and mind) and will feel at ease in this state of stillness and extinction (of passions). Thus (this stage of) wonderful enlightenment will be in harmony with the condition of nirvana which is beyond body, mind and (the conception of) an ego and a personality and wherein (that of) a being and a life is just a passing thought. This expedient is called dhyana.'

'Virtuous man, these three Dharma doors (to enlightenment) are in accord with the (nature of) complete enlightenment. By means of them, the Tathagatas in the ten directions attained Buddhahood. All expedients, whether similar or different, used by all Bodhisattvas in the ten directions, follow these three (patterns) and once they succeed in the perfect practice of them, they will attain complete enlightenment.'

'Virtuous man, if a man in his practice of the holy Tao, teaches, converts and succeeds in guiding hundreds, thousands, tens of thousands and hundreds of thousands of people to attain arhatship and pratyeka Buddhahood, he cannot be compared with another man who, upon hearing about this

unhindered Dharma door to complete enlightenment, follows and practises it in an instant (ksana).’

To repeat His instruction, the World Honoured One read the following gatha:

‘Respect Inspiring, you should know that
the unsurpassed mind of bodhi is
non-dual in its reality.
As to expedient methods
without limit is their number.
In the Tathagata’s teaching
there are three categories.
Stillness (experienced) in samatha
is like reflections in a mirror.
The illusion like samadhi
is a shoot that gradually grows.
Dhyana is still and passionless
as the sound of instrumental music.
These three profound Dharma doors
with full enlightenment accord.
The Tathagatas everywhere
and the great Bodhisattvas
practised them for Buddhahood.
Perfection in these three
is called Final Nirvana.’

Chapter Nine The Sound Distinguishing Bodhisattva

The Sound Distinguishing Bodhisattva who was in the assembly, rose from his seat, prostrated himself with his head at the feet of the Buddha, circled Him thrice from the right, bowed upon his knees, brought together his two palms with crossed fingers and said: ‘O World Honoured One of great compassion, such Dharma doors are very rare indeed. World Honoured One, how many of them should each Bodhisattva practise to realize complete enlightenment? May you expediently teach this assembly and future living beings in the period of the Dharma’s termination so that they can be awakened to fundamental reality.’

After saying these words, he again made the same prostration and the same request for a second and third time.

Thereupon, the World Honoured One said to the Sound Distinguishing Bodhisattva: 'Excellent, excellent, (it is good that) you are able to ask the Tathagata how to practise (these Dharma doors) for the benefit of this assembly and that of future living beings in the period of the Dharma's termination. Listen attentively to what I now tell you.' The Sound Distinguishing Bodhisattva was filled with joy upon hearing this; he and the assembly kept silent to hear (the teaching).

(The Buddha said:) 'Virtuous man, fundamentally the pure and clean (nature of) the complete enlightenment of all Tathagatas is beyond the reach of practice or practiser. All Bodhisattvas and future living beings in the period of the Dharma's termination, in their illusory efforts to practise (self-cultivation) from their unenlightened state, have (the choice of) twenty-five kinds of meditative study (which are) conducive to the attainment of pure and clean imperturbability.'

'If Bodhisattvas concentrate only on the (state of) utter stillness and thereby (succeed in) eradicating klesa for ever by means of the power of samadhi, they will achieve the ultimate and, without rising from their seats, they will enter (the state of) nirvana. This is the single practice of samatha.'

'In their meditative study (of unreal) illusions only, if Bodhisattvas use the Buddha power to transform the world for the purpose of performing, by means of all kinds of activity, pure and clean wondrous Bodhisattvas deeds without straying from their calm thoughts controlled by dharanis and from their wisdom begotten (by stillness), this is the single practice of samapatti.'

'If Bodhisattvas concentrate only on the eradication of illusions without making use of (benefiting) function, they will only wipe out klesa and when the latter has been completely eliminated, they will realize fundamental absolute reality. This is the single practice of dhyana.'

'If Bodhisattvas first concentrate on the state of utter stillness and then use the mind of wisdom begotten by stillness to shine upon illusions, thereby inspiring their Bodhisattva work of salvation, this is samatha followed by samapatti.'

'If Bodhisattvas, by means of their wisdom begotten by stillness, realize the nature of utter stillness, thereby eradicating klesa and getting out of samsara for ever, this is samatha followed by dhyana.'

'If Bodhisattvas, by means of their still wisdom, reproduce their illusory powers to cause all kinds of transformation to occur for the liberation of living beings and then eliminate klesa to enter (the state of) nirvana, this is samatha followed by samapatti and ending in dhyana.'

'If Bodhisattvas, by means of the power begotten by utter stillness, first wipe out klesa and then perform pure and clean profound Bodhisattva deeds to liberate living beings, this is samatha

followed by dhyana and ending in samapatti.'

'If Bodhisattvas use, by means of the power begotten by utter stillness, their minds to wipe out klesa and then liberate living beings and set up worlds, this is samatha followed by the simultaneous practice of samapatti and dhyana.'

'If Bodhisattvas, by means of their power begotten by utter stillness, give rise to transformation and then eradicate klesa, this is the simultaneous practice of samatha and samapatti followed by that of dhyana.'

'If Bodhisattvas use their power begotten by utter stillness to realize nirvana first and then make full use of their power of transmutation in the world, this is the simultaneous practice of samatha and dhyana followed by that of samapatti.'

'If Bodhisattvas, while in accord with their power of transmutation, concentrate on the state of utter stillness, this is samapatti ending in samatha.'

'If Bodhisattvas from various kinds of state caused by their power of transmutation concentrate on the still and passionless condition, this is samapatti ending in dhyana.'

'If Bodhisattvas use their power of transmutation to do Buddha works and then abide in stillness to eradicate klesa, this is samapatti followed by samatha and ending in dhyana.'

'If in the unhindered full use of their power of transmutation, Bodhisattvas eradicate klesa and dwell in the state of utter stillness, this is samapatti followed by dhyana and ending in samatha.'

'If Bodhisattvas, by the expedient use of their power of transmutation, realize both utter stillness and nirvana, this is samapatti followed by the simultaneous study of samatha and dhyana.'

'If Bodhisattvas make various uses of their power of transmutation for realizing utter stillness and then eliminate klesa, this is the simultaneous (study of) samapatti and samatha, followed by dhyana.'

'If Bodhisattvas use their power of transmutation to realize nirvana and then abide in pure and clean inactive samadhi, this is the simultaneous (study of) samapatti and dhyana followed by samatha.'

'If Bodhisattvas use their nirvanic power to realize utter stillness, thus abiding in (the state of) purity and cleanness, this is dhyana followed by samatha.'

'If Bodhisattvas use their nirvanic power to be in harmony with nirvanic function in all situations, this is dhyana followed by samapatti.'

'If Bodhisattvas use their nirvanic power so that, while abiding in samadhi, their self-nature can give rise to transmutations, this is dhyana followed by samatha and ending in samapatti.'

'If Bodhisattvas use their nirvanic power so that their nirvanic self-nature can perform its function and that their pure and clean state can return to samadhi, this is dhyana followed by samapatti and ending in samatha.'

'If Bodhisattvas avail themselves of the purity and cleanness of their nirvanic power to abide in samadhi and to perform transmutation, this is dhyana followed by the simultaneous practice of samatha and samapatti.'

'If Bodhisattvas use their nirvanic power to realize utter stillness and then perform transmutations, this is the simultaneous practice of dhyana and samatha followed by samapatti.'

'If Bodhisattvas use their nirvanic power to perform transmutations and then realize utter stillness with its pure and bright wisdom, this is the simultaneous practice of dhyana and samapatti followed by samatha.'

'If Bodhisattvas use their wisdom of complete enlightenment perfectly to unite all things so that the phenomenal expression of self-nature will not stray from the nature of enlightenment, this is the perfect threefold practice in accord with the self-nature in its purity and cleanness.'

'Virtuous man, these are called the Bodhisattva's twenty-five methods of meditation which all Bodhisattvas should follow in their practice. If they and future living beings in the period of the Dharma's termination wish to practise (any one of) them, they should first lead a pure life, silence their thoughts and sincerely repent. Then on the last day of the third week, after giving a reference number to each of these twenty-five methods and using twenty-five tallies with their corresponding numbers, they should pray and seek divination by picking a tally at random. The number picked will indicate the method, whether gradual or instantaneous, that befits the seeker, However a single feeling of doubt or hesitation on the part of the latter will cause the divination to be ineffective.'

To repeat His instruction, the World Honoured One read the following gatha:

'Sound Distinguishing, you should know that
the pure and clean unhindered wisdom

of all Bodhisattvas
comes from dhyana-samadhi.
The so-called samatha,
samapatti and dhyana
are the threefold Dharma of which the gradual or quick practice
has twenty-five varieties.
All Tathagatas everywhere
who practise in the present, past and future,
must this Dharma use to
realize enlightenment,
only those of instantaneous awakening
and unbelievers are exceptions.
All Bodhisattvas
and all future beings in the Dharma ending age
should observe this Dharma,
follow and diligently practise it.
Relying on the great and powerful compassion of the Buddha,
they will ere long attain nirvana.'

Chapter Ten The Bodhisattva of Clean Karma

The Bodhisattva of Clean Karma who was in the assembly rose from his seat, prostrated himself with his head at the feet of the Buddha, circled Him thrice from the right, bowed down upon his knees, brought together his two palms with crossed fingers and said: 'O World Honoured One of great compassion, you have fully expounded to us the inconceivable deeds of all Tathagatas from the cause-ground so that the whole assembly can hear what they have never heard before and can see the tamer of passions passing through aeons of arduous toil as many as the sandgrains of the river Ganges, with all his practices and achievements unfolded in an instant, thus rejoicing us, the Bodhisattvas in this assembly.'

'World Honoured One, if this nature of enlightenment was fundamentally pure and clean, why is it contaminated and soiled, thus causing all living beings to be deluded, perplexed and unable to enter it.' 'May the World Honoured One thoroughly awaken us to the Dharma nature (Dharmata) so that this assembly and future living beings in the period of the Dharma's termination can use (your teaching) as our (guiding) eye in the future.'

After saying these words, he again made the same prostration and the same request for a second and third time.

The World Honoured One then said to the Bodhisattva of Clean Karma: 'Excellent, excellent! Virtuous man, (it is good that) you are able to ask the Tathagata for such an expedient explanation for the benefit of this assembly and also that of future living beings in the period of the Dharma's termination. Listen attentively to what I now say.'

The Bodhisattva of Clean Karma was filled with joy upon hearing this; he and the assembly kept silent to hear (the teaching).

(The Buddha said:) 'Virtuous man, since the time without beginning, all living beings have been clinging wrongly to the reality of an ego, of a man, of a being and of a life. They regard these four inverted (illusions) as their real bodies thereby giving rise to like and dislike. Because of this false body, they cling to further falsehood and the two falsities, by relying on each other, create false karmas. Because of false karmas, they falsely perceive the turning (wheel of) samsara. When they are bored with samsara, they falsely perceive nirvana.'

'Therefore, they are unable to enter the (state of) pure and clean enlightenment. It is not the latter that opposes and rejects them but it is because of (their clinging to) a subject that can enter it. Since they grasp this entering subject, no entry by their bodhi (nature) is possible. For this reason, both the stirring and stopping of thoughts cause delusion and perplexity.'

'Why is it? Because since the time without beginning, there has been self-rising (basic) ignorance which (acts as) their master.'

'All living beings are born without the eyes of wisdom and their bodies and minds are (the embodiment of) ignorance. For instance, no man wants to take his own life.'

'Therefore, you see (the result is that) we agree with those liking us and we hate and resent those contradicting us. Because of like and dislike, ignorance is preserved. As this ignorance continues, it is impossible to realize anything in one's quest of the truth.'

'Virtuous man, what is the ego? It is what the mind of a living being experiences (as existing).'

'Virtuous man, for instance, when a man is healthy, he forgets all about the body of his ego. When his four limbs are not in a good state or when he is unwell, if he is cauterized with moxa, (the pain will cause) his ego to be felt as existing. Therefore the ego only manifests when it is experienced.'

'Virtuous man, the mind which can realize even the Tathagata (state) and can perceive clearly pure

and clean nirvana is but an ego.'

'Virtuous man, what is personality? It is the mind that is aware of such experience. Virtuous man, when it is awakened (to the presence of) an ego, it will no longer recognize it. Not only is the object thus evidenced not an ego but also the evidencing subject also ceases to be one. Thus all awareness that is beyond evidencing (at this stage) is personality.'

'Virtuous man, (even) when the mind is perfectly aware of nirvana as its own self, if a little bit of awareness is retained in the former, it will be but a personality in spite of a thorough understanding of the identity of nirvana with the (true) self according to the fundamental law.'

'Virtuous man, what is a being? It is the mind which is beyond (the previous) experience and realization.'

'Virtuous man, if for example a man says: "I am a living being," we know that he who speaks of a living being is neither the "I" nor (another) man. Why is he not the I? Because he says: "I am a living being" and is, therefore, not the "I". Why is he not (another) personality? Because he says: "I am a living being" and is, therefore, neither the self nor (another) man.'

'Virtuous man, (the states) that can be experienced and realized by the mind, belong to an ego and to a personality. That which is beyond the I and a man and retains the knowledge (of something) is called a being.'

'Virtuous man, what is a life? It is the mind (now) looking into (its) purity and cleanness. (Although) it is aware of its (three previous) objectives, its karmic awareness does not perceive itself and (lingers) like a root for life.'

'Virtuous man, the introspecting mind that perceives all objects as defilements is (also impure) because it does not keep from them. When boiling water melts ice, the latter disappears (completely). The ice knowing its own melting is like (the mind) preserving the I and its awareness of it.'

'Virtuous man, future living beings in the period of the Dharma's termination who do not understand the (above) four states, will fail to realize any of the stages of sainthood in spite of their strenuous efforts in self-cultivation in many aeons. Hence the ending period of the right Dharma.'

'Why is it? Because they (wrongly) hold that (all aspects of) the I are nirvana and they mistake their experiencing and realization for achievements. For example, when a man regards a thief as his own

son, his own wealth and treasure cannot be preserved.'

'Why is it? Where there is love of the ego, there is also love of nirvana, for (this idea of) nirvana is hidden in the love of the I. Where there is hate of the ego, there is also hate of samsara. They do not know that love is the real cause of samsara. If samsara is singled out for their hate, they will not achieve liberation.'

'How can they know why Dharma does not liberate (them)?' 'Virtuous man, future living beings in the period of the Dharma's termination who achieve some little progress in their practice of bodhi and regard it as (completely) pure and clean, have not yet entirely eradicated the basic ego.'

'If someone praises their Dharma, they will be happy and will immediately want to liberate the praiser. If someone censures their achievements, they will be filled with anger and resentment. Thus you will know that the concept of an ego is firmly grasped, is still hidden in the storehouse of all knowledge (alayavijnana) and is wandering in the fields of all sense organs without interruption.'

'Virtuous man, therefore, those practisers of the Tao who do not eliminate their conception of an ego cannot enter the (state of) pure and clean enlightenment.'

'Virtuous man, if the ego is known as void, no one can slander the I. (However) if the I (is grasped as) the expounder of Dharma, the ego is still not eliminated. In such a case, the conception of (a man), a being and a life are all present.'

'Virtuous man, future living beings in the period of the Dharma's termination will expound their own illnesses (which they mistake) for the Dharma. They are, therefore, the most pitiable people. Although they are diligent in their practice, they will (only) aggravate their illnesses and will consequently be unable to enter the (state of) pure and clean bodhi.'

'Virtuous man, future living beings in the period of the Dharma's termination who are not clear about these four conceptions and who use the Tathagata's interpretation and conduct in their self-cultivation, will fail to achieve it.'

'There are (also) living beings who claim they have realized and experienced what they really have not. They are jealous when they see others advancing satisfactorily in self-cultivation. Because of their failure to cut off their love of the I, they will not be able to enter (the state of) pure and clean enlightenment.'

'Virtuous man, future living beings in the period of the Dharma's termination who hope to realize the

truth should not seek awakening for (which) they will want to increase their (knowledge by) hearing (about it) and will thereby strengthen their view of the I.'

'They should strive vigorously to advance (in self-cultivation) to overcome their klesa, to pluck up their dauntless courage, to attain what they have not attained, to cut off what they have failed to cut off, to refrain from giving rise to desire, anger, love, arrogance, flattery, crookedness, envy, and jealousy in all situations and to sink all love between (them) selves and others into the conditions of stillness and passionlessness. The Buddha says they will thus achieve success gradually (and) will not fall into perverted views in their quest of learned masters.' 'Where there is longing, like and dislike will follow and will prevent their entry into the (state of) the pure and clean bodhi ocean.'

To repeat His instruction, the Buddha read the following gatha:

'Clean Karma, you should know that
all beings,
because of their self love,
have been transmigrating since the time without beginning.
Non-eradication of the four conceptions
prevents them from attaining bodhi.
Rise of like and of dislike
preserves their flattering and crooked thoughts.
And so delusion and perplexity prevail,
preventing their entry into bodhi town.
To return to the awakening land (ksetra)
first pluck out desire, stupidity and anger.
Getting rid of love of Dharma
makes gradual achievement easy.
Our bodies being non-existent,
how then can like and dislike rise?
Such practisers when seeking learned masters,
fall not into perverted views.
Success can never be achieved
while longing stirs the mind.'

Chapter Eleven The Bodhisattva of Universal Enlightenment

The Bodhisattva of Universal Enlightenment who was in the assembly rose from his seat, prostrated himself with his head at the feet of the Buddha, circled Him thrice from the right, bowed down upon

his knees, brought together his two palms with crossed fingers and said: 'World Honoured One of great compassion, you have decisively expounded the illness of dhyana about which the assembly had not heard before; their minds are now cleansed and settled. World Honoured One, in the period of the Dharma's termination, future living beings will gradually get too far away from the Buddha and when bhadrās and aryaś live in seclusion and when heretics win the day, whom should they seek to meet, on what Dharma should they rely, what line of conduct should they adopt, of what illnesses should they rid themselves and how should they develop their minds so that the blind can avoid falling into perverted views?'

After saying this, he again made the same prostration and the same request for a second and third time.

The World Honoured One then said to the Bodhisattva of Universal Enlightenment: 'Excellent, excellent! Virtuous man, (it is good that) you are able to ask the Tathagata about the method of practice that will bestow the fearless eyes of the Tao upon living beings in the period of the Dharma's termination so that they can attain the stage of sainthood. Listen attentively to what I now tell you.'

The Bodhisattva of Universal Enlightenment was filled with joy upon hearing this; he and the assembly kept silent to hear (the teaching).

(The Buddha said:) 'Virtuous man, in the period of the Dharma's termination, when future living beings develop a broad mind and seek instruction from learned masters so that they can practise self-cultivation correctly, they should call upon persons holding right views, whose minds do not abide in phenomena, who have no attachments to the states of sravakas and pratyeka-buddhas, whose minds always dwell in purity and cleanness although they appear in the midst of klesa and who, although showing that they have mistakes and faults, always extol pure living and lead others away from undisciplined pursuits. If they seek such teachers, they will attain unexcelled complete enlightenment (anuttara-samyak-sambodhi).'

'In the period of the Dharma's termination, when future living beings meet these (enlightened) masters, they should make offerings to (and support) them, even to the detriment of their personal lives. These masters always reveal their purity and cleanness in their four respect inspiring forms of demeanour (in walking, standing, sitting and lying). Even if they show mistakes and faults, students should not give rise to feelings of contempt and disrespect in their own minds. How much more so as regards these masters' way of feeding, wealth, wives, children and retinue. If students do not entertain evil thoughts of their masters, they will ultimately realize omniscience (sambodhi) and the flower of their wisdom will open and illumine all lands (ksetra) in the ten directions of space.'

'Virtuous man, the profound Dharma realized by these enlightened masters should be free from the four kinds of illness.'

'What are these four illnesses? The first one is the illness of action. If a man (i.e. a teacher) says: "I apply my mind to all kinds of action to seek complete enlightenment," this is an illness because the nature of complete enlightenment cannot be attained by any action.'

'The second one is the illness of letting alone. If a man (i.e. a teacher) says: "I neither forsake samsara nor seek nirvana because both have no rising or falling thoughts; I only let everything follow the Dharma nature", this is an illness, for in the search for complete enlightenment, its nature does not exist through letting things follow their course.'

'The third one is the stopping illness. If a man (i.e. a teacher) says: "By stopping all thoughts in my mind for ever, I realize the stillness and sameness of all natures," this is an illness because in the search for complete enlightenment, the stopping (of thoughts) does not lead to union with (the mind's) nature.'

'The fourth one is the illness of elimination. If a man (i.e. a teacher) says: "I now eliminate all kinds of klesa for ever and my body and mind are void; how much more so our sense organs, sense data and all illusory states which are made permanently still?" this is an illness because the nature of complete enlightenment for which he is searching is not stillness.'

'He who keeps from these four illnesses will know (what) purity and cleanness are. Introspection in this manner is right (whereas) any other introspection is wrong.'

'Virtuous man, future living beings in the period of the Dharma's termination wishing to practise (right) conduct should, during their whole lives, make offerings to and serve these learned masters. They should not give rise to feelings of contempt and disrespect when these masters come to them and to feelings of anger and resentment when they leave them, because pleasant and unpleasant circumstances are like the void; because (the students) should know that body and mind are (fundamentally) in the state of universality and that all living beings are of the same substance. Only thus can he who so practises self-cultivation enter the (state of) complete enlightenment.'

'Virtuous man, future living beings in the period of the Dharma's termination will be unable to realize the Tao because since the time without beginning they possess all kinds of seeds of love and hate (produced by their conception) of selfness and otherness which prevent their liberation. If a man regards his foes as he would his parents without a second thought, he will eliminate all illnesses forthwith. Likewise, love and hate as well as self and others will also be eliminated.'

'Virtuous man, in their search for complete enlightenment, future living beings in the period of the Dharma's termination should thus develop their minds by saying: "I (vow to) lead all living beings within boundless space to the entrance into ultimate complete enlightenment wherein there are no realizers of bodhi and wherein selfness and otherness as well as all phenomena are eradicated." If they so develop their minds, they will not fall into heterodox views.'

To repeat His instruction, the World Honoured One read the following gatha:

'Universal Bodhi, you should know that
living beings in the Dharma ending age
who seek enlightened masters
should demand their correct views,
avoiding men of Hinayana.
(Know that) from (all) four illnesses the Dharma should be free,
from action, stoppage, letting alone and eradication.
Show no arrogance when masters come,
have no resentment when they leave.
If (advanced) stages are witnessed,
praise them for their rare occurrence,
rare as a Buddha seen on earth.
Break not the rules of discipline;
your senses always must be clean.
Lead all living beings to
ultimate complete enlightenment.
Selves and others being void,
in right wisdom place your trust:
Thus will you leap above deluded views
realizing bodhi in parinirvana.'

Chapter Twelve The Bodhisattva of Complete Enlightenment

The Bodhisattva of Complete Enlightenment who was in the assembly rose from his seat, prostrated himself with his head at the feet of the Buddha, circled Him thrice from the right, bowed down upon his knees, brought together his two palms with crossed fingers and said: 'O, World Honoured One of great compassion, you have fully expounded pure enlightenment by means of expedients so that future living beings in the period of the Dharma's termination can derive great profit. World Honoured One, we are now awakened (after hearing your teaching) but after the nirvana of the

Buddha, how should living beings in the period of the Dharma's termination who are not yet awakened, quietly dwell for their cultivation of this pure and clean state of complete enlightenment? Which of the three methods of pure contemplation is the foremost (expedient)? May the great Compassionate One bestow great profit upon this assembly and future living beings in the period of the Dharma's termination.'

After saying these words, he again made the same prostration and the same request for a second and third time.

The World Honoured One then said to the Bodhisattva of Complete Enlightenment: 'Excellent, excellent! Virtuous man, (it is good that) you are able to ask the Tathagata about such an expedient for the great benefit of living beings. Listen attentively to what I now tell you.'

The Bodhisattva of Complete Enlightenment was filled with joy upon hearing this; he and the assembly kept silent to hear (the teaching).

(The Buddha said:) 'Virtuous man, whether during the time the Buddha appears in the world or after his nirvana or in the period of the Dharma's termination, living beings endowed with the Mahayana nature, who believe in the Buddha's great profound mind of complete enlightenment and wish to cultivate it should, if they stay at a monastery, (do so after) providing accommodation for fellow-practisers and if they live outside, should practise meditative study according to prevailing circumstances as I have already taught.'

'If they are not prevented by hindering causes, they should establish themselves in a bodhimandala and fix time limits for their dwelling in purity: 120 days for a long period, 100 for a medium and 80 for a short one.'

'Whenever the Buddha appears in the world, they should hold the right thought (of Him) and after His nirvana they should worship His image and concentrate their minds and (faculty of) seeing on it in order always to hold the right thought, as if He was still on earth. (Then) they should make offerings of banners and flowers and within the first twenty-one days make obeisance to the Buddhas in the ten directions of space (calling) their names and sincerely repent of and confess to their sins. They will see auspicious states, will experience a lightness (of body and mind) and will feel at ease. After these twenty-one days, they should continue to control their thoughts.'

'If the time coincides with the beginning of a summer retreat, the latter's three months of tranquil dwelling should be used for the Bodhisattva-pure-abiding in which they should keep from sravakas and avoid being served by followers of Hinayana.'

‘When the tranquil retreat begins, they should repeat before the Buddha: “I am a bhiksu (or bhiksuni, or upasaka or upasika) called so-and-so, a rider in the Bodhisattva vehicle, a practiser of still and passionless conduct for entry into pure and clean reality wherein great complete enlightenment is my temple (sangharama), my body and mind abide comfortably in samatajnana and the nirvanic self-nature is free from all attachments. I now respectfully ask that, instead of relying on sravakas, I be allowed to stay with all the Tathagatas in the ten directions of space and with great Bodhisattvas during the next three months so that I can cultivate a Bodhisattva’s unsurpassed wonderful (or profound) enlightenment; because of this great cause, I do not take my disciples (along with me).’

‘Virtuous man, this is a Bodhisattva’s tranquil retreat; at the end of the time limit set (for his self-cultivation), he is free to go unhindered.’

‘Virtuous man, in the period of the Dharma's termination, future living beings who practise (self-cultivation) in quest of Bodhisattvahood, should, during their tranquil retreat, be heedless of all states (i.e. visions) about which they have not heard (from the Buddha).’

‘Virtuous man, in their practice of samatha, if they first concentrate on utmost stillness by stopping their thinking, the utter stillness will beget awareness (bodhi). In this stillness, the awareness first realized in a body, will spread to a (whole) universe. Virtuous man, if it pervades one whole universe and if in this universe there is a living being who gives rise to a thought, they will all be aware of it. Likewise (when it spreads to) a hundred and a thousand universes, the same condition will prevail. (However) they should be heedless of all states about which they have not heard (from the Buddha).’

‘Virtuous man, if living beings practise samapatti, they should first think of and remember the Tathagatas in the ten directions of space and the Bodhisattvas in all universes, and rely on all Dharma doors (to enlightenment) which they should pursue gradually; in their laborious toil to attain samadhi, they should take (and carry out) great vows, thus culminating in self-sublimation and crystallization of the (holy) seed. However, they should be heedless of all states about which they have not heard (from the Buddha).’

‘Virtuous man, if living beings practise dhyana, they should first follow the method of counting by means of which their minds will know clearly the exact order of the creation, existence and annihilation of each thought. They will thus preserve this clear knowledge of every thought while walking, standing, sitting and lying until, by advancing gradually further, they will discern clearly a drop of rain in a hundred and a thousand worlds as if they see distinctly with their own eyes an object used by them. (However) they should be heedless of all states about which they have not heard (from the Buddha).’

'These are the foremost expedients of the three meditative studies.'

'If living beings practise all these three meditations energetically and diligently they will be Tathagatas appearing in the world.'

'In the period of the Dharma's termination, if living beings of dull roots fail in their quest of Tao, this is because of their karmic obstructions. They should earnestly repent of their errors and faults and resolve to reform themselves and always keep their hopes by first wiping out their love, hate, envy, jealousy, flattery and crookedness as well as the intention of seeking superiority. Then they should practise either one of three meditations and if they fail, they should try another one and train with determination and (fervent) hope of gradual realization.'

To repeat His instruction, the World Honoured One read the following gatha:

'Complete Enlightenment, you should know that
all living beings
in search of the Path Supreme
should choose one of three periods,
repenting of their timeless karmas.
After the first three weeks
the right thought should they hold.
States of which they have not heard
should not be grasped.
Samatha leads to stillness,
samapatti is right remembrance,
dhyana is achieved by counting,
these three are pure contemplations.
Those who practise them with diligence
are Tathagatas on earth.
Those of dull roots who in their practice fail
should earnestly repent
of faults (committed) since time without beginning.
If all obstructions are removed
the Buddha stage appears.'

Chapter Thirteen The Sage Leader Bodhisattva

The Sage Leader Bodhisattva who was in the assembly rose from his seat, prostrated himself with his head at the feet of the Buddha, circled Him thrice from the right, bowed upon his knees, brought together his two palms with crossed fingers and said: 'O World Honoured One of great compassion, you have fully awakened this assembly and future living beings in the period of the Dharma's termination to the inconceivable things of the Tathagata. World Honoured One, what is the name of this Mahayana teaching, how should we receive and observe it, what merits will derive from it, how should we protect those practising its teaching and to what stage will it lead?'

After saying these words, he again made the same prostration and the same request for a second and third time.

The World Honoured One then said to the Sage Leader Bodhisattva: 'Excellent, excellent! Virtuous man, (it is good that) you were able to ask the Tathagata about the name and merits of this sutra for the benefit of Bodhisattvas (in this assembly) and future living beings in the period of the Dharma's termination. Listen attentively to what I now tell you.'

The Sage Leader Bodhisattva was filled with joy upon hearing this; he and the assembly kept silent to hear (the teaching).

(The Buddha said:) 'Virtuous man, this sutra is expounded by Buddhas as many as sandgrains in a hundred, a thousand, ten thousand and a hundred thousand Ganges rivers, is blessed by all Tathagatas in the past, present and future, is the refuge of all Bodhisattvas in the ten directions of space and is the pure and clean eye of the sutras of the twelve divisions of the Mahayana canon.'

'This Sutra is called The Dharani of Complete Enlightenment of the Mahavaipulya Teaching - The Sutra of the Whole Truth - The Mysterious Samadhi King - The Decisive Stage of Tathagata and All Differentiation Arising from the Self-nature in the Tathagatagarbha. By these names you should receive and observe it.'

'Virtuous man, this sutra reveals only the Tathagata state and can be expounded only by the Tathagata Buddha. If all Bodhisattvas and future living beings in the period of the Dharma's termination practise according to it, they will progress gradually until they attain the Buddha stage.

'Virtuous man, this sutra is a Mahayana teaching of instantaneous enlightenment and living beings of instantaneous potentialities who practise it will be awakened. It is also suitable for all other potentialities in their practice of gradual self-cultivation. It is like a great ocean which does not concede its privileges to small streams; all drinkers of its water, from gadflies and mosquitoes to asuras, will quench their thirst.'

‘Virtuous man, a man filling a great chiliocosm with the seven treasures and giving them all as alms, cannot be compared to another man who hears the name of this sutra and (understands) the meaning of one of its sentences.’

‘Virtuous man, if someone teaches as many living beings as the sandgrains in a hundred Ganges rivers to attain arhatship, his (merits) cannot be compared to (those of) an expounder of half a gatha of this sutra.’

‘Virtuous man, if a man hears about this sutra and believes it without doubt, you should know that he has planted (roots of) virtue and wisdom not only in just one or two Buddha lands but in as many as the sandgrains in the Ganges, thus qualifying him to hear about its teaching.’

‘Virtuous man, you should guard all practisers of this sutra in the period of the Dharma's termination by not allowing evil demons and heretics to disturb their bodies and minds and force them to backslide.’

In the assembly, the Fiery Headed, the Wrecking, the Blue and other vajra holders numbering 80,000 with their retinues, arose from their seats, prostrated themselves with their heads at the feet of the Buddha, circled Him thrice from the right and said: ‘World Honoured One, in the period of the Dharma's termination, we will guard all living beings who are able to practise this decisive Mahayana teaching as we would our own eyes. We will lead our followers to their bodhimandalas and places of self-cultivation to guard them day and night so that they will not backslide. We will see to it that their families will permanently be free of all calamities and hindrances, that no illnesses and epidemics will visit them, that their wealth and treasures will always be adequate for their upkeep and that they will never be in need.’

Thereupon, Mahabrahma-devaraja, the king of the twenty-eight heavens, the king of mount Sumeru and (the four) Lokapalas rose from their seats, prostrated themselves with their heads at the feet of the Buddha, circled Him thrice from the right and said: ‘World Honoured One, we too will guard those observing the sutra so that they can live in peace and will not backslide.’

Thereupon, the powerful king of demons (mara) called Kumbhanda and 100,000 other mara kings rose from their seats, prostrated themselves at the feet of the Buddha, circled Him thrice from the right and said: ‘World Honoured One, we also will guard those observing this sutra and will look after them day and night so that they will not backslide. If ghosts and spirits approach within forty miles (one yojana) of the dwelling place of (any devotee), we shall pulverize the trespassers.’

When the Buddha had finished expounding this sutra, all the Bodhisattvas, devas, nagas and others of the eight classes with their retinues as well as the deva kings (Maharaja-devas) and Brahmans (Brahma, Visnu and Siva) who had listened to His teaching, were filled with joy and believed, received and observed it.

<THE END>