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The Inquiry of Lokadhara

Lokadharaparipṛcchā

འཕགས་པ་འཇིག་རྟེན་འཛིན་གྱིས་ཡོངས་སུ་རྟོག་པ་ཞེས་བྱ་བའི་མདོ།

'phags pa 'jig rten 'dzin gyis yongs su dris pa zhes bya ba'i mdo

The Noble Sūtra “The Inquiry of Lokadhara”

Āryalokadharaparipṛcchānāmasūtra



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SUMMARY

- s.1 In *The Inquiry of Lokadhara*, the bodhisattva Lokadhara asks the Buddha to explain the proper way for bodhisattvas to discern the characteristics of phenomena and employ that knowledge to attain awakening. In reply, the Buddha teaches at length how to understand the lack of inherent existence of phenomena. As part of the teaching, the Buddha explains in detail the nonexistence of the aggregates, the elements, the sense sources, dependently originated phenomena, the four applications of mindfulness, the five powers, the eightfold path of the noble ones, and mundane and transcendent phenomena, as well as conditioned and unconditioned phenomena.

ac.

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ac.1 The sūtra was translated by the Dharmachakra Translation Committee under the guidance of Chökyi Nyima Rinpoche. The translation from the Tibetan was produced by Timothy Hinkle. Andreas Doctor checked the translation against the Tibetan, edited the text, and wrote the introduction. James Gentry subsequently compared the translation against Kumārajīva's Chinese translation and made further edits.

The translation was completed under the patronage and supervision of 84000: Translating the Words of the Buddha.

i.

INTRODUCTION

i.1

The Inquiry of Lokadhara is a scripture that belongs to the general sūtra section of the Degé Kangyur. As far as we are aware, no Sanskrit version of this text remains. However, in addition to the Tibetan translation, which we have translated here, the sūtra is also present in two Chinese translations (Taishō 481 and Taishō 482). The first of these was translated by Dharmarakṣa (233–311 CE), the famed and prolific translator of *The Lotus Sūtra*. The second translation was completed between 402 and 412 CE, by the equally renowned translator Kumārajīva (344–413 CE), as one of his last translations. We therefore know that the text has been in existence since at least the third century CE. Unfortunately, however, we know little else of the history of this sūtra. We do not even know when, or by whom, it was translated into Tibetan; the translation does not identify a translator, and the text is not listed in the ninth-century Denkarma (Tib. *ldan dkar ma*) or Phangthangma (Tib. *'phang thang ma*) imperial catalogues of Tibetan translations.¹ It does, however, appear in Buton's (Tib. *bu ston*) *History of the Dharma* (Tib. *chos 'byung*), thus suggesting that it was translated after the fall of the Yarlung dynasty (846 CE) (or at least outside official circles of imperial influence), and only became known in Tibet sometime prior to the fourteenth century CE. A cursory search of the Dunhuang manuscript catalogues did not yield any further information, although future studies of these resources may shed new light on this issue. In this regard, it is worth mentioning that Cornelius Chang (1976, p. 22) reports that a fragment of the sūtra was discovered in Turfan (in modern day Xinjiang). The sūtra is therefore likely to have been present in the Dunhuang region as well, as the Tibetan Yarlung Dynasty controlled Turfan during the same period that it controlled Dunhuang, until roughly 846 CE.

i.2

For this translation, we took as our basis the Tibetan Degé xylograph version and compared it to the Stok Palace manuscript and the variant readings recorded in the Comparative Edition (Tib. *dpe bsdur ma*).

Furthermore, we compared the Tibetan with the Chinese translations. This comparison revealed strong affinities between the Tibetan translation and the Chinese translations, specifically that of Kumārajīva. Indeed, the similarities in structure and content between the Tibetan translation and Kumārajīva's translation (Taishō 482) are so striking that this Chinese translation, or a related copy thereof, was likely the source text for the Tibetan. The minor variations between it and the Tibetan can mostly be attributed to the several centuries of editorial work that both the source text and the target text underwent since the time of the translation. There are also further indications that this text was translated into Tibetan from the Chinese. For example, the recensions in the Yongle Peking, Lithang, Kangxi Peking, Narthang, and Choné Kangyurs are all missing a Sanskrit title, which is otherwise a customary element for texts translated from Sanskrit. Only the Stok Palace and Degé Kangyurs include a Sanskrit title, but this might have been back-translated from the Tibetan and subsequently included by later editors. This and the absence of a translation colophon (another prevalent feature of some of the Tibetan translations from Chinese) suggest that the history of the text might be traced to China.²

i.3 In comparing the Tibetan to Kumārajīva's Chinese translation as it appears in Taishō 482, we did not note all minor differences. Rather, we edited the translation in favor of the Chinese wherever it was obvious (or could reasonably be argued) that the Tibetan was an unclear attempt at rendering the Chinese, or was once a clearer rendering prior to subsequent editorial interventions. In cases that were less clear to us, but where the Chinese provided a better reading, we generally adopted the Chinese reading and recorded the Tibetan in annotations.

i.4 Despite the obscurity of the textual history of this sūtra and its infrequent mention in classical and modern writings, the teachings presented herein are certain to be of value to those interested in the world view of the Great Vehicle. Whereas in some sūtras a great number of miracles and visitations from celestial bodhisattvas occur as part of the teaching, this sūtra consists of a lengthy discourse by the Buddha centered on a presentation of traditional Abhidharma categories from the perspective of the Great Vehicle. Unlike the classical presentation of Buddhist ontology, however, this teaching is not concerned with the relative nature and categorization of phenomena, but rather with the inherent emptiness of the categories described and their ultimate lack of inherent existence. In this way, the sūtra presents the topic of metaphysics from a distinctly Great Vehicle perspective that distances itself from traditional Buddhist dharma theory. Rather than emphasizing the unique characteristics and properties of phenomena, the Buddha unifies them all within the single category of emptiness. Throughout

the text the terms *Dharma* and *phenomena* are translations of the same Tibetan term *chos* (Skt. *dharmā*), which carries both of these meanings in addition to several other meanings that are also implied in this text, such as “awakened qualities,” “truths,” and “trainings.” This text, like much of Buddhist literature in fact, plays repeatedly with the multivalence of *dharmā*(s) to impart a sense of the circularity and mutual implications of the “truths” that buddhas realize about the nature of “phenomena,” the “qualities” achieved through this realization, the “teachings” they give to enable others to realize it, and the “trainings” that these teachings stipulate, leading back, once again, to the discovery of such “truths.” In this regard it is also helpful to keep in mind that the *dharmā*s in Abhidharma theory represent the “bare facts” or ontological building blocks of existence—phenomena the existence of which this text heavily critiques and questions.

- i.5 Over the course of the *sūtra*, which is divided into twelve chapters, the Buddha presents the following topics: the five aggregates, the eighteen elements, the twelve sense sources, the twelve links of dependent origination, the four applications of mindfulness, the five powers, the eightfold path of the noble ones, the phenomena of the world and transcendence, and conditioned and unconditioned phenomena. These subjects provide an important explanatory framework for the functioning of existence and the path to awakening from the Abhidharma point of view. Although some explanation of each topic is given, the *sūtra* clearly assumes the reader’s familiarity with Abhidharma theory. Moreover, rather than offering a traditional explanation of these topics, the Buddha consistently explains their lack of identifying marks (Skt. *animitta*), meaning that despite their conventional designations, the phenomena in question do not in actuality have any true or real referents. The Buddha states that these topics are normally taught purely for the expedient purpose of guiding childish ordinary beings (i.e., not the followers of the Great Vehicle) along the path; however, on the ultimate level, the individual characteristics that these phenomena seem to possess due to the interdependent process of causation cannot be found. These subjects are taught merely to provide students with useful classifications that ultimately must lead them beyond such ontological categories. By contrast, this *sūtra*’s theme is the absence of marks of all phenomena, one of the *three gateways of liberation*, which also include emptiness and the absence of wishes. As such, the *sūtra* represents a clear critique of the traditional vehicle of the hearers and a forceful affirmation of the superiority of the perspective of the Great Vehicle.

The Translation

The Noble Sūtra

The Inquiry of Lokadhara

1. CHAPTER ONE: THE INTRODUCTION

[F.7.b] [B1]

1.1 Homage to all buddhas and bodhisattvas!

1.2 Thus did I hear at one time. The Blessed One was staying at the Kalandakanivāpa in Veṇuvana near Rājagṛha, with a great saṅgha of monks. The Blessed One was teaching the Dharma to a large assembly with hundreds of thousands of beings in attendance. Present in the assembly was the bodhisattva great being Lokadhara. It was his wish that bodhisattva great beings develop the mind of awakening by adorning themselves with immeasurable virtues; that they understand in its entirety the true meaning of all phenomena; [F.8.a] that they understand how limitless aspirations lead to the perfection of limitless ornaments; that they comprehend and understand the true characteristics of limitless phenomena; that they purify their motivation through limitless aspirations; that they gain comprehensive knowledge; that they attain the ornament of generosity and the purity of certainty; that they perfect the ornament of discipline and patience; that they purify the attitude of mildness and gentleness; that they understand the purity of diligence; that they understand and comprehend the perfections of concentration and insight; and that they develop limitless other such virtues.

1.3 Therefore, he stood up, draped his shawl over one shoulder, and knelt on his right knee. With his palms together he bowed toward the Blessed One and said, “Blessed One, may I inquire, in order to bring benefit and happiness to many people; in order that bodhisattva great beings will not discontinue the Buddha’s lineage; in order that their discipline will be without attachment and pure in all activities; in order that they will apply themselves to the great Dharma; and in order that bodhisattvas will become knowledgeable in upholding the immeasurable domains of the Dharma of noble beings. Blessed One, how do bodhisattva great beings become knowledgeable concerning the true characteristics of phenomena? How do

they become skilled in discerning the characteristics of phenomena? How do they acquire the power of mindfulness? How do they acquire the insight of knowing how to discern the categories of all phenomena? Once they have relinquished this body, how do they sustain unbroken mindfulness until they attain unsurpassed and perfect awakening?"

1.4 The Blessed One responded to the bodhisattva Lokadhara, [F.8.b] "Excellent, excellent! Lokadhara, it is excellent that you have asked the Thus-Gone One about these subjects on behalf of bodhisattva great beings. The merit you have gained from asking questions—in order to bring benefit and happiness to many people, out of love for the world, for the sake of the benefit and happiness of the world and its gods, and to illuminate the bodhisattvas of the present and future with great light—is boundless.

1.5 "As for your having asked the Thus-Gone One about these subjects, it is excellent that you have thought to inquire of the Thus-Gone One in order to eliminate beings' doubts; illuminate and protect all beings; teach beings beneficial subjects; free beings from treacherous paths; serve as the support, base, protection, and refuge of many beings; extract and remove them from the three lower realms; establish beings on the unsurpassed path; liberate many beings from the anguish of birth, aging, sickness, death, distress, lamentation, pain, and anxiety; bestow the unsurpassed happiness of nirvāṇa upon beings; protect and guard the sublime Dharma in the future; and liberate beings during the dark times of destruction in the future. Therefore, Lokadhara, listen well and commit this to memory, as I will now explain."

The bodhisattva Lokadhara replied, "Blessed One, I shall do as you ask," and he listened to the Blessed One.

1.6 The Blessed One then said, "Sublime being, I have this to say: [F.9.a] Bodhisattva great beings who understand four beneficial subjects will endeavor in and apply themselves to the true characteristics of phenomena and become highly skilled in discerning the characteristics of phenomena. What are these four? They should achieve perfect mindfulness, achieve unbroken mindfulness, make continuous progress by means of highly refined insight, and always remain mindful. Lokadhara, bodhisattva great beings who understand these four beneficial subjects will endeavor in and apply themselves to the true characteristics of phenomena and become skilled in discerning the characteristics of phenomena.

1.7 "Lokadhara, bodhisattva great beings who understand an alternate set of four beneficial subjects will endeavor in and apply themselves to the true characteristics of phenomena and become highly skilled in discerning the characteristics of phenomena. What are these four? They should understand

well the definitive meaning of phenomena, understand well the meaning of phenomena, understand well the various causes and conditions of phenomena, and enter the true gateway of phenomena.

1.8 “Lokadhara, bodhisattva great beings who understand an alternate set of four beneficial subjects will endeavor in and apply themselves to the true characteristics of phenomena and become highly skilled in discerning the characteristics of phenomena. What are these four? They should understand well the characteristics of limitless phenomena, become highly skilled in cultivating limitless definitive phenomena, exponentially increase engagement in limitless virtues, and understand and perceive the characteristic of arising and ceasing of phenomena.

1.9 “Lokadhara, bodhisattva great beings who understand an alternate set of four beneficial subjects [F.9.b] will endeavor in and apply themselves to the true characteristics of phenomena and become highly skilled in discerning the characteristics of phenomena. What are these four? They should assiduously attend to unsurpassed and perfect awakening, swiftly perfect the factors of awakening, avoid being led astray by others by being highly skilled with regard to the expedient means of phenomena, and become highly skilled in all forms of wisdom and insight. Lokadhara, bodhisattva great beings who see these four subjects will endeavor in and apply themselves to the true characteristics of phenomena and become highly skilled in discerning the characteristics of phenomena.

1.10 “Lokadhara, bodhisattva great beings who possess an alternate set of four qualities will endeavor in and apply themselves to the true characteristics of phenomena and become highly skilled in discerning the characteristics of phenomena. What are these four? Seeking to bring beings benefit and happiness by having a mind that is unstained by stinginess, always keeping pure discipline, being unceasing in their diligent conduct by being steadfast in the perfection of diligence, and applying themselves to the perfection of insight with correct mental engagement.

1.11 “Lokadhara, bodhisattva great beings who have an alternate set of four qualities will endeavor in and apply themselves to the true characteristics of phenomena and become highly skilled in discerning the characteristics of phenomena. What are these four? Having abundant and pure aspirations, having abundant and pure diligent conduct, being steadfast in the virtue of patience that is forgiving, and attaining the understanding that differentiates the true characteristics of phenomena. [F.10.a]

1.12 “Lokadhara, bodhisattva great beings who have an alternate set of four qualities will endeavor in and apply themselves to the true characteristics of phenomena and become highly skilled in discerning the characteristics of phenomena. What are these four? Pursuing omniscient wisdom with great

zeal; generating great zeal by being skilled in discerning concentration, liberation, and absorption; applying themselves to pure conduct in order to attain the mental states of love, compassion, joy, and equanimity; and cultivating the definitive meaning.

1.13 “Lokadhara, bodhisattva great beings who have an alternate set of four qualities will endeavor in and apply themselves to the true characteristics of phenomena and become highly skilled in discerning the characteristics of phenomena. What are these four? The perfection of the domain of insight, seeking the pure domain of wisdom, zeal for unimpeded wisdom, and never abandoning the aspiration for omniscient wisdom. Lokadhara, bodhisattva great beings who have this set of four qualities will endeavor in and apply themselves to the true characteristics of phenomena and become highly skilled in discerning the characteristics of phenomena.”

1.14 “Lokadhara, bodhisattva great beings who understand an alternate set of four subjects will pursue the power of mindfulness. What are these four? Cultivating familiarity with the complete power of mindfulness, experiencing blissful insight, maintaining unbroken mindfulness, and thoroughly cultivating the four applications of mindfulness.

1.15 “Lokadhara, bodhisattva great beings who understand four subjects [F.10.b] will pursue the power of mindfulness. What are these four? Always applying mindfulness with respect to the mind in order to perfect the factors of awakening, having pure insight that employs an acute power of mindfulness to know what was cultivated in previous existences, swiftly attaining unbroken mindfulness, and generating the cause of omniscient wisdom.

1.16 “Lokadhara, bodhisattva great beings who understand four subjects will pursue the power of mindfulness. What are these four? Cultivating the entirety of contemplative methods, cultivating genuine wisdom and insight, generating tremendous diligence in order to attain the qualities of buddhahood, and not forgetting mindfulness in order to attain the strength of unbroken mindfulness. Lokadhara, bodhisattva great beings who understand these four subjects will pursue the power of mindfulness.”

1.17 “Lokadhara, bodhisattva great beings who have four qualities will attain the power of mindfulness. What are these four? Constant and unbroken diligence aimed at recollecting the highest insight, constant and unbroken focus aimed at achieving the true characteristics of phenomena, constant vigilance aimed at accurately recalling all phenomena, and constant guarding of one’s faculties in order to obtain correct mental engagement.

1.18

“Lokadhara, bodhisattva great beings who have an alternate set of four qualities will attain the power of mindfulness. What are these four? Maintaining pure discipline, having pure conduct, dispelling the five mental obscurations concerning all forms of conduct while being unattached to worldly phenomena, and discarding the obscurations of action and affliction. [F.11.a]

1.19 “Lokadhara, bodhisattva great beings who have an alternate set of four qualities will attain the power of mindfulness. What are these four? Pursuing virtuous phenomena with an unperturbed mind, cultivating familiarity with the mind’s sole characteristic, having understanding and knowledge of Dharma discourses, and avoiding both householders and renunciates by being uninterested in socializing.

1.20 “Lokadhara, bodhisattva great beings who have an alternate set of four qualities will attain the power of mindfulness. What are these four? Training under a spiritual friend, constantly applying oneself to the profound Dharma, always being happy to approach buddhas and bodhisattvas, and delighting in supplication and inquiry while being inspired to cultivate insight. Bodhisattva great beings who have these four qualities will attain the power of mindfulness.”

1.21 “Lokadhara, bodhisattva great beings who have an alternate set of four qualities will progress toward insight by knowing how to discern the categories of all phenomena. What are these four? Being very knowledgeable with regard to the true characteristics of all phenomena, being very knowledgeable with regard to discerning the causes of all phenomena, being knowledgeable with regard to the definitive meaning of all phenomena, and being knowledgeable with regard to the classifications of words and speech related to all phenomena.

1.22 “Lokadhara, bodhisattva great beings who have an alternate set of four qualities will progress toward insight by knowing how to discern the categories of all phenomena. What are these four? Being knowledgeable with regard to the progressive order of Dharma teachings, being knowledgeable with regard to the means of the dependent origination of all phenomena, [F.11.b] having the skillful means to cultivate all Dharma teachings, and being very knowledgeable with regard to discerning both the discourses on the definitive meaning and those on the inferred meaning.

1.23 “Lokadhara, bodhisattva great beings who have an alternate set of four qualities will progress toward insight by knowing how to discern the categories of all phenomena. What are these four? Being knowledgeable with regard to distinguishing the path from what is not the path, being able to describe the meaning of any Dharma teaching, swiftly achieving the domain of pure insight, and perfectly cultivating the perfection of wisdom.

- Lokadhara, bodhisattva great beings who have this alternate set of four qualities will progress toward insight by knowing how to discern the categories of all phenomena.
- 1.24 “Lokadhara, bodhisattva great beings who have an alternate set of four qualities will progress toward insight by knowing how to discern the categories of all phenomena. What are these four? Being knowledgeable about cultivating all phenomena characterized by origination, being knowledgeable with regard to the characteristic of cessation related to the causes of all phenomena, being knowledgeable about the characteristic of the conditions related to all phenomena, and being skillful by means of causes and conditions.
- 1.25 “Lokadhara, bodhisattva great beings who have an alternate set of four qualities will progress toward insight by knowing how to discern the categories of all phenomena. What are these four? Being knowledgeable with regard to all the phenomena of suffering, being knowledgeable with regard to all the phenomena of origination, being knowledgeable with regard to all the phenomena of cessation, and being knowledgeable with regard to all the phenomena of cessation and the path.
- 1.26 “Lokadhara, bodhisattva great beings who have an alternate set of four qualities [F.12.a] will progress toward insight by knowing how to discern the categories of all phenomena. What are these four? Being knowledgeable with regard to the connection between the formation and destruction of all phenomena; drawing on previous causes to achieve power; being knowledgeable with regard to anything that tames phenomena; and being knowledgeable with regard to discerning letters, syllables, and words.
- 1.27 “Lokadhara, bodhisattva great beings who have an alternate set of four qualities will progress toward insight by knowing how to discern the categories of all phenomena. What are these four? Being very knowledgeable with regard to the discourses of inferred meaning, not becoming caught up in the words of the discourses of definitive meaning, being knowledgeable with regard to the seal³ of the characteristics of all phenomena, and being steadfast in the wisdom of the absence of marks of all phenomena. Lokadhara, bodhisattva great beings who have this alternate set of four qualities will progress toward insight by knowing how to discern the categories of all phenomena.”
- 1.28 “Lokadhara, bodhisattva great beings who have four qualities will have unbroken mindfulness from the point that they relinquish this body until they awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood. What are these four? Knowledge of virtuous and nonvirtuous phenomena, excellent mindfulness and insight, abandonment of the five mental obscurations, and never allowing one’s mindfulness of unsurpassed and perfect awakening to wane.

- 1.29 “Lokadhara, bodhisattva great beings who have four additional qualities will have unbroken mindfulness from the point that they relinquish this body until they awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood. What are these four? Strong pursuit of the four applications of mindfulness, [F.12.b] strong pursuit of discerning insight, placing insight at the forefront of all absorptions, and mastering definitive insight.
- 1.30 “Lokadhara, bodhisattva great beings who have four qualities will have unbroken mindfulness from the point that they relinquish this body until they awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood. What are these four? Attainment of the dhāraṇī gateways, cultivation of unborn wisdom, understanding the wisdom of exhaustion, and realization of the wisdom of cessation.
- 1.31 “Lokadhara, bodhisattva great beings who have four qualities will have unbroken mindfulness from the point that they relinquish this body until they awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood. What are these four? Eliminating desire and aversion, being free from attachment to any conditioned phenomenon, realization of unconditioned wisdom, and arriving at the domain of the thus-gone ones. Lokadhara, bodhisattva great beings who have these four qualities will have unbroken mindfulness from the point that they relinquish this body until they awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood.”
- 1.32 “Lokadhara, bodhisattva great beings who have five types of wisdom strength that purify phenomena will perfect the higher virtues. What are these five? The wisdom strength that purifies motivation, the wisdom strength that purifies aspirations, the wisdom strength that purifies roots of virtue, the wisdom strength that purifies dedication, and the wisdom strength that purifies karmic obscurations.
- 1.33 “Lokadhara, bodhisattva great beings who have an alternate set of five types of purificatory wisdom strength [F.13.a] will perfect the higher virtues. What are these five? The wisdom strength that purifies conduct, the wisdom strength that purifies mindfulness, the wisdom strength that purifies practice, the wisdom strength that purifies apprehension of sentient beings,⁴ and the wisdom strength that purifies apprehension of characteristics.
- 1.34 “Lokadhara, bodhisattva great beings who have an alternate set of five types of purificatory wisdom strength will perfect the higher virtues. What are these five? The wisdom strength that purifies a detached attitude, the wisdom strength that purifies bringing benefit and happiness to beings, the wisdom strength that purifies the development of great love, the wisdom strength that purifies the development of great compassion, and the wisdom strength that purifies the development of great joy and equanimity.

- “Lokadhara, bodhisattva great beings who have an alternate set of five types of purificatory wisdom strength will perfect the higher virtues. What are these five? The wisdom strength that purifies the observance of discipline, the wisdom strength that purifies nonattachment to the observance of discipline, the wisdom strength that purifies patience, the wisdom strength that purifies nonattachment to patience, and the wisdom strength that purifies learnedness.
- 1.36 “Lokadhara, bodhisattva great beings who have an alternate set of five types of purificatory wisdom strength will perfect the higher virtues. What are these five? The wisdom strength that purifies higher diligence, [F.13.b] the wisdom strength that purifies the acquisition of diligence, the wisdom strength that purifies concentration, the wisdom strength that purifies the means of concentration, and the wisdom strength that purifies the means of tranquility and special insight.
- 1.37 “Lokadhara, bodhisattva great beings who have an alternate set of five types of purificatory wisdom strength will perfect the higher virtues. What are these five? The wisdom strength that purifies insight, the wisdom strength that purifies the attainment of erudition, the wisdom strength that purifies the worldly and transcendent, the wisdom strength that purifies insight and means, and the wisdom strength that purifies the conditioned and the unconditioned.
- 1.38 “Lokadhara, bodhisattva great beings who have an alternate set of five types of purificatory wisdom strength will perfect the higher virtues. What are these five? The wisdom strength that purifies the understanding of means, the wisdom strength that purifies knowledge and liberation, the wisdom strength that purifies the characteristic of the unborn, the wisdom strength that purifies the singularity of characteristics and the absence of characteristics, and the wisdom strength that purifies the relative and the ultimate. Lokadhara, bodhisattva great beings who have these five types of purificatory wisdom strength will perfect the higher virtues. Therefore, Lokadhara, bodhisattva great beings must endeavor greatly to cultivate these purificatory wisdom strengths.”
- 1.39 “Lokadhara, bodhisattva great beings who have three qualities will endeavor in the purificatory wisdom strength. [F.14.a] What are these three? Interest, diligence, and carefulness. Bodhisattva great beings who have these three will endeavor in the wisdom strength that purifies the entirety of virtues. Why is this? Lokadhara, interest, diligence, and carefulness are the roots of all qualities.
- 1.40 “Thus, bodhisattva great beings who apply themselves to the purificatory wisdom strength will swiftly attain omniscient wisdom. They will be called those who do not regress from diligence. They will be called those who do

not regress from the Dharma. They will also swiftly attain an exponential growth in those very virtues. They will also swiftly achieve the wisdom strength that purifies all qualities. Lokadhara, any person who achieves the wisdom strength that purifies all qualities in this manner is said to be a field of merit for the world. It is said that this person will consume the offering goods after me. It is said that this person will arrive at the domain of the thus-gone ones. It is said that this person will realize the qualities of the thus-gone ones. Before long, such a person will master the wisdom of the thus-gone ones.

1.41 “Lokadhara, many countless immeasurable eons ago, as I was practicing bodhisattva conduct, Buddha Dīpaṅkara prophesied to me, ‘You will fully awaken to buddhahood after countless eons.’ At that very moment, I understood all these purificatory wisdom strengths. Lokadhara, any person who has such purificatory wisdom strength will attain unexcelled, perfect, and complete awakening, just as I have attained it now. Such a person will also turn the wheel of Dharma, [F.14.b] just as I do now. That person will roar the lion’s roar, just as I roar it. That person will naturally have power and strength over all phenomena just as I do now. Lokadhara, if you have exerted yourself in the cultivation of this purificatory wisdom strength, you will spontaneously accomplish all wisdom and insight before long.

1.42 “Lokadhara, countless immeasurable eons ago, the blessed one known as King of Lofty Wisdom appeared in the world. He was a thus-gone one, a learned and virtuous one, a blissful one, a knower of the world, an unsurpassed being, a charioteer who guides beings, a teacher of gods and humans, and a blessed buddha. Lokadhara, the blessed one King of Lofty Wisdom had an immeasurable saṅgha of hearers and an immeasurable saṅgha of bodhisattvas. This was due to the causes and conditions of this Blessed One’s past aspirations. Even the words *three lower realms* were unheard of in the blessed one King of Lofty Wisdom’s buddha realm. No one there had experienced any suffering; all in all, everyone there had such an abundance of happiness and joy that they were mostly free of desire, as the five obscurations were eliminated. These beings had such pure happiness that it was as if they had attained the bliss of the four concentrations. The lifespan of the blessed one King of Lofty Wisdom was one quadrillion eons. The Thus-Gone One acted as the king of the world at that time. As there was no other king, the beings of that realm called the Blessed One their *Dharma King*. The blessed one King of Lofty Wisdom taught the bodhisattvas a discourse from the Bodhisattva Collection called [F.15.a] *Countering the Doubts and Pleasing the Minds of All Beings*. When five hundred of the bodhisattvas heard this description of the bodhisattvas’ purificatory wisdom strength, they generated such strength of diligence that for the rest of their lives, they

did not develop the intent to sit; did not develop notions about clothing; did not develop notions about themselves, other beings, men, or women; and did not eat too much food. Rather, they only exerted themselves in this purificatory wisdom strength. When these five hundred bodhisattvas who had exerted themselves so diligently passed away, they were later born in a buddha realm one hundred thousand buddha realms to the east of here, due to the causes and conditions of their roots of virtue. Once born there, they exerted themselves in this teaching, and before long they remembered their past lives and gained sharp faculties. In that buddha realm is a thus-gone one named King of Immeasurable Stacked Flowers. He is still alive and teaching the Dharma. When they were sixteen years old, these bodhisattvas received ordination in the teachings of the blessed one King of Immeasurable Stacked Flowers. For six hundred thousand years, they practiced pure conduct as youths and exerted themselves in this type of diligence.

1.43 “Lokadhara, in that fashion these five hundred bodhisattvas met two hundred thousand thus-gone ones, and by practicing diligence in their presence, gained supreme mindfulness, happiness, and insight. Finally, they met the blessed one King of Lofty and Immeasurable Power, who gave them this prophecy: ‘After ten thousand eons, you will fully awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood.’ [F.15.b] Throughout that ten-thousand-eon period, those five hundred bodhisattvas met two thousand buddhas. In this way, they perfected the awakening of the buddhas, until finally, one eon, they fully awakened to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood.

1.44 “Lokadhara, therefore one should know that bodhisattvas who want to swiftly attain unsurpassed and perfect awakening ought to develop such interest, diligence, and carefulness regarding the purificatory wisdom strength. Why is this? Lokadhara, interest, diligence, and carefulness, along with the factors of awakening, are the roots of attaining the unsurpassed and perfect awakening of the buddhas—they complete the qualities of buddhahood.

1.45 “Lokadhara, as I practiced such diligence, I met with two hundred thousand buddhas, and their teachings enabled me to recall all my past lives. By remembering the circumstances of all my past lives, I eliminated obstacles to the cultivation of this teaching. Never letting my interest, diligence, and carefulness decline, my interest, diligence, and carefulness became continuous.”

1.46 The Blessed One then gazed into the four directions with his mind of great love and compassion and displayed the miraculous power of his extraordinary abilities. He emanated buddhas into all the Jambudvīpas of the

great trichiliocosm, where they each taught the discourse from the Bodhisattva Collection called *Countering the Doubts and Pleasing the Minds of All Beings*. Furthermore, through his miraculous ability, the many assemblies in Veṇuvana were able to behold the emanated buddhas filling the Jambudvīpas, each teaching the Dharma, [F.16.a] whereby all the assemblies were delighted. They rose from their seats, prostrated to the Buddha, and marveled, “Blessed One, the miraculous ability of the blessed buddhas is unfathomable. The immeasurable and unfathomable Dharma is spontaneously accomplished.”

1.47 The Blessed One then addressed the myriad assemblies, “Noble children, the things revealed by the Thus-Gone One are not so remarkable. Why is this? Because the Thus-Gone One understands reality, he can use the power of his miraculous, extraordinary abilities in such a way that the light shining from a single pore of his body can illuminate as many worlds throughout the ten directions as there are grains of sand in the Ganges. Likewise, from a single pore of his body he can make the voice of Dharma heard in all those worlds. Such would not exhaust even a thousandth part of what can be displayed from a single pore. The Thus-Gone One has spontaneously accomplished such unfathomable abilities as these.

1.48 “Noble children, the Thus-Gone One teaches beings by employing an understanding of their thoughts. Noble children, there are few beings these days who are inspired to practice this teaching. Noble children, there are few beings these days who diligently endeavor in the practice of this teaching. Noble children, there are few beings these days who carefully practice this teaching. Why is this? There are few beings in such evil times who will practice this teaching. The Thus-Gone One has come to this evil world of the five degenerations⁵: the degeneration of beings, the degeneration of views, the degeneration of lifespans, the degeneration of afflictions, and the degeneration of eons.

1.49

“Noble children, if it is rare for someone to even so much as trust in this profound and pure teaching and arrive at the insight of buddhahood, what need we say of being interested in the domain of the thus-gone ones? [F.16.b] Noble children, my motivation for adorning myself with such aspirations and practicing such diligence and patience for so long has been to help those suffering beings who are without protector or refuge and who fall into the lower realms. Once I fully awakened, I ensured the benefit and welfare of countless, immeasurable beings. Noble children, therefore, through the grace of the Thus-Gone One’s earlier pure aspirations and diligence, countless, immeasurable beings now have faith and trust in such a profound teaching as this and embrace it. Noble children, beings that I have previously trained trust my teachings. Noble children, few beings have been made to trust such a profound teaching as this through the ten strengths and the four types of fearlessness of the blessed buddhas. All beings who observe this teaching do so through the means and power of the thus-gone ones’ intent. Long have I never been apart from this profound Dharma. That is why I care for and never abandon beings out of great love, great compassion, great joy, and great equanimity. There are few thus-gone ones who benefit beings in a vile world of the five degenerations. Why is this?

1.50 “Noble children, having earlier benefitted beings with the force of great diligence and the power of great skill, I gathered the accumulations leading to unsurpassed and perfect awakening. Noble children, I recall that in the past, I offered up and gave away a thousand bodies in a single day. Noble children, earlier, throughout thousands of lifetimes, when I saw beings suffering from hunger and thirst, I would cut flesh from my body, cook it, and give it to them—yet even then my mind felt no trouble or regret; instead, a great and universal love for all beings arose in me. [F.17.a] Noble children, understand that in this fashion, through benefitting beings with the strength of great diligence and skill, one will gather the accumulations leading to unsurpassed and perfect awakening. Therefore, noble children, by earnest practice of interest, diligence, and carefulness, the accumulations leading to unsurpassed and perfect awakening are gathered. Just as I have engaged in bodhisattva conduct, you must also act for the benefit and happiness of beings. Noble children, none of the blessed buddhas who have appeared in this Fortunate Eon have failed to praise me. They declared, ‘The blessed one Śākyamuni engaged in such diligence. The blessed one Śākyamuni developed such diligence. The blessed one Śākyamuni perfected such diligence. By engaging in bodhisattva conduct, the blessed one Śākyamuni thus helped beings. Having appeared in a vile world of degenerations, he thus acted for the benefit and happiness of countless, immeasurable beings.’

“Noble children, those who are inspired to practice such bodhisattva conduct must exert themselves in interest, diligence, and carefulness. Noble children, even though I have fully awakened to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood, my practice of diligence has not waned; I will generate diligence until my *parinirvāṇa*, when my relics will be reduced to the size of mustard seeds as my body parts are divided, for even that is done for the love and care of future beings. Previously, when I was engaged in bodhisattva conduct, there were some gentle beings who had grown mistaken and errant in their conduct, leading them to descend to difficult states of being. [F.17.b] I aroused great compassion in order to free them from those states; therefore my distributed relics, even so small as a mustard seed in size, will display miraculous power. After I reach *parinirvāṇa*, the minds of those who can be tamed by my relics will be purified. With purified minds, they will reach any states of being to which they aspire.

1.52 “Noble children, my spontaneous accomplishment of such compassion for beings, while I was formerly practicing the conduct of a bodhisattva, will cause my relics to be divided and distributed far and wide: this is also due to my previous aspirations. Thus will I protect many beings in vile future times through my immeasurable virtues, causes and conditions of merit, and great compassion. Noble children, I pray that those future bodhisattvas who are joyfully interested, diligent, and careful with regard to this teaching will be sure to read, recite, uphold, and fully teach discourses such as this to others. Through my miraculous power, I bless such bodhisattvas to read, recite, uphold, and fully teach them to others. So that these discourses will be read, recited, upheld, and fully taught, I have entrusted them to such bodhisattvas. Why is that? Noble children, understand that wherever these discourses appear, the Buddha will remain without passing into *parinirvāṇa*. Therefore, the Thus-Gone One entrusts these discourses to the bodhisattvas. Noble children, you should therefore understand that in the past, I gathered beings without abandoning them by means of such causes and conditions. Presently, I also gather beings without abandoning them. Know that in the future as well, I will gather beings without abandoning them. [F.18.a] Having guarded and cared for such discourses, they will flourish extensively in the final five-hundred-year period to come.

1.53 “Noble children, both at the present and after I pass into *parinirvāṇa*, know that if such a discourse is present in a town, city, mountain, forest, or wilderness, and someone retains, receives, reads, recites, teaches, or explains it, the Buddha resides there. Why is this? Through such causes and conditions, I call buddhas the *Dharma body*. I declare that by seeing the Dharma one sees the Buddha. The Buddha is not to be regarded as a body of form. Those who trust this teaching, and listen to it, trust the Buddha and

listen to the Buddha's teachings. Those who earnestly practice as taught see the Buddha. Such people are said to be proper teachers, Dharma teachers, and followers of the Dharma.

1.54 "Noble children, my body is neither⁶ Dharma nor non-Dharma; it is described in accordance with the Dharma. Called the *most sublime gift of Dharma*, it is neither grounded in Dharma nor non-ingrained in Dharma. How is this? If it were rooted in Dharma, seeing my body would not be called *seeing the Buddha*. Noble children, not being rooted in any phenomenon whatsoever is described as seeing the Buddha. Whoever does not see any phenomenon is described as seeing the Buddha. Why is this? It is inappropriate to describe the Thus-Gone One as *Dharma* or *non-Dharma*, or to view him as Dharma. Why is this? Noble children, for the monks who wish to understand my Dharma as found in the discourses, if even the Dharma is to be discarded like a raft,⁷ what need we say of non-Dharma?⁸ One who is equanimous regarding Dharma and non-Dharma is said to see the Buddha. [F.18.b] Why is this? Because the Thus-Gone One is said to be equanimous regarding all phenomena. Not being attached to, or grasping at, the label *Dharma*, one does not fall into the label *Dharma*, so what need we say of the label *non-Dharma*? Noble children, the absence of labels of all phenomena is called the *Thus-Gone One*. Those who see in this way are said to see the Thus-Gone One. Why is this? Because they are free from seeing any phenomenon, they see the Thus-Gone One. Since all phenomena are beyond apprehension, when one understands and sees all phenomena correctly as they are, this is called seeing the Thus-Gone One. Noble children, the state that does not apprehend any phenomenon is free from all phenomena, is without any thoughts of *Dharma* or *non-Dharma*, is free from debate, is free from anything to do, and is indescribable: this is called *seeing the Thus-Gone One*. Those who see the Dharma in this fashion are said to see the Thus-Gone One.

1.55 "Those who see the Thus-Gone One in this fashion see accurately. Those who see differently from this see mistakenly. Whoever sees mistakenly thus sees falsely; such people are not said to see correctly.⁹ Noble children, seeing true reality is the cessation of all modes of words and statements. It is neither correct nor incorrect. It neither exists nor is absent. It is free from all phenomena, does not adopt any phenomenon, and does not observe any phenomenon. Seeing like this is seeing the Thus-Gone One. Why is this? Noble children, the Thus-Gone One does not give rise to views regarding phenomena. Thus, seeing the absence of characteristics concerning all phenomena is seeing the Thus-Gone One. Whoever sees in this fashion is said to see accurately. [F.19.a]

1.56

“Noble children, you should regard the Thus-Gone One in this way. You must analyze the Thus-Gone One just as I have explained. Those who regard the Thus-Gone One like this will understand all phenomena to be the Thus-Gone One. They will attain the suchness of all phenomena, the true reality of all phenomena, and the characteristic falsity of all phenomena. They will come to understand all phenomena to be the qualities of the Thus-Gone One, all phenomena to be the domain of the Thus-Gone One, and all phenomena to be the unfathomable domain.

1.57 “Noble children, therefore I have declared that all phenomena are the domain of the Thus-Gone One. The Thus-Gone One’s domain is devoid of a domain. Why is this? There is nothing within the *domain of all phenomena* to be experienced. Therefore, I have taught that the absence of a domain is the *domain of the Thus-Gone One*. As the domain of all phenomena is the absence of a domain, that absence of a domain is the domain of the Thus-Gone One. Why is this? As the domain of all phenomena does not exist at all, the absence of a domain is the domain of the Thus-Gone One. As all domains are subsumed in the Thus-Gone One’s domain, it is not a domain. Since the Thus-Gone One understands these phenomena, the absence of a domain is the domain of the Thus-Gone One. Noble children, those who understand all phenomena as the absence of a domain are people who know the domain of the Thus-Gone One. Such people realize the domain of the Thus-Gone One. Such people seek the domain of the Thus-Gone One. Such people are without attachment to the domain of the Thus-Gone One. Why is this? Such people understand the absence of a domain to be the domain of the Thus-Gone One. [F.19.b] They understand the lack of a domain to be the domain of the Thus-Gone One.

1.58 “Because all Dharma teachings are beyond observation and investigation, and because they do not remain, they are not a domain. This is the domain of the Thus-Gone One. It is a domain that is subsumed in wisdom, because it does not enter any Dharma teachings. How is this? Because there is no gateway of the Dharma teachings, they are entered through this gateway. Noble children, no Dharma teaching has entry, origination, or form. Why is this? Given that the Thus-Gone One does not observe any Dharma teachings, from where should they appear? Into what should they enter? How could they be shown? How could they ever be taught? Noble children, this is the entry into the gateway of all Dharma teachings, because of their characteristic of being beyond entry. No Dharma teachings come together or part, are bound or liberated. Because in this way there are no gateways with regard to the gateways of all Dharma teachings, such gateways are not gateways of emergence, gateways of entry, gateways of departure, or gateways of expression; ultimately, they are called the *unborn gateway*.

Through this Dharma gateway, no phenomenon is known or seen. This Dharma gateway involves no understanding of, or entry into, Dharma teachings. Why is this?

1.59 “Noble children, there are no gateways of Dharma teachings, because gateways cannot be observed. Space is a gateway of all Dharma teachings, because it is primordially pure by nature. The absence of discontinuity is a gateway of all Dharma teachings, because discontinuity cannot be observed. The absence of limits is a gateway of all Dharma teachings, because limits cannot be observed. The absence of measures is a gateway of all Dharma teachings, because measures cannot be observed. The absence of bounds is a gateway of all Dharma teachings, because bounds cannot be observed. Noble children, if a noble son or daughter enters this Dharma gateway, [F.20.a] it is said that they enter the gateway of all Dharma teachings, understand the gateway of all Dharma teachings, and reveal the gateway of all Dharma teachings.”

1.60 *This was chapter one: “The Introduction.”*

2. CHAPTER TWO: INVESTIGATING THE FIVE AGGREGATES

2.1 The Blessed One then addressed the bodhisattva Lokadhara, “Lokadhara, bodhisattva great beings who wish to attain the true characteristics of all phenomena, wish to be learned in the characteristics of discerning phenomena, wish to attain the power of recall, wish to attain the insight that discerns all phenomena, or wish to attain unbroken mindfulness from the time they leave this body until reaching unsurpassed and perfect awakening should swiftly enter this Dharma gateway. Through this Dharma gateway, they will attain the light of insight. Why is this? Because this Dharma gateway swiftly ensures that perfection is attained. Furthermore, Lokadhara, bodhisattva great beings should exert themselves in this Dharma gateway. Having entered this gateway that pertains to the Dharma, they will become highly skilled in discerning what pertains to the aggregates, elements, sense sources, dependently originated phenomena, the four applications of mindfulness, the five powers, the eightfold path of the noble ones, and mundane and transcendent phenomena. Additionally, they will become highly skilled in discerning what pertains to conditioned and unconditioned phenomena.”

. Form .

2.2 “Lokadhara, how are bodhisattvas skilled in discerning what pertains to the five aggregates? Bodhisattva great beings correctly understand the five aggregates for appropriation in the following way: [F.20.b] The aggregates for appropriation are heaps of ignorance. The aggregates for appropriation are heaps of suffering. The aggregates for appropriation are heaps of delusion. The aggregates for appropriation are heaps of sickness, boils, and thorns.

2.3 Bodhisattvas should contemplate the discernment of the aggregate for appropriation of form. How then should they contemplate the discernment of the aggregate for appropriation of form? The aggregate for appropriation of form arises from the four great elements, so the *aggregate for appropriation of form* is actually nothing more than a mere imputation. As the aggregate of form is without intrinsic nature and is simply a gathering of the four great elements, the *aggregate of form* is a mere imputation. The aggregate of form was not created, is not created, will not be created, and does not arise. The *aggregate of form* is nothing but a mere imputation, based upon the causes and conditions of past actions and the gathering of the four great elements. Apart from the mere imputation, it is not an aggregate. Such is the aggregate of form. To draw an analogy, it is like the aggregate of space, as it does not have any characteristic of true arising. In what is described as the *aggregate of space*, no phenomenon whatsoever has arisen. Still, because it has the mere label, it is called the *aggregate of space*. Childish ordinary beings hold what is false to be true, with their erroneous thoughts about the nonexistent aggregates and their characteristics, such that they cling to notions like ‘I am the five aggregates,’ ‘my five aggregates,’ ‘I am the aggregate of form,’ and ‘my aggregate of form.’ Thereby, in clinging to form, childish ordinary beings think of form as being themselves, something belonging to them, or something existent, perceptible, adoptable, or obtainable. They dwell on and depend upon form, and so they engage in and experience myriad nonvirtuous and evil actions.

2.4 “It is inappropriate for us to emulate childish ordinary beings, [F.21.a] for we should arouse diligence and earnestly cultivate the factors of awakening. It is appropriate for us to investigate the aggregate of form accurately. When bodhisattvas contemplate the aggregates accurately, they understand them to be like water bubbles. How do they understand them to be like water bubbles? A water bubble does not exist—for it simply occurs due to many conditions and cannot be grasped or held. It is without solidity or a core. For these reasons, water bubbles lack any characteristics of bubbles. Just as the absence of a real bubble can be called a *water bubble*, so it is with the aggregate of form, for the aggregate of form lacks the characteristics of an aggregate. When bodhisattvas contemplate this, they reflect as follows: ‘Childish ordinary beings fail to understand the unreal nature of form accurately; they do not understand the impermanence of form accurately; and they do not understand the characteristic of form accurately. However, we have entered the correct path, so we shall not cling to unreal forms. Why is this? Form does not have any characteristic to grasp at, for it is just a mere label, lacking any true characteristics. Thus, because form lacks a true characteristic and has no name, it is called *form*. Furthermore, form has the

characteristic of being destructible, yet the wise understand it as lacking marks. We must become skilled in cultivating the practice that form has no marks—we should not cling to the marks of form. If a person clings to the marks of form, they are called *one who clings to form*. We should become highly skilled in understanding the marks of form. When bodhisattvas understand this accurately, they know how to discern form accurately. [F.21.b] At that point, they know that the aggregate of form arises from the imputations of childish ordinary beings. The fact that phenomena arise from imputation means that they are unborn. Since all imputations are rooted in and based on the mistaken and false understanding of childish ordinary beings, beings give rise to such *forms* and become bound by those forms. Tormented by form, they are pained by suffering and wander throughout saṃsāra. Blinded by ignorance and delusion, they cling to form and cannot let it go; thereby, they regard form as permanent, solid, and having a core. Through this, childish ordinary beings are bound by the fetters of form and wander constantly through the realms of hell beings, animals, anguished spirits, gods, and humans. They relish the experience of form, for they do not consider the many problems inherent in form. We should not emulate childish ordinary beings; rather, we should cultivate discernment regarding what pertains to form.’

2.5 “When cultivating discernment of form, one should view form’s nature as being like a dream. In a dream, the forms one sees arise from imputed perceptions, feelings, and concepts, which arouse sights, sounds, feelings, perceptions, and dependent origination. One then perceives these as self and other. One sees them as earth, water, fire, and wind. One sees them as mountains, lakes, forests, and so on. In this fashion, the marks of the forms in a dream do not truly exist; rather, they come about based on imputed perceptions. The marks of the aggregate of form are produced in the same way; they arise from the causes and conditions of previous actions and do not have a defined nature.¹⁰ If bodhisattvas contemplate in this fashion, they will not appropriate form as either *I* or *mine*. They will contemplate form accurately. [F.22.a] They will accurately understand its characteristic of impermanence and its false and mistaken nature. Beings, however, grasp and cling to this incorrectly observed form and perceive it as *I*, *mine*, *other*, or *other’s*. When bodhisattvas discern form in this way, they do not observe it as form; they do not see it as having the nature of form; and they do not become attached to impermanent forms. At that time, if they dispel and eliminate all attachment and grasping to form, they will become highly skilled concerning the true characteristics of form; they will understand form’s characteristic of sameness; they will understand form’s characteristic of cessation; they will become skilled concerning form’s characteristic of the path that leads to

cessation; they will realize that the aggregate of form does not come from anywhere or go anywhere. When contemplating in this way, they understand that the body and the aggregate of form are born from the ripening of karmic results and imputations, and that they arise from the gathering of the four great elements. The aggregate of physical form is not the self, not another, ownerless, and does not come from anywhere. Having contemplated the aggregate of form in this fashion, they will not grasp or become attached to inner forms, outer forms, past forms, future forms, or present forms, as they understand all aggregates of form in terms of their characteristic of being unborn. These bodhisattvas then neither negate form nor seek a Dharma that negates form.¹¹ Lokadhara, for these reasons, bodhisattva great beings are called *those who engage in the discernment of form.*”

. Feeling .

- 2.6 “Lokadhara, how do bodhisattva great beings engage in the discernment of the aggregate for appropriation of feeling? [F.22.b] Bodhisattvas think: ‘Pleasurable feelings, painful feelings, and feelings that are neither pleasurable nor painful arise through dependent origination and are based on causes and conditions. Therefore, if one has understood the characteristic of feeling, there is no feeling there, for it is simply clinging. Such clinging is false and arises from false imputations.’ When bodhisattvas think such, they will also think, ‘Childish ordinary beings, bound by falsely imputed feelings, are tormented by the three types of feeling: pleasurable feelings, painful feelings, and feelings that are neither pleasurable nor painful. When childish ordinary beings experience pleasurable feelings, they become bound by the affliction of desire. Because they are afflicted by desire’s secondary afflictions, they engage in various nonvirtuous actions. When they experience unpleasant feelings, they become bound by the affliction of aggression. Because they are afflicted by aggression’s secondary afflictions, they engage in various nonvirtuous actions. When they experience feelings that are neither pleasurable nor painful, they become bound by the affliction of ignorance. Because they are afflicted by ignorance’s secondary afflictions, they are not freed from misery, lamentation, and painful torment. We should not emulate childish ordinary beings. Rather we should investigate the true reality of phenomena. We should investigate feeling accurately.’
- 2.7 “Once bodhisattvas have investigated the aggregate of feelings accurately, they will think, ‘The aggregate of feelings is not an aggregate. Feelings arise from false imputation, and they are devoid of action. Feelings arise from the cause of past actions and are experienced based upon conditions in the present moment. [F.23.a] Because feelings are naturally

empty, they lack the marks of feelings.’ When bodhisattvas contemplate the aggregate of feeling, they see that the aggregate of feelings is like water bubbles that appear and cease without ever truly existing. They arise from the connections between causes and conditions, and they depend on causes and conditions. Hence, they do not remain, even momentarily. As they are not real, they have arisen from the falsehood of imputation. At that time bodhisattvas will think, ‘Ordinary beings are the objects of our loving-kindness. Since they do not understand the aggregate of feelings accurately, they are afflicted by their feelings. They become attached to pleasurable feelings, painful feelings, and feelings that are neither pleasurable nor painful. Bound by such feelings, they wander throughout saṃsāra and pass from one body to another in an unbroken stream, because due to afflictive feelings, they do not understand the characteristics of the aggregate of feelings accurately. We should not emulate such childish ordinary beings. Rather, we should accurately investigate the discernment of the aggregate of feelings.’

2.8 “When they accurately contemplate the aggregate of feelings, they will realize the aggregate of feelings to be a nonexistent aggregate, a false aggregate, a mistaken aggregate, and a nonabiding aggregate. At that time, they will accurately see the characteristics of the aggregate of feelings to be uncreated and devoid of action. They will not view the aggregate of feelings as having any characteristics of the aggregate of feelings. When contemplating the aggregate of feelings in this fashion, they do not view the aggregate of feelings as existing within or without. They are not attached to feelings being *I*, and they are not attached to feelings being *mine*. [F.23.b] They thus understand that the aggregate of feelings does not come from anywhere, that it is ownerless, and that it is not brought into being by anything. They know that feelings are mistaken, and that what is labeled the *category of the aggregate of feelings* manifests as the ripened effect of past actions. They see the aggregate of feelings as the unbroken continuity of engagement in false causes and conditions. At that time, they do not grasp, desire, or cling to the aggregate of feelings of the past; they do not grasp, desire, or cling to the aggregate of feelings of the future; and they do not grasp, desire, or cling to the aggregate of feelings of the present.

2.9 “Such people exert themselves in removing the affliction of desire from pleasurable feelings, the affliction of aversion from painful feelings, and the affliction of ignorance from feelings that are neither pleasurable nor painful. Then, the mind of desire will not arise when the bodhisattva experiences pleasurable feelings, the mind of aversion will not arise when the bodhisattva experiences painful feelings, and the mind of delusion will not arise when the bodhisattva experiences feelings that are neither pleasurable

nor painful. Lokadhara, for the most part, the mind of desire arises when childish ordinary beings experience pleasurable feelings, the mind of aversion arises when they experience painful feelings, and the mind of delusion arises when they experience feelings that are neither pleasant nor painful. Thereby, childish ordinary beings are blinded by attachment, aversion, and delusion and fail to accurately understand the aggregate of feelings just as it is. Failing to understand the characteristics of attachment, aversion, and delusion, they become attached and cling to attachment, aversion, and delusion as being *I, mine*, and so forth.

2.10 “Lokadhara, bodhisattva great beings who understand the aggregate of feelings accurately will not fall under the influence of attachment, aversion, and delusion. [F.24.a] Even if attachment, aversion, and delusion should arise, they will immediately dispel them, taking them earnestly onto the genuine path. They diligently practice in order to remove the affliction of attachment from the experience of pleasurable feelings. They diligently practice in order to remove the affliction of aversion from the experience of painful feelings. They diligently practice in order to remove the affliction of delusion from the experience of feelings that are neither pleasant nor painful. Thus, they gain accurate understanding of the three types of feeling. Then, to that extent, as they experience feelings, they do not cling to pleasurable feelings, painful feelings, or feelings that are neither pleasant nor painful. Distancing themselves from them, they become freed from the affliction of attachment, the affliction of aversion, and the affliction of delusion. Then, when feelings occur, they will understand and regard the aggregate of feelings accurately as impermanent. Having gained such understanding, they will disrupt attachment to the aggregate of feelings. Having understood the disrupted aggregate of feelings in this way, they will no longer be afflicted by feelings on the paths of desire and attachment. If bodhisattvas understand and realize the aggregate of feelings accurately, they will understand the origin of the aggregate of feelings, the cessation of the aggregate of feelings, and the path leading to cessation of the aggregate of feelings. Then they will understand the aggregate of feelings to be characterized as being unborn. Through this characteristic of being unborn, they will understand and realize the aggregate of feelings to be free of marks. Lokadhara, this has been a discussion of how bodhisattva great beings contemplate the discernment of the aggregate of feelings.” [F.24.b]

- 2.11 “Lokadhara, how do bodhisattva great beings contemplate the discernment of the aggregate of perception? When bodhisattva great beings accurately contemplate the aggregate of perception, they see that the aggregate of perception arises from error, and that it is false, unreal, unreliable, and has the characteristic of never having being born to begin with. Being discontinuous, they see it as a gathering of causes and conditions, and as having arisen through the power of past actions. They think, ‘The aggregate of perception is a nonaggregate, for the aggregate of perception is a heap of falsehood. The aggregate of perception is a heap of error. The aggregate of perception lacks the marks of the aggregate of perception. It is just a label, like the mirages of summertime. The aggregate of perception is just like an aggregate of mirages. The label *perception* is imputed due to the perceptions of consciousness.’
- 2.12 “Childish ordinary beings are bound by such false perceptions, which they perceive as pleasure, pain, neither pleasure nor pain, heat, cold, male, female, cycling throughout the five classes of beings,¹² gathering, dispersing, past, present, future, good, bad, existence, and nonexistence. As the perceptions of childish ordinary beings are under the sway of false delusion, and dependent upon causes and conditions, the *aggregate of perception* is a mere imputation. There are no so-called perceptions either internally or externally. Bound by their false perceptions, childish ordinary beings perceive in terms of attachment, aversion, and delusion. [F.25.a] They perceive children and wives. Childish ordinary beings rely on the aggregate of perception and are attached to their false paths. Therefore, they circle throughout saṃsāra due to the aggregate of perception. They fail to understand accurately that the aggregate of perception is false. Childish ordinary beings perceive in terms of self and other. Perceiving male and female, they are bound by the aggregate of perception and are thus not liberated. They grasp and cling to the aggregate of perception as being *I* or *mine*. We should not emulate childish ordinary beings.’
- 2.13 “When bodhisattva great beings accurately contemplate the aggregate of perception in this way, they will not apprehend the aggregate of perception as the aggregate of perception, just as one will not apprehend an aggregate of mirages as an aggregate of mirages. Bodhisattvas view the aggregate of perception as a mirage; thus, they do not desire, take up, or cling to past aggregates of perception; they do not desire, take up, or cling to future aggregates of perception; and they do not dwell on the present aggregates of perception. They do not conceptualize self and other. They exert themselves in the cessation of the aggregate of perception and understand the path of the aggregate of perception to be unborn. They do not view the aggregate of perception as having any basis for coming or any basis for

going. Rather, they view it as something mistaken that arises from the cause of past actions, while being bound by current conditions. The aggregate of perception is a nonexistent aggregate. When they discern and contemplate that the aggregate of perception does not have any basis for coming or any basis for going, they realize the aggregate of perception to be unborn. They will also not conceptualize the cessation of the aggregate of perception; this is because they abide in accurate understanding and knowledge for all the feelings associated with perception to cease.¹³ [F.25.b] When bodhisattvas accurately contemplate the aggregate of perception, they are free from the aggregate of perception, such that, without dwelling on the path of perception, they adhere to an accurate knowledge and understanding of the aggregate of perception.¹⁴ Without being attached to the aggregate of perception, they accurately discern and contemplate the aggregate of perception. They also accurately understand the origination, cessation, and exhaustion of the aggregate of perception. Lokadhara, this is how bodhisattva great beings contemplate the discernment of the aggregate of perception. As they are free from attachment to the aggregate of perception, they apply themselves to the path, which disrupts attachment to the aggregate of perception.” [B2]

· Formation ·

2.14 “Lokadhara, how then do bodhisattva great beings contemplate the discernment of the aggregate of formation? Lokadhara, bodhisattva great beings realize that the aggregate of formation arises from error and is a mere imputation based on false imputations. At that time, bodhisattvas contemplate how all physical, verbal, and mental formations are unclean, impermanent, painful, empty, and selfless. When contemplating this, they think, ‘The aggregate of formation is a nonaggregate. The aggregate of formation is a heap of suffering. The aggregate of formation is a dependently originated aggregate. The aggregate of formation is a heap of reflections. The aggregate of formation does not increase or decrease; it is not gathered. Given that all physical, verbal, and mental formations are uncreated, the wise do not become attached to or grasp the aggregate of formation. Why is this? [F.26.a] Physical formations do not exist within the body, outside it, or in-between. Likewise, verbal and mental formations do not exist within, without, or in-between.

2.15 “ ‘The aggregate of formation lacks the characteristics of the aggregate of formation. Why is this? The aggregate of formation arises from many causes and conditions, mistaken perceptions, false perceptions, and the ripening of the effects of past actions. Formations are thus manifested due to the

influence of causes and conditions. No physical, verbal, and mental formations are truly formed, and they form nothing at all. Formations come from what is false, and they are formed out of mistaken perception. Therefore, the *aggregate of formation* refers to nonformations. Why is this? The wise do not ascertain any characteristics of formations. Therefore, there are no physical, verbal, or mental formations to be ascertained anywhere—whether here or somewhere else, inside or outside. If physical, verbal, and mental formations cannot be ascertained, observed, or described as having the characteristics of formations, how could we talk about apprehending or describing an aggregate of formation? Thus, the aggregate of formation is a nonexistent aggregate.

2.16 “Having developed mistaken perceptions, childish ordinary beings grow attached to the formations of body, speech, and mind. As they conceptualize the aggregate of formation and are bound by it, they cycle in saṃsāra. Under the power of mistaken perception, childish ordinary beings generate physical, verbal, and mental formations. As they grasp and cling to them, they perceive nonphenomena to be phenomena and nonexistent aggregates to be aggregates. Attached to their mistaken formations, [F.26.b] they are bound by them and circle throughout the five classes of beings, continuously conforming to physical, verbal, and mental formations as they fail to accurately understand. By failing to accurately understand the aggregate of formation, they generate formations with body, speech, and mind. Because childish ordinary beings are attached to mistaken perceptions, because they are attached to phenomena that are not real, and because they are attached to what is false, these are called the *aggregate of formation*.’

2.17 “Lokadhara, when bodhisattvas accurately investigate this, they will realize that formations have no substance and are weak. They understand that the so-called aggregate of formation is simply designated as such based on a gathering of many causes and conditions, and so the aggregate of formation does not truly exist. The aggregate of formation is a nonexistent aggregate. The aggregate of formation is primordially unborn. The aggregate of formation lacks intrinsic existence. Since formations cannot be observed in the past, cannot be observed in the future, and cannot be observed in-between, they do not remain. Thus, formations arise and cease moment-by-moment.

2.18 “Lokadhara, in this fashion bodhisattvas accurately understand the aggregate of formation to be emptiness, inapprehensible, lacking a concrete nature, and not even remotely observable. Considering this, they will correctly reason in the following way with regard to the aggregate of formation: ‘Childish ordinary beings are bound by phenomena that have no

essence, by the aggregate of formation, and by their attachment. They generate formations with their body, speech, and mind, and they generate the formations of self and possessions. By generating such action, they are bound by the aggregate of formation and fail to recognize the very aggregate of formation to be ignorance and delusion. Under the power of such mistaken perceptions, beings grasp and cling to formations. [F.27.a] Since such people become attached and cling to the aggregate of formation in this way, they sometimes generate pleasurable formations, sometimes generate painful formations, and sometimes generate formations that are neither pleasurable nor painful. When generating formations concerning pleasure, such people attain a body that is pleasurable. When generating formations concerning pain, such people attain a body that is painful. When generating formations concerning what is neither pleasurable nor painful, such people attain a body that is neither pleasurable nor painful. When they attain a body that is pleasurable, such people develop desire for it. When they attain a body that is painful, such people develop aversion for it. When they attain a body that is neither pleasurable or painful, such people develop delusion regarding it. Falling under the power of desire, aversion, and delusion, they fail to see the flaws of formations, and so they fail to purify physical, verbal, and mental formations. In failing to purify physical, verbal, and mental formations, they descend into impure paths: those of hell beings, animals, and anguished spirits. Even if they manage to briefly gain freedom from such states and are born as gods or humans, they remain very attached to physical, verbal, and mental formations; they are still quite attached to the aggregate of formation. Bodhisattva great beings accurately understand this. We too should not emulate childish ordinary beings. Rather, we should train to purify physical, verbal, and mental formations and not become attached to the aggregate of formation. Having thoroughly investigated the flaws of the aggregate of formation, we should seek the path, which brings emancipation from the aggregate of formation.'

2.19 “Those who think in this way are called *those who accurately contemplate the aggregate of formation* and *those who accurately contemplate the impermanent nature of the aggregate of formation*. At that time, they will act appropriately by not grasping at, being attached, or clinging to formations, the origination of formations, [F.27.b] the cessation of formations, or the path leading to the cessation of formations. They will not be attached or cling to formations. They will also not be attached to the aggregate of formation. When contemplating this, they will be free from the marks of formations and realize how even formations lack the nature of the aggregate of formation. By realizing all formations to be emptiness, they will become weary, apprehensive, and dismissive of all formations. They will only form pure

physical, verbal, and mental formations. They will demolish the marks of formations and distance themselves from the marks of the aggregate of formation. Thus, any type of body such a person acquires will be pure. Why is this? Such people have purified their physical, verbal, and mental actions. They have purified their physical, verbal, and mental formations. They are free from the aggregate of formation, they are free from the marks of the aggregate of formation, and they destroy the marks of substantial existence of all phenomena. When accurately contemplating this matter, they realize that the aggregate of formation does not come from anywhere or go anywhere. They do not observe any formations that have the marks of truly arising or truly ceasing. They understand that formations lack the marks of arising and ceasing, for no formation has the marks of arising and ceasing. Once these people understand that formations lack the marks of arising and ceasing, they become weary and dismissive toward them. They will accurately understand and realize the marks of the origination and cessation of formations.

2.20 “Even though they see formations in terms of their characteristic of being unborn, they do not fully apprehend any characteristics of formations. Why is this? Lokadhara, it is because the aggregate of formation lacks true characteristics. [F.28.a] Just as a banana tree lacks both the characteristic of being solid and the characteristic of not being solid, so it is with the characteristics of formations—they lack both the characteristic of being solid and the characteristic of not being solid. Lokadhara, this is how bodhisattva great beings contemplate the discernment whereby one mentally engages the aggregate of formation.”

· Consciousness ·

2.21 “Lokadhara, how then do bodhisattva great beings accurately contemplate the discernment of the aggregate of consciousness? Bodhisattva great beings contemplate the aggregate of consciousness as a nonaggregate. They contemplate the aggregate of consciousness as a heap of error. They contemplate how the aggregate of consciousness is a heap of falsehood. Why is this so? Lokadhara, the aggregate of consciousness arises from mistaken perception. Because beings have been bound by the condition of false perception, they have previously created actions, due to which the aggregate of consciousness now manifests. Because it also depends upon current conditions, it is based on many causes and conditions. Therefore, the aggregate of consciousness arises from consciousness that is based on nonexistent and false imputations. It is called *consciousness* because it is cognizant. It exists adventitiously, based upon a confused conceptual mind.

Because it knows, it is called *consciousness*. It is called the *aggregate of consciousness* because it is conscious of myriad entities, because it initiates mental actions, because it thinks, because it generates marks from many conditions, and because it generates thinking in myriad forms. It is called the *aggregate of consciousness* because consciousness causes the forms perceived by consciousness to arise and it manifests the actions of mind, and because it is fond of thinking. It is called mind, mentality, and consciousness.¹⁵ By conceptualizing everything through its mental activity, [F.28.b] consciousness assembles phenomena and perceives them as characteristics, formations, and intrinsic natures. Thus, it is called the *aggregate of consciousness*. In this manner, the aggregate of consciousness is a nonaggregate. It is unborn, unarisen, and uncreated.

2.22 “It is called the *aggregate of consciousness* because it cognizes falsely, due to the condition of mistaken perception. Why is this? The aggregate of consciousness arises from many causes and conditions. It does not arise naturally, uninterruptedly, or continuously; rather it arises and ceases moment-by-moment, without generating the characteristics of the aggregate of consciousness. Why is this? Because no definitive manifestation of consciousness can be observed, and no characteristics of its manifestation can be observed. The wise reflect on it accurately, because they do not apprehend any such definitive manifestation or characteristics. Likewise, they understand that it lacks inherent nature, lacks its own characteristics, and possesses no solid nature. They understand the aggregate of consciousness to be a nonaggregate.

2.23 “Childish ordinary beings perceive what is not the aggregate of consciousness to be the aggregate of consciousness. They are bound by incorrect thinking and a false and mistaken outlook, which causes them to assiduously impute the aggregate of consciousness. Thereby they become attached to the aggregate of consciousness, dwell on the functions of consciousness, and rely upon the features of consciousness. By thus displaying a conceptual mindset, the aggregate of consciousness is generated. Such people conceptualize all sorts of things, which causes them to become attached to consciousness of the inner, consciousness of the outer, consciousness of the inner and outer, consciousness of the distant, and consciousness of the immediate. As consciousness imputes marks, beings generate the aggregate of consciousness. By means of their conceptual perception, such people impute it with the synonyms of *mind*, *mentality*, [F.29.a] and *consciousness*. They assiduously impute *this is mind*, *this is mentality*, and *this is consciousness*. In this fashion they perceive the arising of various characteristics of the mind. Childish ordinary beings are attached to the aggregate of consciousness—they are bound by the aggregate of

consciousness. Through the coming together of mind, mentality, and consciousness, the aggregate of consciousness arises in various forms. Due to being false conceptual entities, having an identical characteristic, and having a fixed characteristic, beings acquire this mind, mentality, and consciousness, and they also acquire the false concept of attachment to them.¹⁶ Such people depend and rely upon the aggregate of consciousness. Attached to the aggregate of consciousness, they grasp and cling to the past aggregate of consciousness as existent, they grasp and cling to the future aggregate of consciousness as existent, and they grasp and cling to the present aggregate of consciousness as existent. Childish ordinary beings become attached to things they see, hear, feel, and cognize as the aggregate of consciousness and thus construe them as being existent. Such people grasp and cling to things they see, hear, feel, and cognize. Bound by the aggregate of consciousness, they highly cherish what they cognize. Under the collective power of mind, mentality, and consciousness, they wander throughout saṃsāra, from this world to the next, and from there to here. Bound by the aggregate of consciousness, they fail to accurately understand the aggregate of consciousness. Since the aggregate of consciousness is false, then all things heard, seen, felt, and cognized have arisen from a mistaken cause, such that there is no accurate consciousness of them. [F.29.b] In this way, as such people fail to accurately apprehend, at times a virtuous consciousness will arise, at times a nonvirtuous consciousness will arise, and at times a consciousness that is neither virtuous nor nonvirtuous will arise. Although such people always follow after consciousness, they do not recognize the origin of consciousness or the true characteristics of consciousness.

2.24 “Lokadhara, when bodhisattva great beings accurately realize this, they understand that the aggregate of consciousness arises from false consciousness. They understand that the things seen, heard, felt, and cognized arise from many causes and conditions. They think, ‘Ordinary beings perceive phenomena where there are none, and have thus become attached to the aggregate of consciousness. We should not emulate childish ordinary beings; rather, we should accurately analyze the discernment of consciousness and the discernment of the aggregate of consciousness.’

2.25 “When bodhisattvas accurately contemplate in this manner, they understand the aggregate of consciousness to be false and mistaken. They understand it as having the characteristic of being unborn¹⁷ from the very beginning. They understand that the aggregate of consciousness is a nonaggregate. The aggregate of consciousness is a heap of reflections. The aggregate of consciousness is a heap of illusion. For example, if an illusionist conjures up an illusory person, the consciousness of that person is not

present within, without, or in-between. The nature of consciousness is analogous to that. It arises from many false conditions and conceptuality, and it is not a real entity. Consciousness is like a marionette,¹⁸ for it comes into being due to the gathering of many false and mistaken causes and conditions.

2.26 “When contemplating this, [F.30.a] bodhisattvas understand consciousness to be impermanent, painful, unclean, and without self. They understand the characteristic of consciousness to be illusory and realize the nature of consciousness to be illusory. At that time, bodhisattvas think: ‘Worldly beings are intoxicated and blinded by delusion. They all appear from consciousness that imputes—as a result of the gathering of mind, mentality, and consciousness, the three realms are nothing but consciousness. Mind, mentality, and consciousness are without form or location; they do not exist either inside or outside phenomena. Because childish ordinary beings are bound by their false perceptions, they grasp and cling to the aggregate of consciousness as *I* and *mine*. Such people cling to the aggregate of consciousness as existing internally, as existing externally, as existing both internally and externally, and as existing in self and other. Such people cling to the aggregate of consciousness as primary. Bound by consciousness, they are attached to the experience of the aggregate of consciousness and proclaim the characteristics of the aggregate of consciousness. Being attached to the experience of mind, mentality, and consciousness causes them to become attached and cling to the aggregate of consciousness. Such people are bound by consciousness. Because of their association with the aggregate of consciousness, they come under the power of mind, mentality, and consciousness. Due to the causes and conditions of mind, mentality, and consciousness, they are born as childish ordinary beings. If they generate lesser thoughts, they will acquire a lesser body. If they generate superior thoughts, they will acquire a superior body. If they generate middling thoughts, they will acquire a middling body. Due to following mind, mentality, and consciousness, [F.30.b] their dependence and reliance upon the sense sources arises. Because of their attachment to the aggregate of consciousness, they are not liberated from birth, aging, sickness, death, sorrow, lamentation, and suffering.’

2.27 “Bodhisattvas accurately understand these things about the aggregate of consciousness. By accurately understanding the characteristic of impermanence of the aggregate of consciousness, they do not grasp or cling to the aggregate of consciousness of the past. They understand the aggregate of consciousness to be a nonaggregate. They do not grasp or cling to the aggregate of consciousness of the future. They understand the aggregate of consciousness to be a nonaggregate. They do not dwell upon

the consciousness of the present either, for they accurately understand the characteristic of impermanence of the aggregate of consciousness. They accurately understand the characteristic of arising and ceasing of the aggregate of consciousness. Those who employ their minds in this fashion and accurately contemplate the aggregate of consciousness are said to *enter the correct path*. They accurately understand consciousness. They accurately understand the origination of consciousness. They accurately understand the cessation of consciousness. They accurately understand the path to the cessation of consciousness. Having accurately understood the characteristics of origination and cessation of the aggregate of consciousness, such people become skilled in destroying¹⁹ the aggregate of consciousness and eliminating all marks. They understand and realize the characteristics of the origination and cessation of the aggregate of consciousness. [F.31.a] At this point, bodhisattvas neither generate nor obstruct the aggregate of consciousness, for they realize the aggregate of consciousness to be primordially unborn. When realizing this, they do not realize consciousness in terms of its characteristic of ceasing; rather, they understand the aggregate of consciousness's characteristic of being unborn. Why is this? Lokadhara, the aggregate of consciousness is without birth, marks, or existence. The aggregate of consciousness's characteristic of being born is false; thus it is subsumed within the characteristic of being unborn. Lokadhara, the aggregate of consciousness lacks the characteristics of birth and existence. The characteristics of the aggregate of consciousness arise from many causes and conditions. Lokadhara, when bodhisattva great beings contemplate dependently originated phenomena in this manner, they realize the aggregate of consciousness to be a nonaggregate. Having carefully analyzed and investigated in this way, they will accurately understand and realize everything designated as consciousness. Once bodhisattvas understand how to disengage from the aggregate of consciousness, they will overcome all apprehensions and objects of knowledge. Lokadhara, this is how bodhisattva great beings understand the aggregate of consciousness. When they understand the aggregate of consciousness to be unborn, uncreated, unarisen, imperceptible, and ungraspable, they see that it arises from many conditions and appears due to the gathering of many conditions. Although it comes into existence due to the conditions of things seen, heard, felt, and cognized, it is primordially empty. When contemplating the aggregate of consciousness in this manner, they understand the aggregate of consciousness to be uncreated and unarisen. They do not cling to it or become attached to it as primary.

Lokadhara, this is how bodhisattva great beings accurately contemplate the discernment of, and engagement with, the aggregate of consciousness.”
[F.31.b]

· The Five Aggregates ·

2.28 “Such bodhisattvas, who skillfully engage with the five aggregates and skillfully contemplate the five aggregates for appropriation in the correct manner, are said to be skilled in engaging with the origination, cessation, and path with regard to the five aggregates. By eliminating all grasping at marks concerning the aggregates, they accurately understand the means related to the five aggregates. Through such means, they will not cling to, grasp at, crave for, or become bound by the five aggregates for appropriation. They accurately understand form and its characteristic of impermanence. Therefore, should attachment to form happen to arise for bodhisattvas, they will immediately dispel and eliminate it. Similarly, they accurately understand feeling, perception, formation, and consciousness, along with their characteristic of impermanence. Should attachment to feeling, perception, formation, or consciousness arise for bodhisattvas, they will immediately dispel it and disrupt it. By doing away with their desire for and attachment to the five aggregates for appropriation, bodhisattvas align themselves with a skillful understanding of the definitive nature of the five aggregates. When contemplating in this manner, they come to understand even the subtle marks of arising and ceasing of the five aggregates for appropriation.

2.29 “Lokadhara, how do bodhisattva great beings contemplate the discernment of the subtle marks of arising and ceasing of the five aggregates for appropriation? Bodhisattva great beings understand the five aggregates’ characteristic of arising and ceasing by seeing how—when beings enter the womb and begin the embryonic stage—their previous set of five aggregates has ceased and a new set of five aggregates arises. They understand that while the previous consciousness has of course ceased, [F.32.a] the five aggregates are not characterized by disruption or cessation. While the consciousness indeed adheres to and abides in the embryo, they understand the five aggregates to be nonabiding and impermanent. Thereby they realize that the five aggregates for appropriation arise and cease moment-by-moment once they have entered the womb. Likewise, from the embryonic stage until the child is born, and from birth to death, the five aggregates for appropriation are characterized by arising and ceasing moment-by-moment. The five aggregates for appropriation arise and cease each and every

moment. This is called contemplating the discernment of the subtle characteristics of arising and ceasing of the five aggregates for appropriation.

2.30 “Lokadhara, the subtle characteristics of arising and ceasing of the five aggregates for appropriation are as follows: Once the previous five aggregates for appropriation have ceased, beings enter the womb without any corporeality. Then, as they initially become conjoined with consciousness, the five aggregates for appropriation arise and cease. In terms of the embryonic stage, the five aggregates for appropriation are synonymously labeled *a human being*. Why is this? Lokadhara, without the support of consciousness, they would not remain, for it is said that the five aggregates for appropriation depend upon consciousness. Lokadhara, the subtle characteristics of arising and ceasing of the five aggregates for appropriation pertaining to the gods²⁰ in the formless realm should be understood in the same way. Lokadhara, if the insight of the solitary buddhas is unable to know the subtle characteristics of arising and ceasing of the five aggregates for appropriation, then there’s no need to mention the insight of hearers. It is only the blessed buddhas who can properly understand the subtle characteristics of arising and ceasing of the five aggregates for appropriation while in the womb, along with the momentary arising and ceasing of the aggregates of the gods in the formless realms. This is so because their omniscient insight transcends all worldly insight. [F.32.b] Bodhisattva great beings gain the acceptance that phenomena are unborn and enter the domain of the wisdom of the buddhas. Yet even they are unable to fully understand—as the buddhas do—the subtle characteristics of the five aggregates for appropriation while in the womb, nor that which pertains to the gods in the formless realms. Lokadhara, the insight of the blessed buddhas is not dependent on other factors. Having naturally discovered wisdom, insight, and skill, they fully awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood. There is nothing that the wisdom of the blessed buddhas does not understand. With the unhindered wisdom of the blessed ones, they achieve insight that is certain with regard to all phenomena and has the power to control all phenomena. Why is this? Because they have practiced an incredibly profound Dharma for immeasurable, fathomless, and countless thousands of eons.”

· The Five Aggregates for Appropriation ·

2.31 “Lokadhara, if childish ordinary beings lack even the means to contemplate the five aggregates for appropriation, there’s no need to mention their ability to contemplate the subtle characteristics of arising and ceasing of the five

aggregates for appropriation. Why is this? Childish ordinary beings do not understand the five aggregates for appropriation, or the truth of the five aggregates for appropriation. Childish ordinary beings do not understand appropriation, or the five aggregates for appropriation.

2.32 “Lokadhara, what then is *appropriation*? Appropriation is called *appropriation* because it appropriates self, others, views, discipline, the five aggregates, the eighteen elements, and the twelve causes and conditions. Any phenomena construed to be desired, whether outer or inner, is appropriated; existence is appropriated; as are things seen, heard, felt, cognized; as are self and possessions. [F.33.a] Lokadhara, childish ordinary beings fail to see and understand this false appropriation. They appropriate phenomena via mistaken causes and conditions. Because such people are bound by appropriation, they appropriate formations due to the condition of ignorance, they appropriate consciousness due to the condition of formations, and they appropriate name-and-form due to the condition of consciousness. Beings grasp and crave for the coarse marks of name-and-form, and appropriate them. They appropriate form, conjoin themselves with form, and are bound by form. Moreover, they appropriate the four remaining formless aggregates, conceptualizing and labeling feeling, perception, formation, and consciousness. Lokadhara, if there were no buddhas, beings would fail to know and understand. They would remain incapable of accurately contemplating the five aggregates for appropriation. In order to destroy beings’ dependence and reliance on form; in order to destroy beings’ dependence and reliance on feeling, perception, formation, and consciousness; and in order to destroy the single characteristic that pertains to them all, the blessed buddhas analyzed and taught as follows:²¹

2.33 “ ‘That which all of you depend and rely upon is form. Form is a gathering of the four great elements. Feeling, perception, formation, and consciousness are mere labels. The five aggregates for appropriation are taught in order to present the marks of name-and-form. You ordinary beings should not depend upon or become attached to the five aggregates for appropriation, which are unstable and insubstantial.’

2.34 “Lokadhara, why have the thus-gone ones thus taught the aggregates for appropriation? Lokadhara, childish ordinary beings arise from mistaken perception, and they wander throughout saṃsāra because they are caught in the net of ignorance. Why do they wander? Because of grasping and attachment to the marks of the five aggregates for appropriation. [F.33.b] They think: ‘I will be happy if I depend on this.’ By observing pleasurable marks, such people become attached to the five aggregates for appropriation and rely upon them. By observing and becoming attached to painful marks

and marks that are neither pleasurable nor painful, they rely upon the five aggregates for appropriation and become attached to them. The locus upon which childish ordinary beings rely is the five aggregates for appropriation.

2.35

“Lokadhara, childish ordinary beings are born blind: they fail to understand what the five aggregates are and where they come from. By not understanding the five aggregates accurately, they grasp and become attached to the aggregates. Therefore, they are called *aggregates for appropriation*. There is no appropriation there, and there is also nothing to appropriate that can be observed. So, they are bound by attachment to mistaken perception and incorrect conceptuality. Stupefied by ignorance and delusion, they appropriate in terms of *I, mine, and self and other*. Therefore, these are called aggregates for appropriation. The five aggregates have nothing that can be appropriated and no true characteristics. Therefore, the wise understand the five aggregates for appropriation as nonaggregates. They understand the five aggregates for appropriation as mistaken aggregates. They understand the five aggregates for appropriation as five aggregates of ignorance. Because childish ordinary beings are bound by this, they become attached to and dwell upon the five aggregates for appropriation. Because they become attached to and dwell on them, they do not understand what the aggregates for appropriation are like. Because they become attached to and dwell on the five aggregates, they take birth and circle. Because they become attached to and dwell on the five aggregates, they wander throughout all the destinies of sentient existence. On what do they dwell and to what do they become attached? They dwell on and become attached to sight. They dwell on and become attached to hearing. They dwell on and become attached to feeling. They dwell on and become attached to consciousness. They dwell on and become attached to craving.²² They dwell on and become attached to ignorance. [F.34.a] Because they are bound by the fetters of existence, childish ordinary beings are attached to the five aggregates for appropriation. Obscured by their obscurations, they are stupefied by ignorance and become ignorant and unaware. What is the source of their attachment? What are they bound by? It is due to ignorance that they circle in repeated births as hell beings, animals, anguished spirits, gods, and humans. Bound by saṃsāra, they dwell in and become attached to saṃsāra, and so they cannot give it up, discard it, or disrupt it. Thus, they fail to accurately understand the five aggregates for appropriation.”

- 2.36 “Because they fail to understand the true characteristics of the five aggregates for appropriation, they are harmed by all sorts of suffering. Having fallen into the pit of falsity, they fail to understand the path leading to the exit. In failing to understand the path of emancipation, such people have wandered continuously from beginningless time throughout saṃsāra. Thus, they are not liberated from birth, aging, sickness, death, lamentation, distress, or suffering. They are not liberated from the fathomless abyss of saṃsāra. They are not liberated from the great mass of suffering, and repeatedly they dwell in suffering and become attached to it. They are addicted to suffering. They are enslaved by suffering.
- 2.37 “What is meant by *suffering*? It is the five aggregates for appropriation. Suffering arises at the time of birth and ceases at the time of cessation. Lokadhara, due to that cause and that condition, I deliver this Dharma teaching to my disciples: Monks, you must accurately investigate the aggregate of form. You must accurately understand form’s characteristic of impermanence. Should you find yourself attached to form, immediately dispel and eliminate it. Likewise, you must accurately investigate feeling, perception, formation, and consciousness. You must accurately understand the characteristic of impermanence with regard to feeling, perception, [F.34.b] formation, and consciousness. Should you find yourself attached to feeling, perception, formation, or consciousness, you must immediately dispel and eliminate that attachment. By dispelling and eliminating attachment, the mind will be truly liberated.
- 2.38 “Lokadhara, if people understand the meaning of the teachings I have given and earnestly employ what I have taught, they will be liberated from birth, aging, sickness, death, lamentation, distress, and suffering. If people do not practice or cultivate what I have taught, they will remain bound by the chains of form and craving. Blinded by their ignorance, they will remain attached to the five aggregates for appropriation. People who remain attached to the five aggregates for appropriation will not be liberated from the abyss of saṃsāra. Lokadhara, therefore, worldly beings argue with me, yet I do not argue with worldly beings.”

. The World .

- 2.39 “What is meant by *the world*? *The world* is attachment to the five aggregates for appropriation. Attached to the five aggregates, people are bound by the five aggregates. Thereby they fail to understand the nature of the five aggregates, and they do not understand that emptiness is the characteristic of the five aggregates; and so they argue with me. Such people contradict the teachings of the Buddha. They argue with the Buddha and thus fall into

great misery. Whether the Thus-Gone One abides in the world or has passed into parinirvāṇa, whoever realizes the five aggregates to be false, empty, and nonexistent; arisen from error, ignorance, and false imputations,²³ and deceptive to childish ordinary beings will understand the five aggregates to be like nonaggregates. Such people will not argue with the Buddha. Since they will not contradict the teachings of the Buddha, they will be liberated from the suffering of hell beings, animals, and anguished spirits. [F.35.a] Lokadhara, the Blessed Buddha does not debate with others. Because he has ceased all debate, he is called *Buddha*, and he teaches to all beings the genuine Dharma, namely this: 'All that you have previously appropriated was mistaken. Due to being mistaken, all beings cling to and depend upon the five aggregates, and thereby they repeatedly cycle throughout the world.' In this way, people who cling to and depend upon the five aggregates will develop and cling to myriad wrong views. They cling to and depend upon various terms and words. They cling to and depend upon sorrow, lamentation, and suffering. Thus, people are afflicted with various wrong views and are thus harmed by many forms of suffering; but still, their views never become their protector, refuge, base, or support, for only the blessed buddhas can protect and offer refuge. Childish ordinary beings are small-minded and have limited understanding. They are attached to the five sense pleasures and cling to the five aggregates, which are rife with problems. Childish ordinary beings argue with those who protect, offer refuge, provide support, and deliver from all suffering. Lokadhara, I have raised my hand. I am not the teacher of those who view in terms of the five aggregates, view the five aggregates in terms of marks, or who become attached to the five aggregates. They are not my students. They are not my ordained. They are not my followers. They do not take refuge in me. Such people have set out on the path to the lower realms and entered the incorrect path. They do not follow the truth. They are mistaken. They fail to understand what the Buddha knows and teaches. They fail to understand what the Buddha knows and teaches about the five aggregates. [F.35.b] They fail to understand what the Buddha teaches concerning the ultimate. Thus, by not following the Buddha's teachings, they should not receive veneration and offerings. I do not permit them to be ordained, much less to receive the honor of veneration and offerings from others. Why is this? Because such people are included in the ranks of the non-Buddhists. Such people, who produce marks concerning the five aggregates, are known as those who are attached and cling to the five aggregates.

2.40 "Lokadhara, when the Dharma is coming to ruin in the final five-hundred-year period, many who have taken ordination in my teachings will produce marks regarding the five aggregates. They will speak of the marks of the five

aggregates as being real.²⁴ They will be attached to the five aggregates. Those that have entered such a base and false path while taking ordination in my teachings will then drape Dharma robes around their necks as they enjoy spending their time going from household to household. You should know that even though such people are no different from non-Buddhists, many will be generous and venerate them due to the power of my Dharma. Lokadhara, I declare that those who have views of the five aggregates, who teach the five aggregates as being real,²⁵ or who are attached to the five aggregates, are not allowed to accept so much as a cup of water from someone else. Why is this? Such people lack any acceptance whatsoever of the principles of my teaching. Thus, such people contradict my teachings and abandon the Dharma of the noble ones.

2.41 “Lokadhara, therefore, bodhisattva great beings should make a great aspiration, vowing that in such dire future times, they will uphold and protect my very profound discourses, and to disrupt beings’ views of the five aggregates, they will teach them the Dharma. Lokadhara, in all my discourses I explained how to eliminate all marks of the aggregates and how to abandon attachment to the aggregates. Much debate then arose among many householders and the ordained concerning this discourse; therefore, they did not perceive it as being true. Bodhisattva great beings [F.36.a] should thus make the following promise and great aspiration: ‘For the sake of the benefit and happiness of beings in the dire times of the future who will be attached to and have wrong views about the aggregates, and in order to dispel their attachment to the five aggregates, I will bring benefit and happiness to them with the Dharma, in whatever way will tame them.’ Therefore, Lokadhara, those bodhisattva great beings who wish to understand the truth of phenomena, who wish to become skilled in discerning the characteristics of phenomena, who wish to attain the power of mindfulness, who wish for the insight that skillfully discerns the categories of phenomena, and who wish to attain unbroken mindfulness from the time they abandon this body until they reach unsurpassed and perfect awakening should investigate the five aggregates for appropriation in terms of their characteristics of impermanence, suffering, selflessness, falsity, hollowness, final emptiness, and being primordially unborn. When they constantly contemplate this accurately, they will dispel their attachment and craving for the five aggregates for appropriation. Additionally, they will achieve a connection to this category of profound teaching.

2.42 “Lokadhara, countless immeasurable eons ago, the thus-gone one, the worthy one, the perfect buddha Royal Mountain of Great Intelligence appeared in the world. He was learned and virtuous, a blissful one, a knower of the world, an unsurpassed being, a charioteer who guides beings, a

teacher of gods and humans, and a blessed buddha. Lokadhara, the blessed Royal Mountain of Great Intelligence had eight trillion hearers in his saṅgha, all of whom were worthy ones who had exhausted the defilements. Furthermore, he had 800 quadrillion followers who were irreversible on the level of training. [F.36.b] There were also one sextillion beings in his assembly of bodhisattva great beings. The lifespan of the blessed Royal Mountain of Great Intelligence was eighty thousand years. Lokadhara, at that time there was a king named Bringer of Benefit, who ruled over twenty thousand cities, each of which was filled with happy beings. Each city was encircled by seven concentric walls that were twelve leagues in circumference. They were fashioned from the four precious substances. There were seven layers of moats and fences that were covered with a net of various precious substances. The cities, moats, trees, walls, and covering nets were fashioned from the four precious substances: gold, beryl, crystal, and coral. There were five hundred parks in each city wherein the trees were made of the seven precious substances. Each and every tree was adorned with precious fabrics. In each park were five hundred jeweled ponds filled with water of the eight qualities. Lokadhara, King Bringer of Benefit had eighty thousand queens and members of his court. At that time, his highest queen had two sons: Limitless Intelligence and Limitless Power. Lokadhara, when the two boys had reached the age of sixteen, they beheld the Thus-Gone One in a dream. Since he was incomparably handsome, he appeared to them like a banner made of gold from the Jambū River. This delighted them to the point that they awoke and proclaimed the following verses.

2.43 “The elder brother said this:

“ ‘I dreamt that I saw the supreme human.
He was golden, ornamented by the signs of a hundred merits.
He was replete with limitless virtues.
When I saw him, my mind was filled with joy.’ [F.37.a]

2.44 “The younger brother said this:

“ ‘I dreamt that I saw the sun-like Buddha.
He was excellent, the most handsome one can be.
I was overjoyed when I saw him vividly,
Just like Meru, the king of mountains.’

2.45 “Lokadhara, the two princes Limitless Intelligence and Limitless Power then went before their father and mother to proclaim to their parents the story of what they saw in their dreams. They said, ‘We dreamt that we saw the Buddha. Please permit us to go see the Blessed One. It is extremely rare for a thus-gone one to appear in the world. In our heedlessness, we have

senselessly and unwittingly fallen into the swamp of the five desires. We are bound by the fetter of form. We are bound by the fetters of feeling, perception, formation, and consciousness. We have not seen the Buddha before, because we have been heedless, living the household life.’

2.46 “Lokadhara, once the two princes announced this to their parents, they went before the blessed Royal Mountain of Great Intelligence. Arriving in the Blessed One’s presence, they bowed, touching the crowns of their heads to his feet and invited the Buddha and his saṅgha of monks with an offering of the four kinds of veneration for a duration of three months. They offered clothing, food, bedding, and medicine in the case of illness. In one of King Bringer of Benefit’s parks at the edge of the city, they hung banners, raised parasols, and arranged jeweled lotuses. Offering this to the Buddha and his saṅgha of monks, they requested them to stay. For three months, the two princes served the Buddha and his saṅgha of monks with offerings of supplies, and they went forth into the homeless life under the Blessed One’s teachings.

2.47 “Lokadhara, the blessed Royal Mountain of Great Intelligence understood the two princes’ pure motivation and aspiration²⁶ [F.37.b] and extensively instructed them in the discourse called *The Skillful Means of Bodhisattvas*, in which the five aggregates, twelve sense sources, and eighteen elements are explained. For forty thousand years, they did not sleep, eat to fullness, or rest; they did not even sit down or walk around anywhere.²⁷ Then, for forty thousand years, they thought of nothing other than the characteristics of falsity and emptiness of the five aggregates for appropriation. Having understood the five aggregates to arise from mistaken perception, they spent their lives practicing pure conduct, while understanding and realizing the characteristics of the five aggregates for appropriation. When they passed away, they were born in the Heaven of Joy. After the Blessed One passed into nirvāṇa, they were born into the family of an important householder here in Jambudvīpa, and once again, at the age of sixteen, saw the Thus-Gone One in a dream, where they dreamt that he taught them the discourse called *The Skillful Means of Bodhisattvas*, in which the five aggregates and the eighteen elements are explained. Having heard this teaching in the dream, they awoke with a start. They engaged in pure conduct for a full ten thousand years, following the teachings of the Blessed One, carefully investigating the discourse called *The Skillful Means of Bodhisattva Conduct*, in which the five aggregates, twelve sense sources, and eighteen elements are explained. Then, once they passed away, they were born in the Heaven of the Thirty-Three. When their divine lifespan was spent, they were born once again here in Jambudvīpa into an important, high-caste Brahmin family. One thousand years after the Dharma of the blessed Royal Mountain of Great

Intelligence had disappeared, the two princes received ordination based upon their previous causes and conditions. Their understanding grew vast, with insight as vast as the ocean. They became skilled in discerning and reflecting upon the characteristics of the aggregates, and came to understand them directly and accurately. Lokadhara, they established twenty thousand humans and two hundred thousand gods in unsurpassed and perfect awakening. [F.38.a]

2.48 “Lokadhara, these two bodhisattvas were close companions wherever they were born. They met and served a quadrillion buddhas. They then gained the acceptance that phenomena are primordially unborn. Once they gained the acceptance that phenomena are unborn, they once again met a quadrillion buddhas, and eventually went on to attain unsurpassed and perfect awakening. The two of them sequentially awakened to buddhahood during the same eon, where one became known as Limitless Voice, and the other, Limitless Light. Lokadhara, it must therefore be understood that bodhisattva great beings who wish swiftly to attain unsurpassed and perfect awakening should exert themselves in cultivating the pure and excellent Dharma. Additionally, they should become skilled in understanding the characteristics of the aggregates and skilled in the actual characteristics of conditioned phenomena.”

2.49 *This was chapter two: “Investigating the Five Aggregates.”*

3. CHAPTER THREE: THE EIGHTEEN ELEMENTS

· The Eye Element ·

- 3.1 “Lokadhara, regarding the elements, how are bodhisattva great beings learned in the eighteen elements? When bodhisattva great beings practice correct contemplation of the eighteen elements, they think, ‘The eye element cannot be observed to be the eye element. There is also no *I* or *mine* in the eye element. It is impermanent, insubstantial, and empty of inherent nature. Therefore, what is imputed as the characteristic of the eye element cannot be observed in the eye element. The eye element is untrue and totally nonexistent, for it is born from false thinking. The eye element lacks true characteristics, as the space element is the eye element. For instance, just as the space element lacks true characteristics and is not an entity, the eye element also lacks true characteristics and is not an entity. Why is this? [F.38.b] Because no real entity can be found in the eye element, the eye element does not exist in any location or direction. It does not exist internally, externally, or somewhere in-between. The eye element lacks true characteristics and is not an entity. Thus, no entity of the eye element can be apprehended, for it arises from many causes and conditions. The eye element is neither past, nor present, nor future, and there is no intrinsic nature of the eye to observe in the eye element. The eye element depends upon the ripening of the results of past actions and current conditions, whereupon the eye element is imputed. The eye element is a nonelement. No eye element can be observed in the eye element. The so-called eye element refers to the domain of consciousness. The *eye element* manifests when three factors come together: a clear eye faculty, an apparent form, and the involvement of the mind faculty. The eye element lacks anything that can be called a *real eye element*, and the wise understand the eye element to be the absence of the eye element.’ ”

· The Form Element ·

3.2 “Lokadhara, if bodhisattva great beings contemplate the discernment of the eye element in this manner, they will understand the form element to be a nonelement. Why is this? There is no element of form that can be observed²⁸ in the form element, for the form element is uncompounded and uncreated.²⁹ Because form is devoid of any true characteristics, it is called the *form element*. If form is insubstantial, lacking even concepts of it, what need is there to mention the so-called form element? Because the so-called form element is not an entity, the characteristic of form does not exist within form, outside of form, or somewhere in-between. Rather, it is imputed. Form appears due to the combination of a location where forms can appear, the presence of an uncorrupted eye faculty, [F.39.a] and the involvement of the mind consciousness. This is called the *characteristic of form*. It is similar to a reflection in a mirror. If the mirror is unblemished, the characteristic of form will appear in it. But form in fact has no true characteristics; the reflection of a form appears in the mirror even as there is no person there. Further, even if there is a mirror outside, the characteristic of form arises from within. Similarly, when an uncorrupted eye faculty is present in a location where forms are visible, much like the reflection in a mirror, the resulting apprehension can be labeled the *characteristic of form*. Form is devoid of elements, shapes, and true characteristics. These are the so-called characteristics of form. Because the characteristics of form are devoid of self, they are called the *characteristics of form*. Because they are perceived according to the individual in question, they are called the *characteristics of form*. Any person who understands the characteristics of form also understands the characteristics of the absence of form. If one understands the characteristics of form as an unborn element, one will also understand the characteristics of form to be an uncreated element. Why is this? The characteristics of form are neither past, nor present, nor future. The demonstrated lack of inherent characteristics, the demonstrated characteristic of falsity, and the demonstrated imputed characteristics are called *the form element*. In this way bodhisattvas discern the form element.”

· The Eye-Consciousness Element ·

3.3 “Bodhisattvas then discern the characteristics of the eye consciousness in the following manner: the eye consciousness has no eye consciousness, no eye-consciousness element, and no characteristic of being permanent. The eye-consciousness element has no entities or real phenomena. The eye-consciousness element is indemonstrable. [F.39.b] The eye-consciousness element cannot be gathered or separated, for it lacks a substantial basis. We

call it the *eye-consciousness element* because it depends upon the causes and conditions of previous actions, concurrent conditions, and form. Childish ordinary beings call it the *eye-consciousness element* because they follow their mistaken minds. The noble ones, however, understand and realize it as a nonelement. Why is that? Because the eye-consciousness element is indefinite. They call it the *eye-consciousness element* because it is born from and depends upon conditions. The location of the domain of consciousness is the eye-consciousness element, because this consciousness lacks a definite nature. It is said to lack a definite characteristic because it is unborn, because it demonstrates falsehood, because it falsely imputes the characteristic of form, and because it demonstrates conditions.³⁰

3.4 “The Thus-Gone One skillfully makes distinctions based upon beings’ understandings, and so he teaches such characteristics in order to destroy all characteristics of unity as well as difference. The eighteen elements are taught to demonstrate that³¹ consciousness lacks true characteristics, but the pure eye faculty still cognizes the characteristics of form; the eye-consciousness element is thus taught in order to integrate these two things, and in order to demonstrate the true nature of the eye consciousness. The eye-consciousness element is the locus of the visual experience. Even the eye-consciousness element, which is conscious of form, is described as a nonelement. Why is this? The wise do not observe the eye-consciousness element as the eye-consciousness element. Since the eye-consciousness element cannot be observed as the eye-consciousness element, [F.40.a] it cannot be found to be an entity. Why is this? The eye-consciousness element lacks true characteristics. The eye-consciousness element is nothing more than a mere imputation. The expression *element* is merely an expression that means *non-appropriation*. When there is something to be seen, the characteristic of the eye consciousness arises from the function of the eye consciousness and mind. This is called *eye consciousness*. Knowledge of conditional characteristics arises from the gathering of three things: the eye element, the form element, and the eye-consciousness element. Although they are devoid of the substance of an element, it is due to the categories of the eye element, the form element, and the eye-consciousness element that beings can enter the genuine path. Yet in this, there is not truly an eye element, a form element, or an eye-consciousness element. All the thus-gone ones skillfully explain how to understand, see, and discern characteristics. Those who understand and realize this teaching of characteristics will understand the three realms to be without elements. Why is this? Because the realms lack the characteristics of elements, and the elements cannot be observed as the characteristics of the realms. The ear element, sound element, and ear-consciousness element; the nose element, odor element,

and nose-consciousness element; the tongue element, taste element, and tongue-consciousness element; and the body element, tactile element, and body-consciousness element should also be understood in this way.”

· The Mind Element ·

- 3.5 “Lokadhara, how do bodhisattva great beings discern the mind element? Bodhisattvas think, ‘The mind element lacks true characteristics because it has no substance whatsoever. [F.40.b] The mind element lacks an actual element and anything called a *mind element*. As for the so-called mind element, for example, once one has placed a seed into the earth, and it has been moistened by the water in the soil, warmed by the sun, and stimulated by the wind, a sprout will gradually grow. The sprout has not arisen from the seed, and the seed is not the same as the sprout. Once the sprout arises, the seed perishes. Yet, the seed is not other than the sprout, and the sprout is not other than the seed. Just as the seed does not exist within the sprout, so it is with the mind element. Because it produces mental actions, it indirectly represents the mind consciousness, just as the seed indirectly represents the sprout; thus it is designated the *mind element*. There is no mind aside from the mind element, but the mind element cannot be known as *mind*; it is designated *mind element* as a label.³² This so-called mind element does not exist within the mind, outside the mind, or somewhere in-between. But it is called mind element because it is produced out of the causes and conditions of previous actions, because it knows mental actions, because it cognizes what can be perceived, because it combines labels with characteristics, and because it arouses observations in the present moment. It is characterized by indeterminate mental activity and a combination of many causes and conditions. Because the mind element arises from a combination of many factors, it conforms to how beings cognize. Ultimately, there is no *mind element*. Why is this? Because it is devoid of substance. The mind element is unborn, because it is devoid of birth. The so-called mind element is a label that is applied on the relative level. On the ultimate level, there is no real mind element. It cannot be observed as past, present, or future. The wise understand the mind element to be devoid of an element.’ ”

· The Mental-Object Element ·

- 3.6 “In discerning and understanding the mental-object element, bodhisattvas understand the mental-object element to be a nonelement. Since a mental object lacks intrinsic nature, no intrinsic nature can be observed.³³ [F.41.a] The mental-object element is an indeterminate element. Because the mental-

object element cannot be observed as inherently existent, it also cannot be observed to be any definite thing. Still, the *mental object element* is described and taught in order to bring understanding to beings who see mistakenly and who are bound by falsity. The mental-object element is explained in order to establish ordinary beings with an understanding of the absence of elements. Why is this? The mental-object element has no mental-object element, for the so-called mental-object element arises from a gathering of many conditions. Phenomena that arise from a gathering of many conditions have no intrinsic nature. Because causes and conditions have no intrinsic nature, causes and conditions arise from a stream of mistaken perception that is itself a gathering of many factors. The Thus-Gone One thus teaches the mental-object element in order to ripen beings, using conventional language to illustrate the absence of elements. Even though the mental-object element does not exist internally, externally, or somewhere in-between, in order to cause beings to understand and see virtuous and nonvirtuous phenomena, he explains with recourse to the *mental-object element* the absence of all phenomenal characteristics.³⁴ Since they ultimately have the characteristic of emptiness, the mental-object element is taught to ultimately be emptiness. Why is this? The mental-object element is totally nonexistent, because there are no actual marks of existence in the mental-object element. For instance, just as space has no true characteristics, but is still called *space*, the mental-object element likewise has no real marks. The mental-object element is taught in order to destroy the marks of mental objects, for the mental-object element is a nonelement. Why is this? The mental-object element does not exist in the past, present, or future. And yet, because of being formed in dependence on many conditions, the category of *mental-object element* is designated, in accordance with the *mental-object element* imputed by beings. The wise understand the mental-object element to be a nonelement, [F.41.b] for the mental-object element is not singular or multiple. The mental-object element does not have many marks of the mental-object element, nor does it have even a few. Through the skillful means of demonstrating elements, the mental-object element is described as an *element*. Those practitioners who understand and realize the mental-object element see and understand it to be a nonelement. There are no conceptual marks related to the mental-object element throughout the three realms. But because beings imagine there to be mental objects, due to a combination of many causes and conditions, the *mental-object element* is taught. The mental-object element is thus explained to show how mental objects are differentiated and have no definite characteristics.

3.7 “The wise do not see mental objects as arising, because they see the mental-object element in terms of its marks. For them, the mental objects that arise are unborn. Why is this? It is because the mental-object element is devoid of marks. The wise understand and realize the characteristic of mental phenomena to be free of marks. Therefore, concerning the absence of conceptual marks with regard to the mental-object element, it is called the *mental-object element* because it lacks both marks and concepts. The mental-object element has no basis for dwelling, no dwelling, no basis for arising, and no basis for dependence. The mental-object element has no birth, because the mental-object element is primordially unborn. Why is this? Because the mental-object element is devoid of elements. Moreover, because the mental-object element is formed, it does not exist. Moreover, because it is not formed, not dispersed, not assembled, and not fixed, it is the mental-object element. Thus do bodhisattva great beings discern and understand the lack of an element to be the mental-object element.”

. The Mind-Consciousness Element .

3.8 “Lokadhara, how do bodhisattva great beings discern the mind-consciousness element? Bodhisattva great beings think, ‘The mind-consciousness element is an unborn element; it is an unfixed element. [F.42.a] As the mind-consciousness element is devoid of substantial existence and actual qualities, the mind-consciousness element is used to demonstrate the characteristic of the absence of qualities. Why is this? The mind-consciousness element cannot be observed as the mind-consciousness element. The mind-consciousness element is called the *mind-consciousness element* because it is false, nonexistent, mistaken, and has mind as its forefront, whereby it perceives mental objects. It is called the *mind-consciousness element* because it conforms with childish ordinary beings.’

3.9 “Noble beings understand and realize the mind-consciousness element to be a nonelement; they understand and realize the mind-consciousness element to be false and nonexistent. However, since it demonstrates the phenomena of causes and conditions, and since it has mind as its forefront, and thus knows the coming together of many conditions, it is called the *mind-consciousness element*. Moreover, it is taught as such because it accords with beings’ perception. The wise understand the mind-consciousness element as a nonelement. It arises from the gathering of many causes and conditions as well as from imputation. When the elements are perceived to be devoid of marks, that is the ultimate, for elements have no characteristics on the ultimate level. The so-called mind-consciousness element is taught as a relative phenomenon in order to ripen beings, so that beings can

understand the mind-consciousness element as a nonelement. Also, the so-called mind-consciousness element is taught so that the elements can be destroyed with just a few phenomena, and so that one can disengage from them. Why is this? Noble beings seek what cannot be perceived,³⁵ for the mind-consciousness element does not exist within the mind-consciousness element, outside of the mind-consciousness element, or somewhere in-between.

3.10 “The wise realize the mind-consciousness element to be an unconjoined element. [F.42.b] They know that the mind consciousness does not perceive the mind element, and the mind element does not perceive the mind consciousness.³⁶ They understand that it is born from a combination of many causes and conditions, which arise from mistaken perception; in other words, it arises from a combination of both causes and conditions, preceded by the mind. The mind-consciousness element is thus taught because it demonstrates to beings the marks of consciousness, which are attached to falsity and are born from imputation. The mind consciousness does not exist in the past, present, or future. The mind consciousness does not come from anywhere, go anywhere, or remain in any place. It has the characteristic of being primordially unborn. In the mind consciousness there is nothing with an inherent, fixed existence. Why is this? The mind-consciousness element has the mark of nonduality, which is to say, it is free of marks. That mark does not exist on account of dualistic marks; this indemonstrability is itself the mind-consciousness element. Once the wise realize and understand the mind-consciousness element in this way, they understand that the mind-consciousness element cannot be found in any phenomenon, object, or location; it is neither the same as nor different from any phenomenon.

3.11 “The noble ones realize that the mind-consciousness element is unborn, does not come, does not go, and cannot be observed. Why is this? Because on the ultimate level, the mind-consciousness element cannot be observed; it is imperceptible and indemonstrable. Because the wise do not observe the mind-consciousness element to have a function, they understand the mind-consciousness element to be uncreated. Because the mind-consciousness element lacks the mark of birth, [F.43.a] they understand and realize it to be unborn. Lokadhara, this is how bodhisattva great beings discern and understand the mind-consciousness element.”

· The Three Realms ·

3.12 “When bodhisattvas contemplate the three realms, they discern and understand the desire realm,³⁷ the form realm, and the formless realm to be unborn and nonexistent. How do they contemplate them? They think as

follows: 'There is no desire realm in the desire realm. There is no form realm in the form realm. There is no formless realm in the formless realm. However, by using realms to demonstrate those phenomena that are devoid of a realm, the desire realm is shown to those who prefer to enter the desire realm, the form realm is shown to those who prefer to enter the form realm, and the formless realm is shown to those who prefer to enter the formless realm. The absence of realms is indicated and articulated by using realms. The wise understand the desire realm, the form realm, and the formless realm to be utterly nonexistent realms. The wise do not observe the desire realm, the form realm, or the formless realm. By understanding that the three realms are devoid of inherent existence and fixed qualities, but arise from many causes and conditions, the wise thus understand the three realms to be nonrealms. There are no realms, but the three realms manifest due to falsity and mistaken perception. Why is this? Since the wise do not observe the three realms, the three realms cannot be observed or described as belonging to the past, present, or future. The noble ones understand the three realms to be false, nonexistent, devoid of intrinsic nature, free of all phenomena, and arisen from mistaken perception. The Thus-Gone One distinguishes between and explains them in order to disrupt the mistaken perception of many beings [F.43.b] and enable them to see and understand the three realms. The teaching on the existence of the three realms, moreover, describes the three realms so that beings can understand the meaning of nonrealm; for in truth, they are not actual realms. The wise understand and realize the three realms to be nonrealms.'

- 3.13 "Lokadhara, when bodhisattva great beings contemplate in this way, they understand others' elements and their own elements to be the element of space, for they understand them to be the nonexistent mental-object element, the element of nonexistence, and the unborn element. Why is this? Their own elements and others' elements are not different or distinct from the element of space. All such elements emerge from space, but since they are born from many conditions, they are known as *elements*, as there is no fixed characteristic of elements among them. Why is this? It is because space has no definitive element. Given that all characteristics are included in the element of space, this is the meaning of the absence of realms. Just as space has no elements, phenomena too are ultimately without marks and have the characteristic of nonexistence. All elements are free from elements. Since there is no element in an element, *elements* do not exist internally, externally, or somewhere in-between. There is no element within an element. That absence is not included among characteristics and does not depend on an element. All elements are devoid of a locus. All elements are unborn. The wise do not observe elements arising, ceasing, or abiding in the elements. All

elements are unborn, unarisen, nonabiding, and primordially unobservable. The wise do not become attached to elements, which are mere labels. They do not become attached to, grasp at, or conceptualize them. [F.44.a] Therefore, the wise see and understand all elements to be unborn elements. Since all elements are unborn, they are unceasing; thus, on the ultimate level, no element can be observed. Relatively, mental-object elements are distinguished and discussed, but on the ultimate level there is nothing at all that can be described as an *element*. Thus do the wise understand and realize the definitive meaning of all elements.

3.14 “Lokadhara, thus do bodhisattva great beings contemplate, analyze, and understand the eighteen elements, the three realms, others’ elements, their own elements, and the element of space. When bodhisattvas thus understand and realize them, they do not observe or view elements. They understand all their terminology and have confidence in an understanding of all elements as nonelements. Understanding the differentiation into elements and differentiating them on the relative level enables them to understand how all elements appear on the ultimate level. Understanding the application of the nonexistence of the elements, and thus teaching beings the elements, enables them to ground beings in the application of the elements. Even though, on the relative level, they use words and speech to teach beings about phenomena being devoid of elements, they do not teach that elements have dualistic marks. Even though all elements are nondual, they use skillful means to show that the elements are dependently originated. Even though on the relative level they use words and speech to ripen beings, they teach the ultimate to beings. Even though they are learned with regard to the distinct features of the elements, they trust and understand that all elements are nonexistent. Why is this? Lokadhara, on the ultimate level, the Thus-Gone One does not observe elements or any qualities of elements.

3.15 “Lokadhara, I fully awakened to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood without rejecting or disrupting any elements. [F.44.b] Why is this? On the ultimate level, there are no elements. There are no elements, or any actuality, in any elements. All elements are the same as space; so since all elements are included in space, all elements are characterized as being unborn. The Thus-Gone One understands all the elements in this manner. Lokadhara, the Thus-Gone One did not speak of any elements or even the power of phenomena. Why is this? As no phenomenon whatsoever exists, he should not speak of nonexistent elements. Nonetheless, Lokadhara, although the Thus-Gone One has indeed spoken of nonexistent elements, in truth, there are no elements to speak of.

- 3.16 “Lokadhara, this is called *skill in discerning the elements*. Bodhisattva great beings are skilled in discerning the elements, understand all elements to be mere labels, understand them as mere relative elements, understand the ultimate element, understand the ascertainment of the elements, understand the relative truth, are skilled in discerning the elements, understand what their particular qualities are, understand the gathering of elements, understand the engagement with the elements, understand the engagement with the elements of truth, are skilled in the distinctions of the elements, understand all elements to be nonelements, understand all elements to be equivalent to the element of space, do not make distinctions among the elements, do not observe distinctions among elements, and do not express any such distinctions. They become skilled in teaching beings about the destruction of the elements. Lokadhara, a skilled magician can show beings various illusions, enabling them to experience various illusory entities. However, a relative or friend might tell them, ‘This is an illusion; these entities are magically created. This illusion is not real. [F.45.a] It only appears to beings as a mistaken perception.’ In that case, any wise person would understand them to be illusions.
- 3.17 “Lokadhara, the nature of the world is like an illusion. If bodhisattvas understand illusory phenomena, they understand the world’s illusory nature. The ways of the world are like an illusion, and through the power of magic, the world magically appears to beings. If someone clings to the world as truly real, bodhisattvas show them that the world is false and illusory. Once the wise who have profound intelligence and sharp faculties are shown just a facet of this, they understand all phenomena to be emptiness, illusory, unreal, and insubstantial; they understand that all phenomena deceive childish ordinary beings, and that they depend upon false conditions.
- 3.18 “Therefore, Lokadhara, bodhisattva great beings who wish to understand the function of the elements should exert themselves in such extremely profound, indescribable, and unobservable discourses as these, which teach the understanding and knowledge of all elements, describe all elements to be beyond words and beyond formation, teach the means and insight related to all elements, teach how the elements are dependently originated, and, moreover, express the true reality of all phenomena. Such bodhisattvas should exert themselves, namely, in all the statements of the profound discourses that teach worldliness and transcendence, the conditioned and unconditioned, what it is to be fettered and not fettered, the aim of practice, and the meaning of the relative and the ultimate, along with discourses on the definitive meaning, discourses on the inferred meaning, and the liberating discourses on dependent origination.”

3.19 *This was chapter three: "The Eighteen Elements."* [B3]

4. CHAPTER FOUR: UNDERSTANDING THE TWELVE SENSE SOURCES

· The Eye and Form Sense Sources ·

- 4.1 The Blessed One continued addressing Lokadhara: [F.45.b] “How are bodhisattva great beings knowledgeable about the twelve sense sources? When discerning the twelve sense sources, they think, ‘The eye sense source cannot be observed in the eye. In the eye, there is no definitive eye sense source. The eye sense source cannot be observed to be an entity.’ Why is this? The eye sense source is born from many causes and conditions and arises through mistaken perception. It depends upon form, because it observes form. When the two meet,³⁸ the condition of form brings the condition of the eye sense source into existence. Because the form and eye sense sources are mutually dependent, they are collectively called *the eye’s form*. Regarding the so-called *eye* and *form*, form is the gateway through which the eye sense source is generated, and the eye also generates and illuminates the form sense source. Therefore, with regard to the sense sources, the *eye sense source* is so-called because it is labeled a *sense source gateway* via the condition of form and the *form sense source* is so-called because it is seen by the eye. While I teach that they do exist relatively, the eye does not exist in form, form does not exist in the eye, the eye does not exist in the eye, and form does not exist in form. The *eye sense source* is thus labeled because observation of form arises from many conditions. Additionally, the *form sense source* is thus labeled because the eye consciousness and the characteristic of sight arise through dependent origination.
- 4.2 “How is it that, contrary to what is mistakenly claimed on the relative level, ultimately, the eye sense source and the form sense source are both taught to be unobservable? When the wise seek the sense sources, they do not see them as truly existent. Childish ordinary beings with mistaken perception speak of the eye sense source and the form sense source as two

entities. I have taught that the eye sense source and the form sense source [F.46.a] are false sense sources. In order to bring about an accurate understanding of the true characteristics of phenomena, I have said that the sense sources arise due to dependent origination, in association with delusion; and thus, the characteristic of sense sources cannot be truly observed therein. Why is this? The eye and form sense sources do not exist internally, externally, or somewhere in-between. The eye and form sense sources are not past, present, or future. However, since form is perceived due to a gathering of causes and conditions in the present moment, it is called the *eye sense source*; this accords with what is experienced by childish ordinary beings. By understanding that the sense sources are false, nonexistent, and arisen from mistaken imputation, the wise see and understand that the sense sources are not sense sources. They do not speak of the characteristics of the sense sources, and they understand that the sense sources have no fixed characteristics, yet the wise teach them to be dependently originated. The Thus-Gone One has said that these sense sources are known and understood; namely,³⁹ that the sense sources are false, nonexistent, dependent upon causes and conditions, and arisen from mistaken formations. The sense sources are uncreated and devoid of agent. The eye sense source cannot be known or conceived in relation to the form sense source, nor can the form sense source be known or conceived in relation to the eye sense source; both are devoid of marks. By virtue of the characteristic of being void in reality, the sense sources are beyond investigation and description. Since the characteristic of the sense sources arises in dependence, childish beings mistakenly apprehend them, while the noble ones correctly understand and know them. They know that the eye and form sense sources are characterized as being unborn, unceasing, and without coming or going. [F.46.b] Thus, the eye does not perceive the eye, the eye does not conceptualize the eye, form does not perceive form, and form does not conceptualize form. Why is this? Because both are empty. Because both are void, the characteristic of the eye cannot be known via the eye, and the characteristic of form cannot be known via form. Both eye and form lack characteristics and qualities. Since they lack true characteristics, the eye is not created by the eye, the eye cannot be understood by the eye, form is not created by form, and form cannot be understood by form. Because both are nonexistent, the eye does not think, 'I am the eye,' and form does not think, 'I am form.' The identity of both eye and form is essentially an illusion, and so eye and form are also synonyms for falsity. Bodhisattvas likewise discern and contemplate ear and sound, nose and odor, tongue and taste, and body and texture in the same manner as the eye and form sense sources."

· The Mind and Mental-Object Sense Sources ·

- 4.3 “Lokadhara, how do bodhisattva great beings discern and contemplate the mind sense source? When bodhisattva great beings discern and contemplate the mind sense source, they think, ‘The mind sense source is unobservable. There are no true characteristics of a sense source in the mind. The mind sense source is insubstantial.’ Why is this? The mind sense source arises from mistaken perception, through the process of dependent origination. Since it depends upon the mental-object sense source, it performs its function based on the meeting of the two.⁴⁰ The mind sense source occurs because of the condition of the mental-object sense source. It is discerned through the condition of the mental-object sense source, and its characteristic is twofold. The mental-object sense source finds its locus in dependence upon the mind. Mind is the gateway of the arising and development of mental objects, and the mental-object sense source is likewise the gateway of the mind. Therefore, [F.47.a] it is termed the *mental-object sense source*. The *mind sense source* is named as such due to it being the gateway of the mental-object sense source. The *mental-object sense source* is taught in order to demonstrate and bring about knowledge of the gateway of the mind’s characteristics. Although the relative truth is expressed correctly, the mind does not rely upon mental objects, and mental objects do not rely upon the mind. Yet, the mind sense source is so-called because it dependently originates, and mental objects are its conditions; while the mental-object sense source is so-called because it demonstrates dependent origination and the characteristics of the mind. These are explained according to delusional perception on the relative level, whereas on the ultimate level, the mind sense source and mental-object sense source are said to be unobservable. Upon investigation, the wise do not find the sense sources to be truly existent. Childish ordinary beings, with their mistaken perception, talk about the mind sense source and the mental-object sense source as two kinds of marks. The mind and mental-object sense sources are false and nonexistent. Since the Thus-Gone One accurately understands this, he calls them *sense sources*.⁴¹ Since sense sources are dependently originated from mistaken formations, no mind or mental-object sense source can be truly observed there. The mind and mental-object sense sources do not exist internally, externally, or somewhere in-between.
- 4.4 “Moreover, the mind sense source is not past, future, or present. Yet, based upon the perception in present adventitious conditions, the *mind sense source* and *mental-object sense source* are taught in accord with childish ordinary beings’ thinking. The wise understand the mind sense source and mental-object sense source as sense sources that are not sense sources; they are false, nonexistent, and arisen from mistaken conceptuality. Why is this?

Because sense sources definitively lack the characteristic of being sense sources. The wise thus realize the sense sources to be false and nonexistent, [F.47.b] in that the mind sense source and mental-object sense source are inherently unobservable, and any true characteristic that arises from the mind sense source and mental-object sense source is also unobservable.

- 4.5 “Since the mind sense source and mental-object sense source are thus dependently originated, the Thus-Gone One describes the characteristics of knowing and understanding the sense sources as follows: the sense sources are false, nonexistent, arisen from mistaken formations, and dependent upon causes and conditions; the mind sense source and mental-object sense source are uncreated, devoid of action, and devoid of agent; the mental-object sense source cannot be known or conceived by the mind sense source; and the mind sense source cannot be known or conceived in relation to the mental-object sense source. Why is this? It is due to the absence of them both. By virtue of thus being devoid of two characteristics, no divisions can be made between them. Even though these sense sources are dependently originated, they are taught according to the mistaken thinking of childish ordinary beings. According to the understanding and realization of noble beings, the mind sense source does not arise; it is unborn, does not cease, does not come, and does not go. The mind cannot be understood by the mind or conceptualized to be the mind. Mental objects cannot be understood by mental objects or conceptualized by mental objects. This is because both of them are empty. Because both are void, the mind cannot understand the characteristics of mind, and mental objects cannot understand the characteristics of mental objects. Since both of them have nonexistent characteristics, they have no actual qualities whatsoever. Mind cannot either create or destroy mind. Mental objects cannot either create or destroy mental objects. Because neither exists, the mind sense source does not think, ‘I am the mind sense source,’ and the mental object sense source does not think, ‘I am the mental object sense source.’ Both are empty and thus illusory; yet they are distinguished and labeled in name and term. This is how bodhisattva great beings [F.48.a] discern and contemplate the mind and mental-object sense sources.”

· The Inner and Outer Sense Sources ·

- 4.6 “Lokadhara, how do bodhisattva great beings discern and contemplate the six inner and six outer sense sources? They do so in this way: The twelve sense sources all arise from falsity, many conditions, and mistaken perception. Because they are of two marks, they are both outer and inner. Because childish ordinary beings who have not heard the genuine Dharma

do not understand the true reality of the twelve sense sources, they become attached to the eye sense source and think, 'I am the eye sense source,' or 'this is my eye sense source.' Likewise, they become attached to the form sense source and think, 'I am the form sense source,' or 'this is my form sense source.' It is the same with regard to the ear and sound, the nose and odor, the tongue and taste, the body and tactile objects, and the mind and mental objects, to which they become attached and think, 'I am mind,' or 'this is my mind,' and 'I am mental objects,' or 'these are my mental objects.' As they become attached in this way and are hurt and bound by the twelve sense sources, they cycle again and again among the five classes of beings, without knowing the way out.

4.7 "When they genuinely investigate the twelve sense sources in this fashion, bodhisattva great beings see them to be false, illusory, insubstantial, void, hollow, empty, and illusory. They will not become attached to the eye sense source as *I* or *mine*, and so forth, up to they will not become attached to the mental object sense source as *I* or *mine*. Without becoming attached, they do not falsely conceptualize. This is how bodhisattvas are skilled in the twelve sense sources.

4.8 "Lokadhara, thus skilled in the twelve sense sources, bodhisattva great beings do not become attached to or hindered by any of the twelve sense sources. They contemplate the sense sources as something to be known and understood. [F.48.b] Skilled in discerning the sense sources, they understand and realize that the twelve sense sources are born from many conditions. Because of the absence of marks, they know how to do away with the marks of the twelve sense sources, how to not follow the path that involves the sense sources, and how the sense sources are devoid of marks. They also know and understand the entirety of methods related to the practice of their characteristics. Lokadhara, it is like this: just as water can fall from the four sides of a device conjured by an illusionist, so can the twelve sense sources perform all sorts of functions through inner and outer dependent origination. Yet there is nothing in them that can be truly observed to substantially exist. Bound by the magic of previous actions, these twelve sense sources perform all sorts of functions.

4.9 "Lokadhara, it is like this: The *sense sources* are the gateways of the arising and multiplying of the afflictions of childish ordinary beings, who lack understanding. In this regard, the eye is the gateway of form, because it generates both desire and aversion. Form is also the gateway of the eye, because it also generates both desire and aversion. The same is true of the ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind, as for example the mind is the gateway of mental objects and generates both desire and aversion. Mental objects are also the gateway of the mind and generate desire and aversion. In this way,

the twelve sense sources comingle and combine with desire and aversion, thus leading to failed understanding of their true characteristics. Lokadhara, by clearly understanding the intrinsic nature of the sense sources and their characteristics, bodhisattva great beings avoid becoming bound by desire and aversion. Lokadhara, thus do bodhisattva great beings fully understand the sense sources."

4.10 *This was chapter four: "Understanding the Twelve Sense Sources."*

5. CHAPTER FIVE: UNDERSTANDING THE
 TWELVE LINKS OF DEPENDENT
 ORIGINATION

- 5.1 “Lokadhara, how are bodhisattva great beings skilled in discerning and contemplating the twelve links of dependent origination? [F.49.a] Bodhisattva great beings discern and contemplate the twelve links of dependent origination as follows: *Ignorance* is so designated because of nonexistence. Ignorance is so designated because it lacks qualities. Ignorance is so designated because it cannot understand knowledge. How is ignorance unable to understand knowledge? Ignorance is called *ignorance* because it has no fixed qualities to observe. For what reason does the condition of ignorance give rise to formations? All phenomena⁴² are nonexistent, but childish ordinary beings form them, thus it is said that ignorance causes formations. Because consciousness arises from formations, it depends upon the condition of formations. Name-and-form are two characteristics, and therefore name-and-form are created by the condition of consciousness. The six sense sources are based upon the condition of name-and-form, because the six sense sources arise from name-and-form. Contact is based upon the condition of the six sense sources, because contact arises from the six sense sources. Feeling is based upon the condition of contact, because feeling arises from contact. Craving is based upon the condition of feeling, because craving arises from feeling. Grasping is based upon the condition of craving, because grasping arises from craving. Becoming is based upon the condition of grasping, because becoming arises from grasping. Birth is based upon the condition of becoming, because birth arises from becoming. Based upon the condition of birth, there arises aging, death, sorrow, lamentation, and the great mass of suffering. In this way aging, death, sorrow, lamentation, and the great mass of suffering are so designated because of birth. In this manner, the great mass of suffering arises. This process is all-subsuming: with a mistaken perception, one

contravenes knowledge and accumulates a mass of ignorance. This generates desire for another existence, and based on one's preferences and attachments, one seeks birth in all such places—this is the aggregate of existence. [F.49.b]

5.2 “Lokadhara, worldly beings are bound by these twelve links of dependent origination. Blinded by ignorance, they are caught in the dark abyss of ignorance. Preceded by ignorance, the entire process of the twelve links of dependent origination manifests. When bodhisattvas investigate the true characteristic of ignorance in this manner, they understand ignorance itself to be emptiness, and thus its point of origin to be unobservable. Why is this? Since ignorance is nonexistent, the point of origin is nonexistent. Thus, the wise realize the limitless to be the point of origin, and thus do not distinguish a point of origin. Disrupting false conceptuality, they do not become attached to ignorance. Because no phenomenon exists, phenomena do not accord with the way they are described. If one says ‘no phenomenon exists,’ that itself is seeing and understanding ignorance. If one understands or realizes all phenomena,⁴³ that itself is knowledge. There is no knowledge other than this. Understanding and seeing knowledge is what is called *knowledge*.

5.3 “Regarding this, how does one see and understand ignorance? Understanding and seeing ignorance is to know that all phenomena are nonexistent, that all phenomena are unobservable, that all phenomena are false and mistaken, and that all phenomena fail to accord with the way they are described. Understanding and seeing ignorance is called *knowledge*. Why is this? Because ignorance is unobservable. According to the statement, ‘formations are caused by ignorance,’ all phenomena that appear due to the condition of ignorance are nonexistent.

5.4 “Since childish ordinary beings are stupefied by the darkness of ignorance, they mistakenly engage in the actions of formations. Such actions of formations are formless and without locus. Thus, ignorance cannot generate formations. As they lack the quality of having been created, it is said that formations are caused by ignorance. Since the actions of formations lack any basis for gathering, coming, or going, and since the basis for the formations is neither past, present, nor future, [F.50.a] ignorance is devoid of ignorance, and the actions of formations are devoid of the actions of formations. Even though the actions of formations have no locus, the actions of formations arise in dependence upon ignorance. Yet the actions of formations do not rely upon ignorance, and ignorance does not rely upon the actions of formations. Ignorance cannot understand ignorance, and the actions of formations cannot understand the actions of formations. Even though ignorance and the actions of formations arise in this fashion from

ignorance due to mistaken perception, ignorance is unobservable, and the nature of ignorance is unobservable. Likewise, the actions of formations are unobservable, and the nature of the actions of formations is unobservable. However, based on the density of darkness, ignorance is labeled *darkness*, and the density of the darkness of ignorance is the basis for imputing *formations*. Still, among nonexistent phenomena, actions are performed, and in this way the actions of ignorance and formations are utterly nonexistent.

5.5 “As for the statement, ‘consciousness appears due to the condition of formations,’ consciousness does not depend upon the actions of formations, but neither does it arise in isolation from the actions of formations. And yet, the actions of formations are not what produces consciousness. Why is this? The actions of formations cannot be known as the actions of formations, and there is nothing that depends upon the actions of formations. While beings with mistaken perception do give rise to consciousness due to the actions of formations, such consciousness does not exist inside the actions of formations, outside the actions of formations, or somewhere in-between. While no consciousness arises, consciousness does arise from the ceaseless and unbroken continuity of the actions of formations. When the wise seek the characteristic of consciousness, it is unobservable. They do not observe consciousness to arise. Consciousness cannot know consciousness or see it to be consciousness. Consciousness does not depend on consciousness.

5.6 “As for the statement, ‘name-and-form are due to the condition of consciousness,’ name-and-form neither depend on consciousness, [F.50.b] nor do they arise outside of consciousness. Name-and-form do not come from consciousness, yet because blind, childish ordinary beings observe name-and-form by means of consciousness, they become attached to name-and-form. Yet, name-and-form are not generated by consciousness. When the wise investigate this, they do not observe or see name-and-form. Name-and-form are formless, without location, and arisen from incorrect thinking. It is said that the characteristic of form exists due to the condition of consciousness. However, if this very consciousness is unobservable, what need we say of form arising based upon the condition of consciousness? There is no locus of *form* that can be identified in actuality.

5.7 “As for the statement, ‘the six sense sources appear due to the condition of name-and-form,’ the six sense sources are produced by name-and-form.⁴⁴ Due to the presence of name in the body, the inhalation and exhalation of breath cause the phenomena of the body, mind, and mental factors to develop. Yet, the six sense sources are illusory and nonexistent. Thus arisen from false concepts, they have a delusional function.

5.8

“As for the statement, ‘contact appears due to the condition of the six sense sources,’ contact exists based on form, yet contact has no contact with form. Why is this? Form’s nature is not conscious. Though form is no different from stones or trees, contact is distinguished and labeled as such because it arises from the six sense sources. Why is this? If the six sense sources are false and nonexistent, what need we say of contact? Contact is empty and nonexistent, arises from mistaken thinking, and cannot be found in any location or direction. Since contact itself is empty and lacks the characteristic of contact, contact cannot know the six sense sources, and the six sense sources cannot know contact.

5.9 “As for the statement, ‘feeling appears due to the condition of contact,’ feeling does not abide inside contact, outside contact, or somewhere in-between, nor [F.51.a] does contact arise independently as support for feeling. And yet, feeling arises from contact. Since contact is false and nonexistent, what need we say of feeling, for feeling lacks true characteristics. Feeling is a mistaken concept arisen out of nonexistence; thus it has a delusional function.

5.10 “As for the statement, ‘craving appears due to the condition of feeling,’ feeling does not come separately as support for craving, and feeling itself does not coexist with craving. Feeling cannot know or think about craving. Craving cannot know or think about feeling. Craving does not coexist with feeling. Feeling does not depend on craving. And yet, there is no feeling at all separate from craving.⁴⁵ If feeling itself lacks the characteristic of feeling, what need we say about the statement, ‘craving is based upon the condition of feeling’? Feeling does not exist inside craving, outside craving, or somewhere in-between. Likewise, craving does not exist inside craving, outside craving, or somewhere in-between. The characteristics of craving cannot be observed within craving, for craving is so designated based upon falsity and mistaken conceptuality. Craving is neither past, present, nor future. Craving arises neither from bondage nor from nonbondage. Craving is imputed based on the condition of feeling, which in turn arises from an unbroken continuity of causes and conditions, one after another. The wise understand that craving does not exist in the objects of craving, nor in locations. They understand it to be empty, void, hollow, insubstantial, false, and nonexistent.

5.11 “As for the statement, ‘grasping appears due to the condition of craving,’ craving does not come separately as a basis for grasping, and craving does not coexist with grasping. Though grasping is not generated by craving, grasping is imputed based upon the coexistence of certain causes and conditions that appear due to the existence of craving. Craving does not coexist with grasping, yet craving is none other than grasping. [F.51.b]

Grasping does not coexist with craving, yet grasping is none other than craving. Thus, grasping does not exist inside craving, outside craving, or somewhere in-between. Given that craving itself is unobservable, what need we say about the statement, 'grasping appears due to the condition of craving,' for grasping has no true characteristics to observe. The wise realize grasping to be false and nonexistent. The characteristic of grasping does not exist within grasping. Thus, grasping is neither past, present, nor future. Grasping does not exist inside, outside, or somewhere in-between. It occurs from mistaken perception and arises from causes and conditions. Grasping is so-called based upon the gathering of many conditions. It is neither together with nor separate from any phenomenon. Even though grasping lacks intrinsic nature and fixed qualities, childish ordinary beings experience false grasping. Because all formations are false, worldly beings are bound by grasping. The wise, however, understand that grasping is false, empty, insubstantial, and devoid of entities, with not even a tiny bit of actual quality to observe.

5.12 "As for the statement, 'becoming appears due to the condition of grasping,' grasping does not come as support for becoming, and grasping cannot produce becoming. So, although it is said that 'becoming appears due to the condition of grasping,'⁴⁶ becoming does not exist inside grasping, outside grasping, or somewhere in-between. Becoming does not depend on grasping, and grasping neither comes together with nor is separate from becoming. Yet, because of the coming together of many conditions, it is said that 'becoming appears based on the condition of grasping.' And nonetheless, grasping cannot generate becoming, and becoming cannot be analyzed by means of grasping. If grasping itself is false and nonexistent, what need we say about *becoming*? Becoming lacks something to be based on. Becoming itself is unobservable as becoming, for becoming itself does not exist inside becoming, [F.52.a] outside becoming, or somewhere in-between. Becoming is neither past, present, nor future. For the wise, becoming is false and delusional, and it has neither formation nor dispersion. Therefore, becoming is something that cannot be known or discerned. Such becoming does not exist in any location or direction. Such becoming has no beginning, ending, or interim. They understand and realize how becoming is mentioned as part of the twelve links of dependent origination because becoming is neither existent nor nonexistent. The wise realize becoming to be emptiness, insubstantial, void, and hollow.

5.13 "As for the statement, 'birth appears due to the condition of becoming,' becoming does not come as support for birth. Birth does not coexist with becoming, nor is it separate from it. Birth does not exist inside becoming, outside becoming, or somewhere in-between. Becoming cannot generate

birth, yet birth will not occur separate from becoming. Due to the unbroken continuity of the twelve links of dependent origination, one after another, it is said that 'birth is based on the condition of becoming.' Birth and becoming are neither conditions for each other, nor are they not so. If becoming itself is unobservable, what need we say of the notion that birth owes its existence to the condition of becoming? The wise understand that birth does not depend on becoming, that there are no characteristics of birth in birth, and that birth has no intrinsic nature. They understand that, since birth is insubstantial, there is nothing whatsoever in it that can be truly observed. The wise understand that birth has no nature and is nonexistent, and that, nonetheless, to demonstrate merely a continuity of the twelve links of dependent origination, one after another, it is said that 'birth comes about due to the condition of becoming.' Birth lacks any phenomena that come together or disperse. [F.52.b] Birth does not exist inside becoming, outside becoming, or somewhere in-between. Birth is neither past, present, nor future. Birth is unobservable in the past, future, and interim. Since birth is unobservable as an entity, the wise understand that it arises from a collection of many causes and conditions, false and mistaken perception, and what is nonexistent and illusory.

5.14 "Concerning the statement, 'aging, death, sorrow, lamentation, and suffering appear due to the condition of birth,' birth does not come as a support for aging, death, sorrow, lamentation, and suffering. Nor can birth generate aging, death, sorrow, lamentation, and suffering. Aging, death, sorrow, lamentation, and suffering do not exist inside birth, outside birth, or somewhere in-between. Aging, death, sorrow, lamentation, and suffering do not depend on birth,⁴⁷ but it is nonetheless said that aging, death, sorrow, lamentation, and suffering are due to birth because this demonstrates that phenomena arise due to many causes and conditions. Birth neither comes together with nor is separate from aging, death, sorrow, lamentation, and suffering. If birth itself is unobservable in birth, what need we say of the notion that aging, death, sorrow, lamentation, and suffering owe their existence to the condition of birth? Aging, death, and suffering themselves cannot be observed in aging, death, and suffering. Why is this? Aging, death, and suffering themselves exist neither inside aging, death, and suffering; outside aging, death, and suffering; nor somewhere in-between. Aging, death, and suffering are neither past, present, nor future. Aging, death, and suffering [F.53.a] neither come together with, nor are separate from, aging, death, and suffering. It is said that 'aging, death, and suffering are due to the condition of birth' based on mistaken perception, a combination of many causes and conditions, and the assembly of the twelve links of dependent origination. Aging, death, and suffering have no basis. No true

characteristics can be observed in aging, death, and suffering. The past, present, and future cannot be observed in aging, sickness, and suffering. The wise understand aging, sickness, and suffering to be false, nonexistent, mistaken, insubstantial, uncreated, unarisen, and unborn.

5.15 “When contemplating phenomena through the twelve links of dependent origination in this way, one will not see the phenomena of the twelve links of dependent origination as past, present, or future. One will not see the characteristics of the phenomena of the twelve links of dependent origination. One will understand and realize that dependent origination is devoid of conditions, unborn, devoid of marks, unconditioned, unarisen, and insubstantial, and that all phenomena are primordially nonexistent. By understanding and realizing the twelve links of dependent origination in this way, one will not see the twelve links of dependent origination as having an agent or experiencer.⁴⁸ If phenomena arise from causes, they do not exist when their causes do not exist. By thus pursuing this up to the point of ignorance, bodhisattvas understand all phenomena to be unobservable. By contemplating in this way, they understand that the absence of conditions is the twelve links of dependent origination, which are unborn. Bodhisattvas understand that the twelve links of dependent origination arise from falsity. If, by understanding the twelve links of dependent origination up to the point of ignorance, there is nothing called a *phenomenon*, then there are also no phenomena to be so designated.⁴⁹ Therefore, they understand and realize the twelve links of dependent origination up to the point of ignorance. [F.53.b]

5.16 “Ignorance is unborn, uncreated, unarisen, insubstantial, without actual qualities, uncaused, and nonexistent. In that case, bodhisattvas make no distinction between knowledge and ignorance, for the true characteristic of ignorance is knowledge itself. From the cause of ignorance, no phenomena exist, no phenomena have conditions, and there are no false concepts. Therefore, they realize the twelve links of dependent origination up to the point of ignorance.

5.17

“Lokadhara, this is called *the bodhisattva great beings’ means and insight into the twelve links of dependent origination*. When bodhisattvas understand the twelve links of dependent origination in terms of their formation and separation, this is called the excellent attainment of the bodhisattvas’ insight into the unborn. Why is this? One who thinks in terms of birth and cessation is not knowledgeable of the twelve links of dependent origination. One who understands the coming together and separation of the many conditions is said to attain insight into the unborn. One who attains insight into the unborn is said to realize the twelve links of dependent origination. Therefore, Lokadhara, bodhisattva great beings who wish to realize or reach the insight into the unborn should apply themselves to insight into the twelve links of dependent origination. Thereby, they will come to understand and know the characteristic of the unborn related to the twelve links of dependent origination.

5.18 “Lokadhara, bodhisattva great beings who understand the twelve links of dependent origination to be unborn will attain the mastery of the twelve links of dependent origination. They will thus be able to understand and see the three realms in terms of the characteristic of being unborn, and thereby swiftly gain the acceptance that phenomena are unborn. Such bodhisattvas will immediately receive a prophecy that they will attain unsurpassed and perfect awakening from the present living buddhas, [F.54.a] or such bodhisattvas will be thus prophesied soon, or eventually. Lokadhara, they will be overjoyed when they receive such a happy prophecy, and they will achieve the light of insight from the practice of focusing on and engaging with all phenomena. By realizing the twelve links of dependent origination to be unborn in this way, they will serve the buddhas living in the present. They will be unintimidated by evil māras. They will cross the river of birth and cyclic existence to reach dry land. They will be freed from the swamp of ignorance. They will proceed to the abode of bliss.

5.19 “Lokadhara, I prophesy that anyone, whether I am still alive or have already passed away, who hears, trusts, reads, recites, or practices this method of the twelve links of dependent origination will swiftly gain the acceptance that phenomena are unborn. I prophesy that they will soon receive prophecy of their unsurpassed and perfect awakening from all the present thus-gone ones.”

5.20 *This was the fifth chapter: “Understanding the Twelve Links of Dependent Origination.”*

6. CHAPTER SIX: THE FOUR APPLICATIONS OF MINDFULNESS

6.1 “Lokadhara, how are bodhisattva great beings skilled in the applications of mindfulness? Bodhisattva great beings discern and contemplate the four applications of mindfulness. What are these four? The contemplation of the body in relation to the body, the contemplation of feelings in relation to feelings, the contemplation of the mind in relation to the mind, and the contemplation of mental phenomena in relation to mental phenomena. How do they contemplate the body in relation to the body, and contemplate feelings, mind, [F.54.b] and mental phenomena in relation to feelings, mind, and mental phenomena?”

. Contemplation of the Body in Relation to the Body .

6.2 “Lokadhara, when bodhisattva great beings practice the contemplation of the body in relation to the body, they accurately contemplate the characteristics of the body. The body is characterized as impermanent, painful, like an ailment, like a blister, tormented by suffering, frail, fleeting, and destructible. This body is utterly unclean. It is filled with many ugly and foul elements. Foul things are constantly excreted from its nine orifices. The body reeks. It is like a living bag of vomit. If one investigates this body accurately, one cannot find even a single hair that is clean and pleasing. This body is bone and sinew wound together and wrapped with skin and flesh. It arises through the ripening of the causes, conditions, and results of past actions. It is understood to be bound by origination and appropriation. What are origination and appropriation in this context? That the body arises from past causes and conditions is designated *appropriation*. That we presently wash this body and then sustain it with food, clothing, seats, and medicine is called *origination*. In this fashion, the causes and conditions of the present moment are called *origination*, while all actions performed while bound by the

power of the ripening of past results are termed *appropriation*. Furthermore, what we designate the *body* is formed of the four great elements, lacks definitive and true characteristics, and is included in the aggregate of form.

6.3 “Why is it called the *body*? It is called the body because it is able to perform functions. It is called the body because one clings and is attached to this supportive locus. It is called the body because its actions follow the instructions of the mind. It is called the body because it arises from false concepts. It is called the body because it is produced from an illusory conjunction. It is called the body because it is conjoined with karma.

6.4 “This body will meet its end before long. [F.55.a] It is fleeting, impermanent, and variable. It has no characteristics. The body does not exist inside the body, outside the body, or somewhere in-between. This body is not understood or seen as the body. This body does not act, move, or form hopes or aspirations. It has no mind, and is no different from stones and wood. The body has no characteristics of a body that can be ascertained. If one genuinely discerns and investigates the body in this manner, one will see that it is uncreated, has no agent, and has no past, no future, and no present. This body does not have a single feature of permanence, stability, or solidity. It is just like a water bubble that cannot withstand grabbing or grasping. This body is the home of eighty thousand worms. This body is harmed by all sorts of actions. This body suffers due to the three kinds of suffering. Given that it is without protector, it is vulnerable to the suffering of being conditioned, the suffering of change, and the suffering of suffering. Thus, all these miseries make it a container for much suffering.

6.5 “Having contemplated the body accurately in relation to the body, one will think, ‘The body is not the self. It is not something other. It is not independent or according to one’s own wishes. It is the production of a nonproduct.’⁵⁰ One will also think, ‘This body is insubstantial and is unobservable as a definite thing. This body is naturally empty, lacking any true characteristics. This body arises from falsity, like something created by a machine. Because it occurs from the causes and conditions of past actions, it is inappropriate to generate the perception of the body as *I* or *mine*, for we should not cherish our bodies and lives.’ When bodhisattvas contemplate accurately in this fashion, they do not observe the body as coming together or separating. [F.55.b] They do not see the body as coming from somewhere, going somewhere, or abiding anywhere. They do not think that this body exists in the past, present, or future. Thus, they do not rely on the body or life-force, and they are not attached to the body as *I* or *mine*. They discard grasping to the body. Such bodhisattvas realize this body to be emptiness, selfless, and unowned. Because they do not observe this body as *I* or *mine*, they do not observe it as having physical characteristics. Because such

bodhisattvas do not observe the characteristics of the body, they have no expectations of engaging the body, so there is no way for the body to be produced or arise. What does *engagement* mean in this case? It is that the body lacks creation or arising. Because this body has the characteristic of being uncreated and unarisen, it is born of many causes and conditions. The body comes into being through the gathering of causes and conditions, yet causes and conditions are false, nonexistent, mistaken, empty, and insubstantial. The body is born of such causes and conditions. Because such causes and conditions themselves are unborn and without marks, when one is contemplating the body in this way, one will understand that the body has the characteristic of being unborn. Having applied oneself in this manner, one will realize how the body has no characteristics. By correctly realizing how the body has no characteristics, one will understand this body to be without marks. Because there are no marks to observe, the body is understood to be unborn.

6.6 “This body cannot be observed as having any marks of the past, marks of the present, or marks of the future. Why is this? Because the body in essence has no definitive qualities to observe, and because the body cannot be observed as self or other. When contemplating this, one will understand how the body does not come from anywhere or go anywhere. One will comprehend the nature of the body’s unborn and unceasing character. [F.56.a]

6.7 “Lokadhara, bodhisattva great beings who thus contemplate the body in relation to the body and comprehend its true characteristics will dispel and disrupt any clinging or attachment to the body, thus causing their mindfulness to immediately settle upon the body in the proper manner. They are then called *practitioners who contemplate the body in relation to the body.*”

· Contemplation of Feelings in Relation to Feelings ·

6.8 “Lokadhara, how do bodhisattva great beings practice the contemplation of feelings in relation to feelings? When bodhisattva great beings contemplate the three varieties of feelings—painful feelings, pleasurable feelings, and feelings that are neither painful nor pleasurable—they understand that they do not come from anywhere or go anywhere. They understand them to be propped up by false conditions and the ripened results of past actions, in conjunction with delusion. They understand that feelings arise from false and inaccurate conceptuality. When bodhisattvas contemplate feelings in this manner, they do not observe them as past feelings, present feelings, or future feelings. Bodhisattvas see past feelings as empty, selfless, unowned, impermanent, unstable, insubstantial, and without the characteristic of

changelessness.⁵¹ They realize past feelings in terms of their characteristic of emptiness, characteristic of peace, and characteristic of being without marks. They also see future feelings as empty, selfless, unowned, impermanent, unstable, insubstantial, and without the characteristic of changelessness.⁵² They understand future feelings in terms of their characteristic of emptiness, characteristic of peace, and characteristic of being without marks.

6.9 “When bodhisattvas contemplate this, they think, ‘Feelings lack true characteristics, [F.56.b] are insubstantial, and lack any fixed attributes. Since they are variegated, they continuously arise and subside, without ever remaining still.’ This leads bodhisattvas to think further, ‘Feelings are uncreated and lack an agent. The three varieties of feeling are generated from the minds of childish ordinary beings with mistaken perception. These feelings owe their existence to the gathering of the causes of previous actions and concurrent conditions. Feelings are all empty, unstable, insubstantial, and false by nature. They are like empty houses.’⁵³

6.10 “When contemplating in this way, the mind rests one-pointedly in the absence of feelings.⁵⁴ At that moment, bodhisattvas understand and know all feelings in their characteristic of coalescing and subsiding, yet they also view feelings as neither coming together nor dispersing. Moreover, they do not see feelings within feelings, but think, ‘Feelings are emptiness, because feelings are naturally empty.’⁵⁵ Thus they understand feelings as having the characteristic of being unborn. Because feelings are unborn and unceasing, they understand that they lack any characteristic of having come into being. Thus, considering them, when they experience feelings, they are never attached to them. They accurately see and understand the characteristics of feelings. Free from feelings, they do not dwell on feelings. Thus, their minds become equanimous concerning feelings, and thereby they attain the absorption of equanimity. Lokadhara, these bodhisattva great beings are called *practitioners who contemplate feelings in relation to feelings.*”

· Contemplation of the Mind in Relation to the Mind ·

6.11 “Lokadhara, how do bodhisattva great beings practice the contemplation of the mind in relation to the mind? Bodhisattva great beings contemplate the mind in terms of the characteristics of arising, ceasing, remaining, and transitioning. When they contemplate this, they think, [F.57.a] ‘It does not come from anywhere. It does not go anywhere. Since it is born from consciousness and conditions, it is insubstantial and unobservable as any fixed quality. This mind does not come or go. It cannot be observed to remain or transition. This mind is neither past, present, nor future. This mind is born from consciousness, conditions, and thinking. This mind does not exist

internally, externally, or somewhere in-between. This mind lacks even a single mark of birth or arising. This mind lacks intrinsic nature, fixed identity, a creator, and anything created. We speak of something called the *mind* because of myriad actions. We speak of something called the *mind* based on myriad conditions of consciousness. We speak of something called the *mind* based on thoughts arising and ceasing, moment by moment, in an unbroken continuity.⁵⁶ This description is given so that ordinary beings can understand and know the characteristic of the mind that cognizes objects. The mind lacks the characteristic of mind. This mind is primordially unborn, unarisen, and essentially pure. It has false concepts because of being defiled by adventitious afflictions.⁵⁷ But the mind cannot understand or see itself. Why is this? This mind is emptiness. Because it is emptiness, it is insubstantial. This mind does not possess a fixed quality, because it is unobservable as any fixed quality, and because this mind lacks the quality of being single or multiple. This mind is unobservable in the past, present, or future. This mind is formless and invisible; thus, the mind cannot see itself or know its own nature. It occurs simply because childish ordinary beings with mistaken perception make observations via false conditions and consciousness. [F.57.b] This mind is emptiness; it is selfless, unowned, impermanent, unstable, insubstantial, and does not have the quality of changelessness.' When one thinks and contemplates in this way, one will accomplish the application of mindfulness related to the mind.

6.12 "At such a time, one does not wonder whether something is the mind or not. Instead, one will understand that the mind has the characteristic of being unborn, thereby realizing the mind to be unborn. Why is this? Because the mind has no real nature or true characteristics. The wise understand and realize how the mind is unborn and lacks characteristics in this way. At that moment, they accurately understand the mind's characteristics of forming and subsiding. When understanding this, no characteristics of origination or cessation can be found in the mind. They will attain the characteristic of the pure nature of mind that is free from considering the mind as ceasing or not ceasing. Because bodhisattvas' minds are pure in this way, they are not defiled by adventitious afflictions. Why is this? Bodhisattvas who see and know their own minds to be pure, thereby know that other beings' minds are pure too, and thus they think the following: 'When the mind is stained, beings are stained. When the mind is pure, beings are pure.'⁵⁸ As they consider this, they do not observe the mind to be characterized as stained or pure. They know that the mind as such perpetually has the characteristic of purity."

· Contemplation of Mental Phenomena in Relation to Mental
Phenomena ·

- 6.13 “Lokadhara, how do bodhisattva great beings practice the contemplation of mental phenomena in relation to mental phenomena? Bodhisattvas do not think that any mental phenomenon exists internally, externally, or somewhere in-between. Moreover, they do not observe mental phenomena to be past, present, or future. All mental phenomena arise from many conditions, are rooted in mistaken perception, and have no true characteristics. [F.58.a] That is to say, all mental phenomena are subject to the person. As for the basic nature of mental phenomena, all mental phenomena are devoid of mental phenomena.⁵⁹ Mental phenomena do not exist inside mental phenomena, outside mental phenomena, or somewhere in-between. Mental phenomena neither conjoin with nor separate from mental phenomena. Mental phenomena are insubstantial and lack true characteristics. Because mental phenomena do not exist, they are unmoving and uncreated. All mental phenomena are like space in being nonexistent. All mental phenomena are deceptive and illusory, because the characteristic of illusion is unobservable. Mental phenomena are pure, because they are unstained by anything at all. Mental phenomena have the characteristic of being beyond appropriation, because there is no appropriation. Mental phenomena are dreamlike, because dreams are nonexistent. Mental phenomena are formless, because form is totally nonexistent. Mental phenomena are like reflections, because reflections themselves are nonexistent. Mental phenomena are nameless and without marks, because names and marks are nonexistent. Mental phenomena are like echoes, because they are nonexistent, arisen out of falsity. Mental phenomena are devoid of intrinsic nature, because their nature is unobservable. Mental phenomena are like mirages, because they are understood to be nonexistent.
- 6.14 “When bodhisattvas contemplate mental phenomena in this manner, they will not see mental phenomena as having the characteristics of being single or multiple. They will not see mental phenomena as conjoined or separate. They will not see mental phenomena as present in mental phenomena. When they contemplate this, they will not see mental phenomena as coming from elsewhere. They will not see any mental phenomenon with a foundational basis. Why is this? Mental phenomena lack any foundation, any basis, and any source. [F.58.b] Mental phenomena have no foundation, because they lack any basis or locus, and because they lack any observable locus.
- 6.15 “Lokadhara, mental phenomena are beyond distinction, for they lack any marks to distinguish them. Because they are born from many conditions, they function due to mistaken perception, yet mental phenomena do not

exist in any location or direction. The wise observe mental phenomena as having neither a single characteristic, nor two characteristics, nor multifarious characteristics. Why is this? Lokadhara, mental phenomena are unborn, uncreated, unarisen, and unfabricated. Mental phenomena have no nature or essence, for they are beyond any nature. Mental phenomena are nonabiding, because they are beyond having a destination. When they contemplate mental phenomena in this manner, they understand and realize how mental phenomena are without self and without person. They will understand mental phenomena to be naturally empty. By understanding mental phenomena to be emptiness, they will understand mental phenomena to be without marks. By viewing them as having no marks, they will have no wishes regarding any mental phenomena. When they realize mental phenomena to be unborn, they will think, 'There are certainly no mental phenomena here that arise or cease.' When they contemplate this, their minds will rest one-pointedly. In this way, they will understand how mental phenomena are unborn. They will see and understand the exhaustion of the origination and cessation of all mental phenomena. They will understand how mental phenomena are without marks and without intrinsic nature. Why is this? Lokadhara, because mental phenomena lack true characteristics, they will understand how mental phenomena are without marks and free from marks.

6.16 "Lokadhara, this is how bodhisattva great beings practice the contemplation of mental phenomena in relation to mental phenomena. [F.59.a] As for this understanding, they do not observe or appropriate any mental phenomena. They exert themselves so as not to generate, dwell on, or stop mental phenomena. They see the characteristic of exhaustion and cessation of all mental phenomena, and their characteristic of pacification."⁶⁰

6.17 "Lokadhara, this is the bodhisattva great beings' complete understanding of the four applications of mindfulness. Why are they called *applications of mindfulness*? The application of mindfulness understands all phenomena as lacking any basis for ceasing, any basis for occurring, and any basis for abiding. When this occurs, it is called *unflagging mindfulness* or the application of mindfulness with regard to all phenomena. Moreover, the *application of mindfulness* means understanding and seeing all phenomena accurately as being nonabiding, unborn, and unappropriated."

6.18 *This was the sixth chapter: "The Four Applications of Mindfulness."*

7. CHAPTER SEVEN: THE FIVE POWERS

7.1 “Lokadhara, how are bodhisattva great beings skilled in the five powers? Bodhisattva great beings accurately contemplate the five transcendent powers. What are these five? The powers of faith, diligence, mindfulness, absorption, and insight.

· The Power of Faith ·

7.2 “When bodhisattvas put the five powers into practice, they gain trust in how all phenomena are born from dependent origination, arise through mistaken perception, and are like a whirling firebrand or a dream, in owing their existence to a gathering of conditions of false perception. They trust that all phenomena have the characteristics of being impermanent, suffering, impure, selfless, like a thorn or blister, insubstantial, unstable, mutable, and destructible. [F.59.b] Moreover, they trust that all phenomena are false, and thus nonexistent; that just as a child is fooled by an empty fist or a rainbow, phenomena are merely arisen from imputation and dependent phenomena, and thus lack even a single true quality of being an entity. Moreover, they trust that all phenomena are neither past, present, nor future. They trust that all phenomena neither come from, nor go, anywhere. They trust that all phenomena are emptiness, without marks, and unconditioned. They trust that all phenomena are unborn, unconditioned, unarisen, without marks, and free from marks. They trust in pure discipline, pure absorption, pure insight, and the pure teaching of the wisdom of liberation.⁶¹ Bodhisattvas become irreversible by effortlessly accomplishing the power of faith; guided by faith, they can observe discipline, such that their faith will not decline or be lost. By effortlessly accomplishing the quality of irreversibility, they will have unwavering faith. They will ripen faith in accordance with the ripening of karmic results, and they will destroy all wrong views. They will not spurn the teachings or seek out any teachers other than the blessed buddhas. They

will always follow the true nature of all phenomena. They will follow the genuine path practiced by the saṅgha. Through observing pure discipline and effortlessly accomplishing acceptance, they will attain faith that is unwavering, unchanging, and extraordinary. They are thus said to possess the power of faith.”

. The Power of Diligence .

- 7.3 “Lokadhara, how do bodhisattva great beings accurately contemplate the power of diligence? How do they effortlessly accomplish the power of diligence? How do they become highly skilled in the power of diligence? [F.60.a] Bodhisattva great beings practice diligence endlessly. They practice diligence without any interruption, in order to dispel the five obscurations. They practice diligence in order to hear the profound Dharma in this manner. Bodhisattvas are uninterrupted in their pursuit of the Dharma, never regressing from their diligent pursuits. They are dauntless in their practice of diligence in order to disrupt obscuring phenomena. Furthermore, they practice diligence in order to abandon myriad unwholesome and unvirtuous phenomena, as well as all perishable phenomena. Furthermore, they practice diligence in order to increase and generate myriad virtuous phenomena. Without a doubt, bodhisattvas effortlessly accomplish diligence. However, they do not become attached to it, but rather, engage in diligence with equanimity. By effortlessly accomplishing irreversible diligence, such people will understand and realize all the qualities of proper practice, thereby mastering diligence. By practicing diligence so well, they will not be dependent on others. Through their practice of diligence, they will achieve the light of insight and effortlessly accomplish the characteristic of irreversibility. As they become irreversible in their diligence and practice such extraordinary diligence, they are said to possess the power of diligence.”

. The Power of Mindfulness .

- 7.4 “Lokadhara, how do bodhisattva great beings attain the power of mindfulness, and how do they practice the power of mindfulness? Bodhisattva great beings focus one-pointedly on mindfulness, engage in generosity, are gentle, observe pure conduct perfectly, and guard the branch of pure discipline. They carefully guard the branch of absorption, the branch of insight, the branch of liberation, and the branch of teaching the wisdom of liberation.

7.5 “They constantly consider and bring to mind⁶² the actions of body, speech, and mind. They constantly consider and bring to mind the topics of perfection. [F.60.b] They consider and bring to mind the methods related to the characteristics of all phenomena as arising, ceasing, remaining, and transferring. They see the truths of suffering, origination, cessation, and the path. They consider and bring to mind what is to be understood. They consider and bring to mind the powers, strengths, factors of awakening, paths, absorptions, liberations, and the practices of the attainments. They consider and bring to mind the characteristics of all phenomena as being unborn, unceasing, unconditioned, unarisen, and inexpressible. They constantly consider and bring to mind the attainment of the insight into the unborn. They consider and bring to mind the wish to attain the perfect wisdoms of acceptance, abandonment, and cessation. They consider and bring to mind the wish to attain all the perfect qualities of buddhahood. They consider and bring to mind how to avoid letting the qualities of the hearers or solitary buddhas influence their minds. They constantly consider and bring to mind the mindfulness of unimpeded wisdom. Given such accurate considerations, they come to know the phenomena of the body. Thereby their mindfulness never declines or regresses from that. Due to these contemplations, they become independent from others. As this occurs, such people attain a superior mindfulness that is meaningful in these ways. Thus, they are said to possess the power of mindfulness.”

· The Power of Absorption ·

7.6 “Lokadhara, how do bodhisattva great beings attain the power of absorption, and how do they attain the practices of absorption? When bodhisattva great beings dwell on the level of the noble ones, even though they practice absorption, they never dwell in absorption or become attached to absorption. By thoroughly engaging in the characteristics of absorption—and by thoroughly attaining the practices of absorption, thoroughly generating the absorptions, and practicing absorption that is without observation— [F.61.a] they become skilled in the gateways of all absorptions, skilled in entering absorption, skilled in abiding in absorption, skilled in leaving absorption, skilled in not resting in absorption, skilled in the characteristics of observation, and skilled in observing the characteristics of suchness. Because they are skilled in the experience of all absorptions and have power over absorption, they are not dependent on others, and they do not fall under the power of absorption. Rather, they gain power and strength from absorption. Among absorptions, there are none that are difficult or

deficient; they are accomplished precisely according to their wishes.⁶³ People with such extraordinary absorptions are said to have attained the power of absorption and the practice of the power of absorption.”

. The Power of Insight .

7.7 “Lokadhara, how do bodhisattva great beings attain the power of insight, and how do they practice the power of insight? Bodhisattva great beings who understand and realize the power of insight will correctly quell all suffering. Since such people understand and realize the locus and activity of insight, they disengage from concepts and abandon concepts, whereby they will perfect the insight that leads to nirvāṇa. By effortlessly accomplishing the power of insight, they understand the three realms to be entirely ablaze. With insight into the fact that the three realms are all suffering, they do not abide in the three realms. By realizing the three realms to be emptiness, without marks, without wishes, unborn, unconditioned, unarisen, beyond the way of conditioned phenomena, and endowed with the perfect qualities of buddhahood—they will engage diligently as if their hair were on fire. [F.61.b] The insight of these bodhisattvas is indestructible. By mastering such insight, they transcend the three realms and do not abide in the existence of the three realms. They eliminate all conditioned phenomena and do not abide in any phenomena of attachment and bondage. They become weary of the five objects of desire and avoid both the form and formless realms. Thereby they possess extraordinary insight and immeasurable qualities like a vast ocean. Through such insight, they will be free of any impediment in their skillful use of all phenomena. While such beings use this insight to understand and comprehend the three realms in this way, their minds are not attached to the three realms. This extraordinary insight is the attainment of the power of insight and the practice of insight.”

7.8 “Lokadhara, why are these called *powers*? They are called powers⁶⁴ because they are supreme. They are called powers because they are unwavering. They are called powers because they are indestructible. They are called powers because they are irreversible. They are called powers because they do not depend on others. They are called powers because they cannot be taken away. They are called powers because they pursue genuine qualities. They are called powers because they are unobstructed. They are called powers because they cannot be lost. Moreover, Lokadhara, bodhisattva great beings know well the powers of⁶⁵ beings and can therefore act skillfully⁶⁶ when training in the various powers. Bodhisattvas understand the powers of beings who have attachment as well as the powers of beings without attachment. They understand the powers of beings with aversion as well as

the powers of beings without aversion. They understand the powers of beings with ignorance as well as the powers of beings without ignorance. They understand the powers of beings who have fallen to the lower realms as well as the powers of beings who have been born in the god or human realms. [F.62.a] They understand the powers of beings who are gentle as well as the powers of beings of the sharpest, middling, and lowest powers. They understand beings with impaired powers as well as beings with unimpaired powers. They understand beings with diligent and lazy powers. They understand those beings who are skilled and those who are not skilled. They understand the powers of beings who have misdeeds, do not have misdeeds, have stains, are immaculate, have aversion, lack aversion, are compliant, are not compliant, and who are impeded, as well as those who are unimpeded. They understand the powers of beings with formations for the desire realm, the form realm, and the formless realm. They understand the powers of beings with thick roots of virtue and with thin roots of virtue. They understand beings' powers that are determined, undetermined, and aberrantly determined. They understand the powers of beings who are stingy, not stingy, frivolous, serious, deceptive, not deceptive, exhilarated, not exhilarated, aggressive and impatient, gentle and patient, and miserly or generous. They understand beings' powers of faith, skepticism, respect, disrespect, discipline, impure discipline, patience, laziness, diligence, distraction, settling into absorption, errancy of knowledge, insightfulness, stupidity, genius, pride, humility, [F.62.b] practice of the correct path, practice of the wrong path, carelessness, mindfulness, and intelligence. They understand beings' powers that are disturbed, withdrawn, impaired, unimpaired, impure, pure, of the lesser vehicle, of the solitary buddhas, of buddhas, of bodhisattvas, and of unsurpassed awakening.

7.9 “Because these bodhisattvas transcend all such distinct features of the powers and their practices, they are said to be skilled in discerning the distinct features of the powers of beings. Due to their insight, they do not depend on others, and therefore they are said to attain the practices of the powers. Therefore, they are also called those who cannot be taken away by others, those who are indestructible, those who are irreversible, those who attain the strength of application, those who know the powers, those who attain the powers of gods, nāgas, yakṣas, gandharvas, asuras, garuḍas, kinnaras, mahoragas, humans, and nonhumans, those who attain the supreme faculty, those who attain the fearless and unwavering state, those who are perfected, and those who effortlessly accomplish immeasurable qualities. They will swiftly attain power and dominion over all phenomena.” [B4]

7.10 *This was the seventh chapter: “The Five Powers.”*

8. CHAPTER EIGHT: THE EIGHTFOLD PATH OF
 THE NOBLE ONES

8.1 “Lokadhara, how are bodhisattva great beings skilled in the path of the noble ones? The bodhisattva great beings are steadfast on the noble path. What is meant by *path* in this context? It is the eightfold path of the noble ones, which comprises right view, right thought, [F.63.a] right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right absorption. Lokadhara, what is it that bodhisattva great beings practice on the eightfold path of the noble ones? And what means do they obtain on the eightfold path of the noble ones?”

· Right View ·

8.2 “Bodhisattva great beings with right view are steadfast in right view. In order to disrupt all views, they exert themselves on the path. In order to disrupt all views, they are steadfast on the path and eliminate even their views of nirvāṇa and buddhahood. Why is this? Lokadhara, any view, including even views of nirvāṇa and buddhahood, is a negative view. It is called *right view* because it destroys and defeats all attachment to views. Furthermore, *right view* refers to having no view, and not adopting, forming ideas about, becoming attached to, observing, partaking of, or conceptualizing any view.

8.3 “‘What is seen by right view? The fact that this entire world is bound by false and mistaken views is seen. When this is seen, it is called *being steadfast in the disruption of all views*. Within right view itself, one does not form ideas, view, become attached, or imagine. All views up to and including views of nirvāṇa and buddhahood are eliminated, because one exerts oneself in not generating any views. How is it right view? All phenomena are pacified, so conceptualizing characteristics is unborn, unceasing, and in harmony with nirvāṇa.⁶⁷ One thus does not conceptualize or imagine any phenomenon;

[F.63.b] one does not conceptualize, imagine, or manifest anything.⁶⁸ The correct view is not high, not low, not adopting, and not rejecting. This is called *right view that transcends the world*.

- 8.4 “What is meant by right view that transcends the world? It is called right view that transcends the world because it does not observe the world and it does not observe the transcendence of the world; and in thus not observing even the transcendence of the world, it is nonconceptual. Furthermore, right view knows and understands the world to be just like the transcendence of the world. It is called right view that transcends the world because it does not conceptualize the world or the transcendence of the world, and because it disrupts all conceptual perceptions. It is called *right view* when one does not see anything in terms of right or wrong and has disrupted all mental concepts. Furthermore, right view makes no distinctions between any phenomena: this is right view. Moreover, right view accurately understands the meaning of wrong view. Also, right view understands all wrong views to be sameness. This is how bodhisattvas are steadfast in right view.”

· Right Thought ·

- 8.5 “Lokadhara, once they are steadfast in right view, bodhisattva great beings accurately understand right thought. They think, ‘All thoughts are mistaken. So, even thoughts about nirvāṇa and buddhahood are wrong thoughts. Why is this? *Right thought* is the disruption of thought.’ Right thought is no thought.⁶⁹ [F.64.a] Thinking is conceptual. Why is this? By seeing and understanding the characteristics of all thoughts, wrong thoughts are eliminated. They will not think about ‘this or that other thing.’ By abiding in right thought in this way, they will not have any thoughts about right thoughts or wrong thoughts. By being free from all thoughts, they transcend thought. This is *right thought*. Right thought is seeing and understanding that all thought arises from falsity, untruth, and mistaken perception; it is to not think of any thoughts. When they dwell in right thought in this way, they do not observe right or wrong thoughts; they are free from thoughts, have transcended thoughts, and have disrupted thoughts. This is right thought. At this point, they are no longer bound by any thoughts, and they understand and see that the nature of all thoughts is sameness. This is abiding in right thought.”

· Right Speech ·

8.6 “Lokadhara, bodhisattva great beings’ practice of right speech is to know that all spoken words are false, untrue, arisen from mistaken perception, incorrectly imputed, and arisen from many causes and conditions. With this understanding they think, ‘All words that are spoken are unobservable.’ This accurate understanding of all actions of speech, which occurs once all words have ceased, is *right speech*. When one sees that the speech of spoken words does not come from anywhere or go anywhere, this is right speech. At this point, by being steadfast in this manner in the correct characteristics of speech, all the words they utter are right speech. Therefore, when they are steadfast in right speech, [F.64.b] they are said to abide in the actions of the ultimate and pure speech. Abiding in right speech means to see and understand the characteristics of the acts of speech, to understand all spoken words, and to be unconfused about all spoken words.”

· Right Action ·

8.7 “Lokadhara, bodhisattva great beings understand all actions as wrong and mistaken actions. They understand all actions to be false, nonexistent, unconditioned, and unarisen. Why is this? Because all action lacks true characteristics, and because all action has ceased, it is known as *right action*. Right action is not conceptualizing actions as right or wrong. By understanding the sameness of action, one does not think of it in terms of right or wrong. Therefore, it is right action. Right action means nonattachment to the three realms; it means accurate knowledge and understanding. Since actions are sameness within the true nature, they are not conceptualized as right or wrong. Because bodhisattvas know and understand all action accurately to be right action in this way, they do not perceive or see any phenomenon. Therefore, they are said to endeavor in the accomplishment of right action. In right action there is no wrong action. Accurately seeing and understanding, one is said to dwell in the accomplishment of right action.”

· Right Livelihood ·

8.8 “Lokadhara, bodhisattva great beings understand all forms of livelihood to be wrong livelihood. Why is this? If one clings to the marks of livelihood, as well as to the marks of phenomena, the marks of appropriation, and so on, up to the marks of nirvāṇa and the marks of buddhahood—thinking that purity and buddhahood have marks—as pure livelihood,⁷⁰ [F.65.a] then that is wrong livelihood. *Right livelihood* involves giving up all attachment to the articles of livelihood.⁷¹ Once profit-seeking is eliminated, the absence of

thoughts, then the absence of concepts, and then the transcendence of all concepts is right livelihood. In not conceptualizing right livelihood as wrong or right livelihood, one gains pure and right livelihood in all respects. Therefore, this is the attainment of pure and right livelihood. Furthermore, since all forms of livelihood are unborn, there is no right or wrong. A person who knows this achieves pure livelihood, is steadfast on the right path, and is free of concepts. When abiding in such right livelihood, one does not take up right livelihood or abandon wrong livelihood. Therefore, one is abiding in right livelihood. At such time, one is not abiding in what is right or what is wrong. One has attained the livelihood of purity and sameness. Since one is free of any marks of livelihood, one is free of concepts, one does not conceive of anything, and one does not think in terms of livelihood or non-livelihood. This is seeing and understanding things accurately. One therefore is said to attain right livelihood.”

· Right Effort ·

- 8.9 “Lokadhara, how are bodhisattva great beings skilled in right effort? How do bodhisattva great beings observe right effort? Bodhisattvas observe *right effort* by giving up all forms of diligence. Why is this? All forms of effort are mistaken. All forms of creation, action, and practice are mistaken. Why is this? All phenomena are produced from wrong actions, and so they are all false. [F.65.b] That being so, right effort involves no creation, production, practice, or aspiration, for all phenomena are devoid of production. Since bodhisattvas give up action with regard to all phenomena, they do not generate any marks of action—not even any marks of nirvāṇa or any marks of buddhahood. By understanding all actions to be false, they practice in order to eliminate actions. Right effort involves no fabrication, for all phenomena are the same, undifferentiated, without fabrication, and completely beyond any marks of fabrication. Bodhisattvas understand diligence to be the lack of diligence, for observing right effort involves no appropriation or abandonment. Right effort means not apprehending diligence. It means seeing and understanding all phenomena accurately. When one understands right effort in this manner, one does not conceptualize either right effort or wrong effort. This therefore is right effort.”

· Right Mindfulness ·

8.10 “Lokadhara, how are bodhisattva great beings skilled in right mindfulness? Bodhisattva great beings understand all forms of mindfulness to be wrong mindfulness. The applications of mindfulness are wrong mindfulness. Why is this? All forms of mindfulness are wrong mindfulness. If one generates mindfulness based on observing an object, that is wrong mindfulness. *Right mindfulness* is the absence of thought and mindfulness. Why is this? Because all forms of mindfulness arise from the condition of mistakenly observing in a wrong manner. Therefore, any basis that engenders mindfulness is false. Right mindfulness does not generate or inhibit any object of observation. [F.66.a] When one observes no object with mindfulness, one is said to be steadfast in right mindfulness, in that there is no basis for wrong mindfulness to arise. In this way, since one knows and understands that all phenomena are false, there is no mindfulness of true phenomena. Therefore, this is known as observing right mindfulness. Right mindfulness does not discern phenomena in terms of wrong mindfulness and right mindfulness. By knowing and understanding that all forms of mindfulness lack the marks of mindfulness, bodhisattvas continuously practice the six mental states of equanimity. This, therefore, is abiding in right mindfulness. Because they are free from attachment and clinging, they are without mindfulness and thinking. All forms of mindfulness with regard to phenomena are understood to be sameness. By seeing and understanding all forms of mindfulness accurately, they do not appropriate or discard mindfulness or non-mindfulness. Therefore, they observe right mindfulness. With this mindfulness they do not discern in terms of sameness and difference. They neither perceive nor observe mindfulness nor non-mindfulness. Without such observations, bodhisattvas understand all forms of mindfulness to be non-mindfulness, and they do not distinguish between mindfulness and non-mindfulness. Because they abide in right mindfulness in this way, they are indescribable and inexpressible. They eliminate all means of verbal description and are free from all means of verbal description. By understanding all means of verbal description accurately, they do not draw distinctions between self and other. Therefore, this is abiding in right mindfulness.”

. Right Absorption .

8.11 “Lokadhara, how do bodhisattva great beings abide in right absorption? Bodhisattva great beings understand all forms of absorption to be wrong absorption. Why is this? [F.66.b] When they do not observe any phenomenon as absorption—such as by perceiving absorption to have marks, or by entering the joy of absorption—they understand the falsity of all the marks

of absorption. *Falsity* implies attachment, which is not present in absorption. Regarding the marks that result from engaging in observation, bodhisattvas are devoid of such false marks. They have no such expectations, do not form any such thoughts, and do not have any such concepts. This is absorption. If they have eliminated attachment and clinging, they will not conceptualize self or other. Having eliminated all attachment to joy, they do not appropriate the experience of absorption and prevent themselves from entering absorption. *Right absorption* is when the mind does not dwell on anything at all. Furthermore, right absorption entails not abiding in any states of absorption; it entails realizing the intrinsic nature of phenomena accurately, while being free from concepts. Thereby, one will become skilled in the characteristics of absorption, and one's mind will not be attached to anything at all. It is called *right absorption* because it eliminates all concepts of self and other, because it does not conceptualize anything that is spoken, and because it disrupts all concepts. Furthermore, it is called *right absorption* because it does not entertain any notions of right or wrong absorption, because it overcomes all notions, because it disrupts all notions, and because it stops all notions. Furthermore, it is called right absorption because it does not generate concepts of right or wrong, and because it does not discern in terms of right or wrong. Why is this? By understanding all practices as absorption and by abiding in right absorption, bodhisattvas are not bound by absorption or the marks of absorption. Transcending the marks of absorption is abiding in right absorption. Furthermore, right absorption is free from concepts about any phenomenon, [F.67.a] and it is free from concepts of right or wrong with regard to phenomena, which are sameness. Right absorption is the sameness of all phenomena. Right absorption transcends all forms of absorption and all the conditioned phenomena of the three realms. Still, it accurately sees and understands all who cycle among the five classes of beings."

8.12 "Lokadhara, in this manner bodhisattva great beings are skilled in the path of the noble ones and the practices of that path. By accurately seeing and understanding this, they will proceed to nirvāṇa."

8.13 *This was the eighth chapter: "The Eightfold Path of the Noble Ones."*

9. CHAPTER NINE: THE PHENOMENA OF THE
 WORLD AND TRANSCENDENCE

9.1 “Lokadhara, how are bodhisattva great beings skilled regarding the phenomena of the world and transcendence? What means do they obtain with regard to the phenomena of the world and transcendence? Lokadhara, bodhisattva great beings understand the phenomena of the world and transcendence to be true reality.

9.2 “What are the phenomena of the world? Bodhisattvas think, ‘Thoughts and concepts about phenomena arise from mistaken perception, they are generated by causes and conditions, and they depend on falsity. Since they arise from the marks of duality, they are empty and nonexistent. They fool childish ordinary beings, like the bright colors reflecting from a pearl or the spinning of a firebrand. *The world* is given as a synonym for things that decay and degenerate. This is the world. These worldly phenomena are all unreal; they arise from false conditions and lack the characteristics of arising or being created. They are labeled as aggregates, elements, sense sources, forms, sounds, odors, tastes, tactile objects, or mental objects, and described as *name-and-form*. [F.67.b] Through their attachment and clinging, childish ordinary beings generate further attachment and clinging in a variety of forms, just as tangled silk fringes⁷² or entwined roots and creepers are linked, one to another. Worldly phenomena are described based upon such mistaken perception.

9.3 “What are transcendent phenomena? *Transcendence* is a primordial and genuine disengagement from worldly phenomena. Why is this? The wise do not observe either worldly phenomena or transcendent phenomena, for they do not observe a locus of worldly and transcendent phenomena. For them, there is nothing that can be imputed as the world or transcendence, for transcendence is mentioned only because of the world, and the true characteristic of the world itself is transcendence. Why is this? The world cannot be observed to have any true characteristics. The characteristic of

both the world and transcendence has always been emptiness, because worldly phenomena lack any true characteristics. The world has always had the characteristic of total pacification. By understanding that worldly and transcendent phenomena in this manner cannot be observed, bodhisattvas are not attached to worldly phenomena or transcendence. They have no quarrel with the world, because they do not depend upon or become attached to worldly or transcendent phenomena. Why is this? The wise understand and realize the world to have the characteristic of falsity. By seeing the world as false, they do not conceptualize the world or transcendence. Why is this? Lokadhara, the *world* means the five aggregates for appropriation. [F.68.a] All worldly phenomena are included in this category. Yet, if investigated by the wise, the aggregates do not exist. They do not observe the aggregates as aggregates, or the nature of the aggregates. The aggregates cannot be observed as a locus of coming, as a locus of staying, or as a locus of going. Because the five aggregates, as well as the twelve sense sources and the eighteen elements, cannot be observed or analyzed, and because they are without name, nature, characteristic, or action, they are transcendence.

9.4 “Lokadhara, when bodhisattva great beings contemplate the phenomena of the world and transcendence, transcendent phenomena are not joined together with worldly phenomena, and transcendent phenomena are also never separate from worldly phenomena. This is how such people see transcendent phenomena as being inseparable from the world, and how they see worldly phenomena as inseparable from transcendent phenomena. Such people do not observe two different forms of conduct, worldly and transcendent. Why is this? Lokadhara, the true characteristic of the world is transcendence. The characteristic of the world cannot be observed in the world, and worldly phenomena cannot be observed in worldly phenomena. Because they are totally nonexistent in this way, realizing and understanding this is transcendence. Lokadhara, given that the world is not different from transcendence, the Blessed Buddha does not appear in the world, and the Thus-Gone One does not teach that worldly phenomena cannot be observed—all worldly phenomena can be accurately seen and understood, because they are unborn. [F.68.b] Lokadhara, not observing or engaging the world is transcendence. Therefore, understand this point: accurately understanding the world and realizing that it cannot be observed is transcendence. Therefore, the Blessed Buddha appeared in the world and declared, ‘Transcendence means to accurately see and understand how all worldly and transcendent phenomena are indivisible and nondual.’ Lokadhara, in this manner the world is incredibly profound and difficult to fathom. Dwelling on worldly phenomena, observing worldly phenomena,

hoping for transcendent phenomena, perceiving relative terminology to characterize the ultimate, and dwelling on dualistic phenomena will not lead one to actualize or understand this Dharma. Why is this? Such people fail to understand the world and transcendence, perceiving them as two different things. Lokadhara, if one perceives two different things, one will not know and understand the world and transcendence. Lokadhara, this is how bodhisattva great beings are highly skilled regarding the phenomena of the world and transcendence, and these are the means they obtain with regard to worldly and transcendent phenomena.”

9.5 *This was the ninth chapter: “The Phenomena of the World and Transcendence.”*

10. CHAPTER TEN: THE CONDITIONED AND THE
UNCONDITIONED

10.1 “Lokadhara, how are bodhisattva great beings highly skilled regarding conditioned and unconditioned phenomena? What means do they obtain regarding conditioned and unconditioned phenomena? Lokadhara, bodhisattva great beings discern and contemplate conditioned and unconditioned phenomena. [F.69.a]

10.2

“How do they discern and contemplate conditioned phenomena? Conditioned phenomena are compounded and without experiencer. Conditioned phenomena are called *conditioned phenomena* because they are considered to be naturally arising and naturally categorized. Conditioned phenomena come about due to formations created by false causes and conditions. Why are conditioned phenomena naturally categorized?⁷³ When formations are perceived through the condition of duality, they are labeled as conditioned phenomena. Conditioned phenomena are uncreated and free from a creator. Since they are naturally arising, they cannot be generated. Thus, they are called conditioned phenomena. Conditioned phenomena do not exist internally, externally, or somewhere in-between; they are not one or many. They arise from false imputation. They are nonexistent, since they have arisen through ignorance. Though they can be perceived due to formations, they are uncreated and nonarising. Therefore, they are called *conditioned*. Conditioned means being bound by marks, and the conditioned is taught for the sake of childish ordinary beings who are attached to mistaken perceptions. The wise, full of understanding and knowledge, do not observe them as conditioned phenomena or something understood to be conditioned phenomena. They are called conditioned phenomena because the wise do not categorize them. Why is this? How do the wise know and understand the features of the conditioned? The wise view all conditioned phenomena as being false, insubstantial, and without bondage. They see that they cannot be categorized. When they contemplate this, they are not attached to conditioned phenomena, and they do not appropriate conditioned phenomena. Why is this? Lokadhara, it is not the case that unconditioned phenomena exist separate from conditioned phenomena, or that conditioned phenomena exist separate from unconditioned phenomena, [F.69.b] for the characteristic of the thatness of the conditioned is the unconditioned. Why is this? There is nothing conditioned within the conditioned, and nothing unconditioned within the unconditioned. Still, so that mistaken beings can see and understand the characteristics of the conditioned, bodhisattvas teach and explain, saying, ‘This is conditioned,’ ‘This is unconditioned,’ ‘This is the characteristic of the conditioned,’ and ‘This is the characteristic of the unconditioned.’

10.3 “What are the characteristics of the conditioned? They are arising, ceasing, and remaining and transitioning. What are the characteristics of the unconditioned? They are not arising, not ceasing, and not remaining or transitioning. It is in order to guide childish ordinary beings that the characteristics of the conditioned and the characteristics of the unconditioned are taught.

10.4

“Lokadhara, conditioned phenomena have the characteristic of not arising, the characteristic of not ceasing, and the characteristic of not remaining or transitioning. Even though conditioned phenomena are said to remain and transition, they are unborn and free of marks. If there truly were unconditioned phenomena that had the three characteristics,⁷⁴ the Blessed One would say, ‘These are the characteristics of arising, these are the characteristics of ceasing, and these are the characteristics of remaining and transitioning.’ However, when it was appropriate to speak definitively, Lokadhara, the Thus-Gone One has said, ‘All phenomena are free of marks.’ Lokadhara, if not arising had marks, if not ceasing had marks, and if not remaining or transitioning had marks, the Blessed One would say that the unconditioned truly has marks. However, Lokadhara, if the unconditioned had marks, it would not be unconditioned. It is when one teaches in terms of marks, or when one teaches childish ordinary beings for whom phenomena must be categorized, [F.70.a] that the conditioned is said to have three characteristics: arising, ceasing, and remaining and transitioning; and the unconditioned is said to have three characteristics: not arising, not ceasing, and not remaining or transitioning. Lokadhara, when someone knows and understands conditioned and unconditioned phenomena, for that person there is no arising, ceasing, or remaining and transitioning. Therefore, this is said to be the attainment of the unconditioned.

10.5

“Lokadhara, arising and ceasing are seen and understood to mean the occurring of origination. If phenomena have no origination, they do not occur. If origination does not arise, it does not reverse course, and there is also no remaining or transitioning. Lokadhara, this is accurately seeing and understanding the thatness of the conditioned. One who accurately sees and understands this will not fall into the categories of arising, ceasing, and remaining and transitioning. Regarding conditioned and unconditioned phenomena, bodhisattvas think, ‘I do not consider conditioned phenomena to be joined together with unconditioned phenomena, or unconditioned phenomena to be joined together with conditioned phenomena.’ They also think, ‘The true characteristic of conditioned phenomena is the unconditioned itself.’ In this way they go beyond thinking. Not conceptualizing in terms of conditioned and unconditioned phenomena is itself unconditioned phenomenon. If one conceptualizes the conditioned and unconditioned, one cannot understand and know the unconditioned. If one eliminates all conceptuality, one understands and knows the unconditioned to be thatness. They understand the characteristic of observation, they eliminate all forms of observation, and they do not conceptualize in terms of categories or absence of categories. Lokadhara, these are bodhisattva great

beings' means with regard to conditioned and unconditioned phenomena.
[F.70.b] By not observing either conditioned or unconditioned phenomena,
they are free from attachment and grasping."

10.6 *This was the tenth chapter: "The Conditioned and the Unconditioned."*

11. CHAPTER ELEVEN: THE TEACHING ON
 WHAT OCCURRED IN THE PAST

- 11.1 “Lokadhara, through their great knowledge of the five aggregates, the eighteen elements, the twelve sense sources, the twelve links of dependent origination, the four applications of mindfulness, the five powers, the eightfold path of the noble ones, the phenomena of the world and transcendence, and conditioned and unconditioned phenomena, bodhisattva great beings will gain great knowledge of the characteristic of the thatness of all phenomena. They will become highly skilled in discerning the characteristics of phenomena. They will attain the power of recollection. They will have the intelligence that discerns the terminology for all phenomena. As soon as they exchange their bodies, they will obtain unbroken recollection, and they will eventually attain unsurpassed and perfect awakening.
- 11.2 “Lokadhara, countless immeasurable eons ago, a blessed buddha named Majestic Mount Meru of Gold from the Jambū River appeared in the world. He was a thus-gone one, a worthy one, a perfect buddha, perfect in knowledge and conduct, a blissful one, a knower of the world, an unsurpassed being, a charioteer who guides beings, and a teacher of gods and humans. Lokadhara, the lifespan of the blessed Majestic Mount Meru of Gold from the Jambū River was five eons. His saṅgha of hearers was immeasurable. His buddha realm was pure and happy. All the beings who lived there were happy and joyful; they had little attachment, aggression, and ignorance; [F.71.a] they were easy to guide, easy to correct, and easy to purify.
- 11.3 “Lokadhara, the blessed Majestic Mount Meru of Gold from the Jambū River taught his bodhisattva assemblies a discourse called *The Bodhisattva Collection That Counters the Doubts of All Beings*. Lokadhara, in the assembly there was a bodhisattva named Ratnaprabha. He became tremendously diligent when he heard the teachings on the practices of the five aggregates,

the eighteen elements, the twelve sense sources, the twelve links of dependent origination, the four applications of mindfulness, the five powers, the eightfold path of the noble ones, the phenomena of the world and transcendence, and conditioned and unconditioned phenomena. For the length of his life, which was two hundred thousand years, he never generated any attitude of negativity. Thus, he did not give rise to attachment, aggression, or ignorance, nor did he have any concern for profit, fame, food, drink, clothing, or his begging bowl. Rather, he generated great diligence in order to engage in the practice of this teaching. Lokadhara, the bodhisattva great being Ratnaprabha observed pure conduct within the teachings of the blessed Majestic Mount Meru of Gold from the Jambū River for his entire life. As he transitioned to another life, he was born again in that very buddha realm. After passing away young, he was once again born into that buddha realm, where he practiced pure conduct. He then took birth five hundred times per eon, until finally, at the end of the fifth eon, as the blessed Majestic Mount Meru of Gold from the Jambū River neared parinirvāṇa, he gained extensive learning and skill in applying Dharma teachings of the true characteristic such as this.⁷⁵ At that point, he remembered all the teachings that he had heard from this Buddha. Endowed with the power of such recollection, he requested the Blessed One, ‘Blessed One, I request an extensive explanation of these Dharma teachings. Would you please give it?’ [F.71.b] In that very life, he brought countless, immeasurable beings to unsurpassed and perfect awakening.

11.4 “As the blessed Majestic Mount Meru of Gold from the Jambū River passed into parinirvāṇa, he entrusted the bodhisattva Ratnaprabha to uphold the Dharma. Thereby, after the Blessed One had passed into parinirvāṇa, the Dharma remained for another eon. In his five hundred lifetimes during that eon, Ratnaprabha always took birth as a human being, received ordination, and generated and propagated the true reality of all phenomena. Additionally, he served the purpose of bringing benefit and happiness to countless numbers of immeasurably many beings.

11.5 “Lokadhara, in the same manner, the bodhisattva Ratnaprabha met many tens of thousands of other buddhas, until finally he received a prophecy from the buddha Apramāṇābha, who prophesied that after one countless eon, Ratnaprabha would fully awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood. During that countless eon, Ratnaprabha met billions of buddhas, after which he fully awakened to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood as the blessed buddha Ornament of Certainty in Any Subject. He became a thus-gone one, a worthy one, a perfect buddha, perfect in knowledge and conduct, a blissful one, a knower of the world, an unsurpassed being, a charioteer who guides beings, and a teacher of gods

and humans. His bodhisattva assembly was unfathomable and immeasurable. His assembly of hearers was also beyond count. This buddha's lifespan was two eons, and his buddha realm was very happy and adorned with the finest ornaments. Therefore, Lokadhara, bodhisattvas who wish to become skilled in the application of these teachings [F.72.a] must train in, recite, and exert themselves diligently in these teachings.

11.6 "Furthermore, bodhisattva great beings who wish to attain the skillful application of these teachings must exert themselves in developing four qualities. What are these four? They are going forth from the household into the homeless life, living alone, having pure discipline, and dispelling the attitude of laziness. Endowed with these four bodhisattva qualities, they will swiftly encounter four circumstances, if they apply themselves to study and are steadfast in patience. What are these four? They are being born in the center of Jambudvīpa, meeting the Buddha, practicing the Dharma, and dispelling the obscurations of negative action.

11.7 "Moreover, Lokadhara, bodhisattva great beings who exert themselves in this teaching will purify the powers of generosity, discipline, patience, diligence, concentration, and insight. When bodhisattva great beings live by this teaching, they will swiftly attain the power of skillful application. Moreover, Lokadhara, even when bodhisattva great beings engage in a small aspect of ascetic practice, they will do so with great compassion for beings. Immersed in such great compassion, they will exert themselves in the skillful application of these teachings. Moreover, Lokadhara, bodhisattva great beings who wish to attain such qualities must exert themselves in entering the dhāraṇī gateways. What does it mean to make effort to enter the dhāraṇī gateways? It means contemplating the limitless conditions for all Dharma teachings, contemplating the limitless skillful applications of all Dharma teachings, and, moreover, contemplating the emergence of these limitless skillful applications.⁷⁶ [F.72.b] As they contemplate such, they will use their skillful application of gateways of absorption to enter limitless conditions for gateways into all Dharma teachings. With such power of entry, with its limitless skillful applications, they will gain knowledge of the true reality of all phenomena. They will be skilled in discerning the characteristics of all phenomena. They will possess the power of recollection. They will possess the insight that is skilled in discerning all phenomena. After leaving their bodies, they will obtain unbroken recollection. Having become irreversible from the Dharma, they will eventually attain unsurpassed and perfect awakening.

11.8 "Lokadhara, furthermore, through having entered the dhāraṇī gateways, bodhisattva great beings understand all phenomena in accordance with each of their causes and conditions. Through a single cause and condition,

they understand thousands of causes and conditions, and attain access to all phenomena in accord with insight. Furthermore, Lokadhara, by generating such diligence in the practice of the Dharma, bodhisattva great beings will enter the absorption of the gateway of the single characteristic. Once they attain the absorption of the gateway of the single characteristic, they will enter the absorption of limitless characteristics. Once they have entered that, they will enter the gateway of all phenomena by means of various causes, conditions, and methods. In this manner, bodhisattvas attain access to all phenomena by entering the gateway of all phenomena.

11.9 “Furthermore, Lokadhara, by intensively cultivating insight, bodhisattva great beings become skilled concerning the characteristics of concentration and skilled in the absorption free from observation. Through the force of such absorption, they will become skilled in limitless forms of observation and limitless ways of arising from absorption. If bodhisattvas abide in this, they will gain access to the true characteristics of all phenomena. [F.73.a] Furthermore, Lokadhara, while bodhisattva great beings always contemplate the means of observing the world and contemplate the observation of conditioned phenomena, they also exert themselves in destroying the means of observing all phenomena, and they are free from any attachment. By cultivating this teaching, bodhisattvas will swiftly gain access to all phenomena. Furthermore, Lokadhara, when bodhisattva great beings practice with tremendous diligence and generate the strength of practice, they contemplate the true characteristic of all phenomena, do not dwell on worldly happiness, and do not get mixed up with worldly concerns. With such a practice, one will swiftly become skilled concerning the true characteristics of phenomena, become skilled in discerning the characteristics of phenomena, gain the power of recollection, gain the insight that is skilled in discerning the categories of all phenomena, gain unbroken recollection after leaving one’s body, and attain unsurpassed and perfect awakening. Therefore, Lokadhara, bodhisattva great beings who wish to perfect these qualities must practice according to this teaching. Lokadhara, if you diligently practice this teaching, before long you will attain unimpeded wisdom with regard to this teaching.

11.10 “Lokadhara, countless, limitless, fathomless immeasurable eons ago, a blessed buddha named Royal Light of Limitless Qualities appeared in the world. He was a thus-gone one, a worthy one, a perfect buddha, perfect in knowledge and conduct, a blissful one, a knower of the world, an unsurpassed being, a charioteer who guides beings, and a teacher of gods and humans. [F.73.b] The lifespan of the blessed one Royal Light of Limitless Qualities was one eon. His buddha realm was covered with a latticed canopy of the seven precious substances. This world was adorned with palm trees

made of the seven precious substances, and these palm trees themselves were adorned with latticed canopies of the seven precious substances. Below each palm tree was a lion throne. Divine fabrics magically appeared from each palm tree. The lion thrones were fashioned of beryl, gold from the Jambū River, and red pearl. In each of the four directions surrounding the palm trees were fragrant and flowering trees. Below each tree as well were small ponds filled with water of the eight qualities. The ponds were made of crystal, emerald, and red pearl. The surfaces of the ponds were covered with blue, red, white, and pink lotus flowers. The banks of the ponds were made of the seven precious substances.

11.11 “Lokadhara, this buddha realm was adorned with many precious substances. In the periphery, in the four directions of this world, were many thousands of trees found in the Heaven of the Thirty-Three, such as *pārijāta* and *kovidāra* trees. The light shining from these trees outshone the light of the sun, moon, and stars. Lokadhara, in this world various sublime melodies sprang from the palm trees and their jeweled lattices, and it sounded just like the melodious song and praises of the gods. The music was always extremely pleasing. There were no three lower realms here; even the name *three lower realms* was unheard of.

11.12 “Lokadhara, the blessed Royal Light of Limitless Qualities [F.74.a] taught the following Dharma in full to the beings there. He taught the perfection of insight and the Bodhisattva Collection called *Countering the Doubts and Pleasing the Minds of All Beings*. Lokadhara, when the blessed Royal Light of Limitless Qualities taught the Dharma, within a single day, hundreds of thousands of beings would develop the mind directed toward unsurpassed and perfect awakening. All of them also completed the accumulations that lead to awakening. Lokadhara, in this manner, the blessed Royal Light of Limitless Qualities ripened countless many innumerable beings to unsurpassed and perfect awakening. The bodhisattva great beings in this buddha realm were in great number. Lokadhara, after that Blessed One entered parinirvāṇa, the sublime Dharma remained for half an eon. Then, since the blessed Royal Light of Limitless Qualities had entered parinirvāṇa, the sublime Dharma came close to disappearing. At that time there was a bodhisattva named Limitless Intelligence, who lived in a buddha realm located below, past ten buddha realms. When his life there ended, he was born in this buddha realm, where he received ordination at the age of sixteen. When the Dharma of the blessed Royal Light of Limitless Qualities had come close to disappearing, he heard the discourse that applies the liberation of the bodhisattva great beings to the aggregates, elements, and sense sources. The bodhisattva Limitless Intelligence heard this discourse and generated great diligence, perfected the related qualities, and gained

the profound power of mastery. Through the causes and conditions of his roots of virtue, after this bodhisattva left that life, he encountered two hundred thousand buddhas [F.74.b] and received their teachings. Since he continuously recalled his past lives, he received ordination at an early age. He practiced pure conduct and always had the power of remembrance. No matter where he was born, he never lost this Dharma. In all his lives, his remembrance was unbroken. Once he fully awakened to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood, his name was Royal Array of Boundless Light. Lokadhara, therefore bodhisattva great beings who wish to fully awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood, and who seek to perfect omniscient wisdom rapidly, must, during the final period of five hundred years after I have entered parinirvāṇa, be diligent and generate a strong resolve. Then they must generate great interest, great diligence, and great carefulness, so that in that dire latter age they will protect and sustain this discourse and others.”

11.13 At that moment the bodhisattva Bhadrāpāla rose from his seat, and with his palms pressed together in the direction of the Blessed One said, “Blessed One, when the sublime Dharma comes close to disappearing during the final five-hundred-year period to come, we shall generate tremendous diligence and read, recite, listen, retain, and teach in full this discourse and others, in order to protect and sustain them.”

11.14 Additionally, thousands of bodhisattvas rose from their seats, and with palms pressed together in the direction of the Blessed One, gazed upon him with unblinking eyes and promised, “Blessed One, in the final five-hundred-year period to come, we will sustain and uphold this discourse, which is profound and free from attachment, which is the light of all the buddhas, [F.75.a] which arouses the virtuous qualities of the bodhisattvas, and which perfects the accumulations of awakening of all bodhisattvas. Having heard this teaching, we are purified—our minds are purified. We will exert ourselves in seeking, bearing, retaining, reciting, and reading it.”

11.15 The Blessed One then smiled, and the worlds of the great trichiliocosm were filled with light, and all the worlds shook six times. Then Ānanda rose from his seat, draped his shawl over one shoulder, and knelt on his right knee. With his palms together, he bowed toward the Blessed One and asked, “Due to what cause and condition did you smile today such that the earth shook?”

11.16 The Blessed One answered, “Did you see these bodhisattva great beings pledge, with great resolve, to sustain and uphold this profound discourse, the Dharma of nonattachment, in the future? Ānanda, these bodhisattvas have not only made this pledge in this one life. Ānanda, I recall that these bodhisattvas have previously pledged, in countless, innumerable buddha

realms, to sustain the teachings of those buddhas throughout the three times. Thereby, they have served the purpose of benefitting and bringing happiness to countless, innumerable beings. They will also protect and sustain my teachings throughout the three times. At present, and when the Dharma is waning after I have entered parinirvāṇa, they will serve the purpose of benefitting and bringing happiness to innumerable beings. [F.75.b] Ānanda,⁷⁷ Bhadrapāla and the others will not only sustain my teachings throughout the three times—they will also sustain and uphold the teachings of all the buddhas of this Fortunate Eon. Likewise, they will sustain and uphold similar teachings of the buddhas of the future. Ānanda, if I attempted to describe the effortlessly accomplished virtues of such bodhisattvas and the purposes they have served in benefitting and bringing happiness to innumerable beings, my explanations would never end. Ānanda, if I described the qualities of these bodhisattvas, beings would not believe it. If beings do not trust the Buddha’s speech, they will toss aside their long-term well-being and fall into the lower realms to suffer greatly. Ānanda, I shall now describe a mere fraction of the purposes these bodhisattvas have served in benefitting others and bringing them happiness, aside from the fact that they have adhered to their previous aspirations. Imagine that all beings in all the worlds of the great trichiliocosm had fallen into the great hells. One of them might then say, ‘All of you, do not be afraid. I will take upon myself all your suffering in these great hells.’ That being might then physically accept, for thousands of years, all the hellish suffering of the beings that had thus been freed from the great hell realms. Tell me Ānanda? Would that person have brought them great benefit and happiness?”

11.17 “Blessed One,” Ānanda replied, “that person would indeed have brought them great benefit and happiness.”

“Ānanda, imagine then that, having extricated these beings from the hells, that person independently brought them all the most sublime worldly happiness. Ānanda, would that person then have kindly benefitted these beings and brought them happiness?”

11.18 Ānanda replied, [F.76.a] “It would not be easy to verbally describe the benefit that person brought them.”

“Ānanda, today I have spoken the truth, for the benefit and happiness brought by such a person does not come close in terms of the measure, size, or likeness of the benefit and happiness brought to beings by the bodhisattva Bhadrapāla and the others. Why is this? Ānanda, the benefit brought by that being would be in terms of material comforts, all of which are conditioned phenomena, and so they would not bring about disenchantment, contentment, the abandonment of desire, insight, the fruits

of the mendicant life, or nirvāṇa. On the other hand, Ānanda, the benefit and happiness brought to beings by these bodhisattvas bring them unsurpassed happiness. They make the wise develop interest in pursuing the awakening of buddhahood; they perform the deeds of the buddhas; they cause the hearers and solitary buddhas—who have not yet entered the genuine abode—to attain that level; and they bring benefit and joy to bodhisattvas by teaching and instructing them through the Dharma teachings of buddhahood. Ānanda, bodhisattvas remain in the world teaching and instructing, thus bringing benefit and joy to others, in order to ensure the continuity of the lineage of the Buddha, and to protect and sustain the lineage of omniscient wisdom. Ānanda, when these beings previously engaged in bodhisattva conduct, they ensured the continuity of the buddhas' lineage for billions of eons, and in the future too they will ensure the continuity of the buddhas' lineage for countless millions of eons. Why is this? Ānanda, when these bodhisattvas were engaged in bodhisattva conduct in the past, they steered countless buddhas toward the awakening of buddhahood. In all their lives, these bodhisattvas protected the Dharma [F.76.b] and effortlessly accomplished the unsurpassed and perfect awakening of millions of buddhas. They also steered countless hundreds of thousands of beings toward the awakening of buddhahood, and, through the power of teaching and training them, they all perfected the qualities of buddhahood and fully awakened to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood. Ānanda, Bhadrapāla and the others have exerted themselves diligently so that many beings could attain the happiness of buddhahood and omniscient wisdom. Ānanda, if someone wishes to teach about the support and refuge, which are like a bodhisattva's parents, and the source of the bodhisattvas, they must be aware of the one hundred bodhisattvas, such as Bhadrapāla. Ānanda, if someone asks who was born in the family of the bodhisattvas, one must reply, 'They are the one hundred bodhisattvas, such as Bhadrapāla.'

11.19 "In this manner, these noble children stay in the world to ensure the continuity of the lineage of the buddhas, and to ensure the continuity of the lineage of omniscient wisdom. During the final five-hundred-year period to come, these noble children will use their power of skillful application in teaching and training, and the causes and conditions of happiness to prevent many beings from falling into the three lower realms. They will also establish countless thousands of other beings in the vehicle of the bodhisattvas. Ānanda, even thousands of buddhas could not conclusively extol the qualities of these noble children. Why is this? Because the virtues of these noble children are unfathomable. Ānanda, these noble children will sustain and uphold the Dharma that I accomplished over thousands of

countless and incalculable eons. Ānanda, I entrust them with, and instruct them in, the Jewel of the Dharma that I accomplished over countless thousands of eons. [F.77.a] This is because these noble children are cared for by all the buddhas presently abiding in their countless and incalculable buddha realms. Ānanda, these noble children are always an object for the veneration of the world and its gods and humans. Ānanda, when the thousands of buddhas throughout the ten directions teach the Dharma, they praise and advise these noble children. Ānanda, I prophesy that, in the future, a noble son or daughter who upholds, remembers, reads, recites, explains, or teaches it fully to others, in order to counter the doubts of all beings, be close to omniscient wisdom. Any being who hears this discourse in the future and feels faith, interest, and commitment to this profound Dharma must be prophesied to fully awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood. Any noble son or daughter who, during the final five-hundred-year period to come, arouses an attitude of faith and inspiration, and diligently guards and retains this discourse, will be entrusted and invested by me with the Dharma of unsurpassed and perfect awakening. I prophesy that any hearer who trusts this profound Dharma and does not have wrong notions about it will meet the Buddha Maitreya in the future. All those seeking the qualities of buddhahood who remember and trust this Dharma will receive prophecy from Buddha Maitreya; due to their past aspirations, they will take ordination and train in the lineage of awakening. Ānanda, know that during the final five-hundred-year period to come, any noble son or daughter who gives rise to diligence for the sake of this teaching will have zealous and constant roots of virtue." [F.77.b]

11.20 *This was the eleventh chapter: "The Teaching on What Occurred in the Past."*

12. CHAPTER TWELVE: THE ENTRUSTMENT

12.1 The bodhisattva great being Lokadhara then requested the Blessed One, “Blessed One, please consecrate this discourse to protect it and bring benefit and happiness to bodhisattva great beings. If bodhisattva great beings hear this discourse in the future, their minds will become pure, joyful, and happy. They will then give rise to diligence in order to accomplish these teachings.”

Then, as the Blessed One consecrated this discourse, he used his miraculous powers to fill the worlds of the great trichilocosm with miraculous and incredible scents and fragrances. Beings gazed upon one another with a loving attitude.

12.2 Once the Blessed One had consecrated it, he said to Lokadhara, “Lokadhara, my consecration of this discourse on the Dharma seal serves the purpose of dispelling all doubts. Lokadhara, anyone who carries, retains, reads, or recites this discourse will soon gain omniscient wisdom. I prophesy that such beings will swiftly perfect omniscient wisdom. Lokadhara, any bodhisattva great being who carries, retains, reads, recites, contemplates, or teaches and explains this discourse on the Dharma seal fully to others will before long gain skill with regard to the five aggregates, the eighteen elements, the twelve sense sources, the twelve links of dependent origination, the four applications of mindfulness, the four correct exertions, the four foundations of miracles, the five powers, [F.78.a] the five strengths, the seven aspects of awakening, the eightfold path of the noble ones, the phenomena of the world and transcendence, and conditioned and unconditioned phenomena. Furthermore, they will swiftly gain knowledge of the true characteristics of phenomena, skill in discerning the characteristics of phenomena, the power of mindfulness, insight that is skilled in discerning phenomena, unbroken mindfulness upon exchanging their bodies, and so forth, up to swiftly gaining unsurpassed and perfect awakening. Lokadhara, in times to come, this discourse will illuminate the vast Dharma for many beings and, due to the light of wisdom, become the

cause and condition for their merit. Furthermore, it will perfect the bodhisattvas' accumulation of unsurpassed and perfect awakening. Lokadhara, in the future, no māra or karmic obscuration will be able to obstruct any person who meets with this discourse or any of the other profound discourses containing the perfections that are included in the Bodhisattva Collection. Lokadhara, even if such people have not gained the acceptance that phenomena are unborn, I prophesy that they will gain the acceptance that phenomena are unborn following the second or third buddha that they meet. If they have gained the acceptance that phenomena are unborn, they will swiftly gain dominion over all phenomena, the purification of their buddha realm, an immeasurable saṅgha of hearers, and an assembly of bodhisattvas. Lokadhara, I have taught this Dharma-seal discourse in order to dispel the doubts of all beings in the future.

12.3 "Lokadhara, when bodhisattva great beings [F.78.b] see the four beneficial factors related to protecting and retaining this discourse and others, they will pledge to do so in the future. What are these four? Bodhisattvas consider that (1) they will swiftly gain immeasurable and unfathomable virtues, (2) sentient beings will create great roots of virtue and retain and protect the genuine Dharma of the buddhas,⁷⁸ (3) the Dharma collections of all the buddhas will be retained, and (4) they will be praised and honored by limitless buddhas.

12.4 "Lokadhara, you and other bodhisattva great beings must teach this collection of the Jewel of the Dharma, which I accomplished over hundreds of thousands of incalculable eons, extensively to gods and humans."

Then Bhadrāpāla and others bowed their heads to the Blessed One's feet and said, "To the best of our ability, and with the Blessed One's blessing, we promise to teach and explain this Jewel of the Dharma fully in the future."

12.5 When this Dharma-seal discourse was taught, a boundless, limitless, and countless number of bodhisattvas with just one life remaining effortlessly accomplished roots of virtue. Countless hundreds of thousands of beings developed the mind directed toward unsurpassed and perfect awakening and were prophesied doubtlessly to achieve unsurpassed and perfect awakening. When the Blessed One had spoken, all the bodhisattvas such as Lokadhara and Bhadrāpāla, as well as the fourfold assembly, and all gods, humans, and asuras rejoiced in what the Blessed One had taught.

12.6 *This was the twelfth chapter: "Entrustment."*

12.7 *This completes the Noble Sūtra "The Inquiry of Lokadhara."*

NOTES

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n.1 Herrmann-Pfandt, 2008.

n.2 Alternatively, although less likely, the Sanskrit source text for the Tibetan translation could have been nearly identical to Kumārajīva's source text.

n.3 Both the Stok manuscript (Tib. *rgya*) and the Chinese (印) read "seal" here, whereas the Degé reads "causes" (Tib. *rgyu*).

n.4 Translated based on the Chinese (衆生) and Stok (Tib. *sems can*). Degé reads: *sems*.

n.5 The expression "evil world of the five degenerations" (Tib. *rnyog pa lnga'i 'jig rten ngan pa*) is a rare, literal translation of the Chinese, 五濁惡世, which in turn translates the Sanskrit *pañcakaṣāyāloka*. This is further evidence that the Tibetan was translated from Chinese.

n.6 Translated based on Stok: *ma yin*. Degé reads: *yin*.

n.7 Meaning that when one takes a raft across a river, one need not carry the raft beyond the bank; it has served its purpose.

n.8 Kumārajīva's Chinese translation of this sentence, as it appears in Taishō 482, seems to present a quotation: "Noble children, as explained in the discourses, 'Monks, if those who want to know my Dharma are to discard even the Dharma as they would a raft, what need is there to mention what is non-Dharma?' " (諸善男子。如經中說。汝等比丘。若知我法如筏喻者。法尚應捨。何況非法。)。 Although the parable of the teachings being like a raft that must be discarded once it has served its purpose is well-known throughout Buddhist literature, we have been unable to locate this precise statement in other scriptures.

n.9

- Translated based on the Chinese: 若邪見者則爲妄見。是人不名爲眞見。 . Degé reads: *gang log par mthong ba de ni yang dag pa ma yin pa mthong ba ste gang zag de ni yang dag pa nyid mthong ba zhes bya'o.*
- n.10 Translated based on the Chinese: 夢中色相無有決定。但以憶想故有。色陰相亦如是。從先世業因緣出。無有決定性。 . Degé reads: *ri dang / chu dang / nags tshal la sogs par mthong ste / de ltar rmi lam gyis gzugs kyi mtshan ma de la nges par chad pa med de rnam par brtags pa'i 'du shes las gzugs kyi phung po'i mtshan mar skyed pa yang de bzhin te / sngon gyi las kyi rgyu dang rkyen las skyes te nges pa'i rang bzhin can ma yin no.*
- n.11 Translated based on the Chinese: 是菩薩爾時不減色亦不求減色法。 . Degé reads: *de ltar byang chub sems dpa' de'i tshe gzugs mi 'gag gzugs 'gags pa'i chos tshol lo.*
- n.12 Here “the five classes of beings” translates the Tibetan *lam rgyud lnga*. R. A. Stein (2010) suggests that *lam rgyud lnga*, or *lam lnga*, is a Tibetan rendering of the Chinese 五道. In fact, *lam rgyud lnga* appears almost exclusively in texts that are openly avowed to be translations from Chinese. This is perhaps the most compelling evidence to suggest a Chinese source text.
- n.13 Translated based on the Chinese: 亦不分別想陰滅。但爲滅一切想受陰故。亦住如實知見故。 . Degé reads: *'du shes kyi phung po dgag par rnam par mi rtog pa ni 'du shes kyi tshor ba thams cad dgag pa'i phyir yang dag pa ji lta ba bzhin shes shing mthong la gnas na'i phyir ro.*
- n.14 Translated based on Stok, which includes ...*mi gnas par*. This accords with the Chinese.
- n.15 “Mind, mentality, and consciousness” here respectively translate *sems* (Skt. *citta*), *yid* (Skt. *manas*), and *rnam par shes pa* (Skt. *vijñāna*).
- n.16 Translation of this sentence is tentative. This interpretive rendering is based on a comparison of the Tibetan and the Chinese. The Chinese reads: 分別虛妄事故。以一相故。以決定相故。能得是心是意是識。能得分別愛著。 . Degé reads: *rnam par rtog pa'i yang dag pa ma yin pa'i dngos po'i phyir / mtshan nyid gcig pa'i phyir / nges pa'i mtshan nyid gcig pa'i phyir sems de dang / yid dang / rnam par shes pa de thob cing chags pa rnam par 'byed pa la mkhas pa thob par 'gyur ro.* Interestingly, the Chinese 分別 maps throughout the translation to both the Tibetan *rnam par 'byed pa* and *rnam par rtog pa*; and according to the online *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism* (www.buddhism-dict.net/ddb/) (<http://www.buddhism-dict.net/ddb/>), it is a possible translation of both the Sanskrit *vibhaj* and cognates like *vibhāga*, as well as *vikalpa/saṃkalpa* or

even just *kalpa*. 能, for its part, typically lends an “agential” sense to its attached verb in the Chinese, so it could remain untranslated in Tibetan, but it can also be a translation of the Sanskrit terms *kuśala*, *pañḍita*, and *pravīṇa*, all of which *mkhas pa* also renders. Perhaps this is a translation error from Chinese to Tibetan, possibly with an extra scribal “correction” added later due to misunderstanding, which would account for why the “childish ordinary people” would “attain skill in discerning attachment,” a concept that hardly makes sense in this context.

- n.17 Read according to Stok: *ma skyes*. Also, the Chinese reads: 不生。 .
- n.18 Tibetan: *'khrul 'khor gyi mi*; Chinese: 機關木人。 . This Tibetan term appears only in Kangyur texts that were translated from Chinese.
- n.19 Translated according to the Chinese (壞) and other Tibetan variants instead of Degé, which reads: *'jog*.
- n.20 Translated according to the Stok, which reads: *gzugs med pa'i khams kyi lha'i nye bar len*, and the Chinese, which also includes the word for “gods/devas” 諸天. Degé reads: *gzugs med pa'i khams kyi nye bar len*.
- n.21 Translation informed by the Chinese: ...故。 諸佛如來作如是分別說。 . Degé does not show this sentence as explicitly introducing the following paragraph. A variant reading in the Chinese is missing 說. It reads, “the thus-gone buddhas analyzed as follows.”
- n.22 Tib. *srid* read as *sred* according to Stok and the Chinese.
- n.23 Translated from the Chinese: 從顛倒無明闇冥起。 .
- n.24 Tentative translation. The Tibetan reads: *nges par gcad pa* (Skt. *nirlūna*). The Chinese reads 決定說五陰相, “speak/teach with certainty about the marks of the five aggregates,” or “speak about the marks of five aggregates as real.” Given the parallelism with the phrase below, which reads in Tibetan *nges par/nges pa'i 'chad pa*, and thus closely reflects the Chinese, the Tibetan *nges par gcad pa* is most likely a corruption of the former.
- n.25 Translation tentative. Tibetan: *nges pa'i 'chad pa*; Chinese: 決定說.
- n.26 Tib. *smān pa* read as *smon pa* according to Urga edition of the Kangyur, which accords with the Chinese: 所願.
- n.27 This accords also with the Chinese: 若坐若經行.
- n.28 Read according to Stok: *dmigs su med* and the Chinese: 不可得。 .

- n.29 Interestingly, the Chinese here reads: 不合不散, “neither gathered nor separated.”
- n.30 Read according to the Chinese: 識所行處是眼識性。是識無決定故。說無決定相。無生故。示虛妄故。能分別色相故。能示緣故。 .
- n.31 This introductory phrase is supplied by the Chinese: 說是十八性...。 .
- n.32 Translated in part according to the Chinese 離意性則無意。意性不能知意。假名字故說爲意性。 . Degé reads: *yid kyi khams las gud na yid dang yid kyi khams zhes ba ba med / yid du mi shes kyang bla dags su yid kyi khams zhes btags so.*
- n.33 According to Yongle, Kangxi, Narthang, Lhasa, and Stok: ...*rang bzhin med pas rang bzhin nyid*. This also reflects the Chinese: 法性無自性。自性不可得。 . Degé reads: ...*rang bzhin nyid dmigs su med de.*
- n.34 Reading informed by the Chinese: 但令衆生知見善不善法。以法性說離一切法相。 .
- n.35 Read according to the Chinese: 聖人求之不可得。 .
- n.36 Read according to the Chinese: 意識不知意性。意性不知意識。 .
- n.37 Both “element” and “realm” here translate the same term (Skt. *dhātu*; Tib. *khams*), albeit used in different contexts.
- n.38 The eye and form.
- n.39 Sentence parsed according to the Chinese: 如來說是諸入知見相。 .
- n.40 Read according to Stok, Yongle, Kangxi, Choné, and the Chinese.
- n.41 Read according to the Chinese: 如來如實通達故示是諸入。 .
- n.42 The Chinese reads 行, “formations” here.
- n.43 The Chinese here reads “that all phenomena do not exist”: 一切法無所有。 .
- n.44 Read according to the Chinese: 是六入因名色起。 .
- n.45 Read according to the Chinese: 亦不離受有愛。 .
- n.46 Here the Tibetan text includes a negation (Tib. *ma*), which we have not translated based on the previous occurrences of this sentence in which the negation is absent.
- n.47 Read according to the Chinese (老死憂悲苦惱亦不依生) and Stok (...*skye ba la mi gnas*).

- n.48 Read according to the Chinese: 作者受者。 .
- n.49 Read according to Stok: *chos zhes bya ba med na* and Chinese, which analogously reads: 若法無者。 .
- n.50 Glossed with the help of the Chinese: 不得自在不得隨意。 作是不作是。 . Degé reads: *gzhan ma yin / dbang med pa / 'dir rang nyams byar med pa / byas pa'o nyam du sems so*.
- n.51 Read according to Stok: *mi 'gyur ba'i mtshan nyid med pa*, and the Chinese: 無不變異相。 .
- n.52 Read according to Stok: *mi 'gyur ba med pa*, and the Chinese: 無不變異相。 .
- n.53 Here the Chinese reads: 空拳, “empty fist.”
- n.54 Reading *med pa* according to Yongle and Kangxi. Degé and other editions read *mang po*.
- n.55 Parsed according to the Chinese: 作是念諸受空性空故。 .
- n.56 Read according to the Chinese: 念念生滅相續不斷故. Degé: *skad cig skad cig gis sky zhing 'gog pa gcig gis bsags pa rgyun mi 'chad pas sems zhes bya ste*.
- n.57 Read according to the Chinese: 客塵煩惱染故有分別。 . Degé: *blo bur gyi nyon mongs pas kun nas nyon mongs pa rnam par rtog kyang*.
- n.58 Read according to the Chinese: 菩薩見知心清淨相。 亦知衆生心清淨相。 作是念。 心垢故衆生垢。 心淨故衆生淨。 . Degé: *byang chub sems dpa' rnam bdag gi sems rnam par dag pa nyid du shes shing mthong bas sems can dag gi sems kyang rnam par dag par shes te snyam du sems so / sems dri ma yod pas na / sems rnam par dag pas na sems can yang rnam par dag pa'o*.
- n.59 Read according to the Chinese: 所謂是諸法屬是人。 諸法本體於諸法中無諸法。 . Degé: *'di lta ste / chos thams cad gang zag dbang po zhes bya ba dang chos kyi ngo bo nyid ces bya ba ni chos thams cad chos zhes ba med de*.
- n.60 Read according to the Chinese: 見一切法盡滅相寂滅相。 . Degé: *des chos thams cad kyi mi 'gog pa zad pa'i mtshan nyid dang rab tu zhi ba'i mtshan nyid kyang mthong ngo*. As such, the Tibetan translation splits 盡滅 into 'gog pa and zad pa, though curiously it includes a negative *mi* prefix before the two, which clearly contrasts with the Chinese 盡滅相. Also, 盡滅 need not be split, since these two characters taken together in compound can also often mean “extinguished.”

- n.61 The Chinese would read here: “pure liberation and pure knowledge and experience of liberation”; 解脱清淨。解脱知見清淨。 .
- n.62 Here “bring to mind” translates Tib. *dran par byed*, which could also be translated “remain mindful of.” The meaning here is that they analyze the nature of such actions in general, rather than observe them unfold in the present.
- n.63 Read according to Stok: *ting nge 'dzin las dka' ba'm chung ba med par 'dod pa bzhin du*, and the Chinese: 於諸定中不以爲難不以爲少。隨意所欲。 .
- n.64 This term (Tib. *dbang po*, Skt. *indriya*) has many uses and connotations, and can refer to the god Indra or someone who is similarly dominant in a particular arena. Thus the word conveys a sense of power and leadership.
- n.65 Tib. *kyis* read as *kyi* according to Urga.
- n.66 Tib. *mkhas pa'i* read as *mkhas pas* according to Yongle and Kangxi. Parsed according to the Chinese.
- n.67 Read according to the Chinese: 云何名爲正見。一切法寂滅。念相不生不滅同於涅槃。 . Degé: *de la ji ltar na yang dag par lta bas chos thams cad rab tu zhi ba dang / rang bzhin gyis mi skye mi 'gog cing mya ngan las 'das pa dang 'thun pa gang zhe na*.
- n.68 Read according to the Chinese: 如是亦不念不分別是一切法。不念不分別不現在前。 . Degé: *'di ltar mi rtog pa dang / rnam par mi rtog pa'i chos thams cad la mi rtog rnam par mi rtog mngon sum du byed ma yang ma yin*.
- n.69 Alternately, Stok would read: “The cessation of thought is no thought,” (*rnam par rtog pa bcad pa ni rnam par mi rtog pa'o*), and the Chinese would read: “The cessation of thought is right thought” (斷分別是正分別。).
- n.70 Reading *'tsho* according to Yongle and Kangxi. Degé and other versions read *tshor*.
- n.71 For example, according to monastic regulations, monks are permitted thirteen articles of livelihood, which include their robes and basic necessities like a washing rag, razor, and sitting mat.
- n.72 Translation tentative. Degé: *kha tshar dar 'dzings pa*.
- n.73 Read according to the Chinese: 云何為行自墮數中。 . Degé: *'du byed cis bya ba ni bgrang ba'i grangs su gtogs*.
- n.74 The three characteristics are arising, remaining, and ceasing.

- n.75 Reading informed by the Chinese: 亦得如是諸法實相方便.
- n.76 Read informed by the Chinese: 所謂善觀一切法無量緣。觀一切法無量方便。亦觀無量方便起。 . Variant readings provide the following for this phrase: 所謂善觀諸法無量緣。觀一切無量方便。亦觀無量方便起。 . This would alternatively read: “It means contemplating the limitless conditions of Dharma teachings, contemplating the skillful application of all the limitless [conditions], and contemplating the emergence of limitless skillful applications. The Tibetan reads: *chos thams cad kyi rkyen tshad med pa la rtog pa dang / tshad med pa thams cad kyi rtog pa la sbyor ba dang ldan pa'i sbyor ba'i tshad pa la rtog pa'o/*.
- n.77 Degé reads “Lokadhara,” but this seems to be an error.
- n.78 Tib. *zhing* omitted according to Yongle, Lithang, Kangxi, Narthang, and Choné.

b.

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GLOSSARY

g.

g.1 Absorption

ting nge 'dzin

ཉིང་འཛིན།

samādhi

A general term for states of deep concentration. One of the synonyms for meditation, referring in particular to a state of complete concentration or focus.

g.2 Acceptance

bzod pa

བཟོད་པ།

kṣānti

The capacity to accept or tolerate experiences which ordinary beings cannot tolerate. It is the preparatory step to profound insight into reality. It also refers to the third stage of the path of joining (*prayogamārga, sbyor lam*). It is also the third transcendent perfection, in which context it has been rendered here as patience.

g.3 Aggregate

phung po

ཕུང་པོ།

skandha

See “five aggregates for appropriation.”

g.4 Aggregate for appropriation

nye bar len pa'i phung po

ཉེ་བར་ལེན་པའི་ཕུང་པོ།

upādānaskandha

See “five aggregates for appropriation.”

g.5 Ānanda

dga' bo

དགའ་བོ།

Ānanda

阿難

g.6 Anguished spirit

yi dwags

ཡི་དྲགས།

preta

One of the five or six classes of sentient beings, considered to be the karmic fruition of past miserliness. In Sanskrit, literally “the departed”; they are analagous to the ancestral spirits of Vedic tradition, the *pitṛs*, who starve without the offerings of descendants. They live in the realm of Yama, the Lord of Death. They are particularly known to suffer from great hunger and thirst and the inability to acquire sustenance.

g.7 Applications of mindfulness

dran pa nye bar bzhag pa

སྒྲ་པ་ཉེ་བར་བཞག་པ།

smṛtyupasthāna

念處

See “four applications of mindfulness.”

g.8 Apprehension

dmigs pa

དམིགས་པ།

ālambana · upalabdhi

A term for the apprehension of a subject, an object, and the relationships that exist between subjects and objects. The term might also be translated as “referentiality,” meaning a system based on the existence of referent objects, referent subjects, and the referential relationships that exist between them. As part of their doctrine of “threefold non-apprehension/non-referentiality” (*khor gsum mi dmigs pa*), Mahāyāna Buddhists famously assert that all three categories of apprehension lack substantiality.

g.9 Appropriation

nye bar len pa · len pa

ཉེབར་ལེན་པ། . ལེན་པ།

upādāna

In some texts, four types of appropriation are listed: of desire (*rāga*), of view (*dṛṣṭi*), of rules and observances as paramount (*śīlavrataaparāmarśa*), and of belief in a self (*ātmavāda*). The term *nye bar len pa* also means “grasping” and it was rendered as such when it refers to the ninth of the twelve links of dependent origination, between craving and becoming.

g.10 Apramāṇābha

tshad med 'od

ཚད་མེད་འོད།

Apramāṇābha

無量光

A buddha from the past.

g.11 Ascetic practice

sbyangs pa'i yon tan

སྤྲུངས་པའི་ཡོན་ཏན།

dhūtaguṇa

頭陀

An optional set of thirteen practices that monastics can adopt in order to cultivate greater detachment. They consist of 1) wearing patched robes made from discarded cloth rather than from cloth donated by laypeople; 2) wearing only three robes; 3) going for alms; 4) not omitting any house while on the alms round, rather than begging only at those houses known to provide good food; 5) eating only what can be eaten in one sitting; 6) eating only food received in the alms bowl, rather than more elaborate meals presented to the Saṅgha; 7) refusing more food after indicating one has eaten enough; 8) dwelling in the forest; 9) dwelling at the root of a tree; 10) dwelling in the open air, using only a tent made from one’s robes as shelter; 11) dwelling in a charnel ground; 12) satisfaction with whatever dwelling one has; and 13) sleeping in a sitting position without ever lying down.

g.12 Asura

lha ma yin

ལྷ་མ་ཡིན།

asura

One of the six classes of sentient beings. The asuras are engendered and dominated by envy, ambition, and hostility and are metaphorically described as being incessantly embroiled in disputes with the gods (*deva*). They are frequently portrayed in brahmanical mythology as having a disruptive effect on cosmological and social harmony.

g.13 Bhadrapāla

bzang skyong

བཟང་སྐྱོང་།

Bhadrapāla

跋陀婆羅

A bodhisattva in the Buddha's retinue.

g.14 Blessed One

bcom ldan 'das

བཅོམ་ལྡན་འདས།

bhagavat · bhagavān

In Buddhist literature, an epithet applied to buddhas, most often to Śākyamuni. The Sanskrit term generically means "possessing fortune," but in specifically Buddhist contexts implies that a buddha is in possession of six auspicious qualities (*bhaga*) associated with complete awakening. The Tibetan term—where *bcom* is said to refer to "subduing" the four *māras*, *ldan* to "possessing" the great qualities of buddhahood, and *'das* to "going beyond" *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa*—possibly reflects the commentarial tradition where the Sanskrit *bhagavat* is interpreted, in addition, as "one who destroys the four *māras*." This is achieved either by reading *bhagavat* as *bhagnavat* ("one who broke"), or by tracing the word *bhaga* to the root $\sqrt{bhañj}$, "to break."

g.15 Blissful one

bde bar gshegs pa

བདེ་བར་གསེགས་པ།

sugata

Epithet of a buddha, meaning "one who has reached bliss."

g.16 Bodhisattva Collection

byang chub kyi sde snod

བྱང་ལྡན་གྱི་སྡེ་སྣོད།

bodhisattvapiṭaka

菩薩藏

An old term for Mahāyāna corpus.

g.17 Body of form

gzugs kyi sku

གཟུགས་ཀྱི་སྐུ།

rūpakāya

色身

The dimension of a buddha that corresponds to relative truth and is perceptible to either ordinary beings (*nirmāṇakāya*) or sublime beings (*saṃbhogakāya*).

g.18 Bringer of Benefit

phan par 'gyur ba

ཕན་པར་འགྱུར་བ།

—

德益

A king in Royal Mountain of Great Intelligence's buddha realm.

g.19 Buddha realm

sangs rgyas kyi zhing

སངས་རྒྱས་ཀྱི་ཞིང་།

buddhakṣetra

A pure realm manifested by a buddha or advanced bodhisattva through the power of their great merit and aspirations.

g.20 Conditioned

'dus byas

འདུས་བྱས།

saṃskṛta

This term refers to composite objects in the generic sense. In other contexts, it can also refer to “formations.”

g.21 Consciousness

rnam par shes pa

རྣམ་པར་ཤེས་པ།

vijñāna

The third link of dependent origination, the fifth of the five aggregates. In most Abhidharma accounts it comprises the six sensory consciousnesses (eye, ear, nose, taste, body, and mind), but in Yogācāra theory two more kinds of consciousness, afflicted (*kliṣṭamanas*) and storehouse (*ālayavijñāna*), are added. For the sixth consciousness, see also “mind consciousness.”

g.22 Definitive meaning

nges pa'i don

ངེས་པའི་དོན།

nītārtha

了義

The ultimate meaning of a given Dharma teaching.

g.23 Desire realm

*'dod kham*s

འདོད་ཁམས།

kāmadhātu

In Buddhist cosmology, it is our sphere of existence where beings are driven primarily by the urge for sense gratification.

g.24 Dhāraṇī

gzungs

གཟུངས།

dhāraṇī

陀羅尼

Usually this term refers to a statement, or spell, meant to protect or bring about a particular result. Here however, the term also has the meaning of “recall” or “memory.”

g.25 Dharma

chos

ཚོས།

dharma

The term “dharma” (*chos*) conveys ten different meanings, according to Vasubandhu’s *Vyākhyāyukti*. It may mean the Buddhist teachings, the awakened qualities which buddhas and bodhisattvas acquire, phenomena or things in general, etc. In the context of this work, it was rendered as

“Dharma” when it refers to the teachings, and in other contexts, rendered according to the specific meaning, namely as phenomena and qualities. See also [i.4](#).

g.26 Dharma body

chos kyi sku

ཚོས་ཀྱི་སྐུ།

dharmakāya

法身

One of the subdivisions in the collection of dharmas that constitutes a Buddha, variously explained but usually more closely related to the aspect of ultimate truth.

g.27 Dharma gateway

chos kyi sgo

ཚོས་ཀྱི་སྐོ།

dharmamukha

法門

A teaching or spiritual method by which the Dharma is understood.

g.28 Dīpaṅkara

mar me mdzad

མར་མེ་མཛད།

Dīpaṅkara

然燈

One of the most renowned of former buddhas.

g.29 Eighteen elements

khams bco brgyad

ཁམས་བཅོ་བརྒྱད།

aṣṭadaśadhātu

One way of describing experience and the world in terms of eighteen elements (eye, form, and eye consciousness; ear, sound, and ear consciousness; nose, odor, and nose consciousness; tongue, taste, and tongue consciousness; body, touch, and body consciousness; mind, mental phenomena, and mind consciousness).

g.30 Eightfold path of the noble ones

'phags pa'i lam yan lag brgyad pa

འཕགས་པའི་ལམ་ལན་ལག་བརྒྱད་པ།

āryāṣṭāṅgamārga

八聖道分

Correct view, thought, speech, actions, livelihood, effort, mindfulness, and absorption. These eight are part of the thirty-seven factors of awakening.

g.31 Element

kham

ལམས།

dhātu

性

See “eighteen elements.”

g.32 Factors of awakening

byang chub kyi phyogs kyi chos

བྱང་ཚུབ་ཀྱི་ཕྱོགས་ཀྱི་ཚོས།

bodhipakṣadharmā

助菩提法

The set of practices that lead to awakening, traditionally listed as thirty-seven.

g.33 Feeling

tshor ba

ཚོར་བ།

vedanā

The seventh link of dependent origination. The second of the five aggregates.

g.34 Five aggregates for appropriation

nye bar len pa'i phung po lnga · phung po lnga

ཉེབར་ལེན་པའི་ཕུང་པོ་ལྔ། . ཕུང་པོ་ལྔ།

pañcopadānaskandha · pañcaskandha

The five aggregates (*skandha*) of form, feeling, perception, formation, and consciousness. On the individual level the five aggregates refer to the basis upon which the mistaken idea of a self is projected. They are referred to as the “bases for appropriation” (*upādāna*) insofar as all conceptual grasping arises on the basis of these aggregates.

g.35 Five degenerations

snyigs ma lnga

སྡིགས་མ་ལྔ།

pañcakaṣāya

The five degenerations are: (1) degeneration of life span, (2) degeneration of views, (3) degeneration of the afflictions (4) degeneration of beings, and (5) the degeneration of the era.

g.36 Five mental obscurations

sgrib pa lnga

སློབ་པ་ལྔ།

pañcanīvaraṇa

五蓋

Longing for desires (*kāmacchanda*), malice (*vyāpāda*), sloth and torpor (*styānamiddha*), excitement and remorse (*auddhatyakauṛtya*), and doubt (*vicikitsā*).

g.37 Five powers

dbang po lnga

དབང་པོ་ལྔ།

pañcendriya

五根

Faith, diligence, mindfulness, absorption, and insight. These are the same as the five strengths at a lesser stage of development. See also [n.64](#).

g.38 Five strengths

stobs lnga

སློབས་ལྔ།

pañcabala

Faith, diligence, mindfulness, absorption, and insight. These are the same as the five powers, at a further stage of development.

g.39 Form

gzugs

གཟུགས།

rūpa

The first of the five aggregates. The third of the eighteen elements.

g.40 Form realm

gzugs khams

གཟུགས་ཁམས།

rūpadhātu

In Buddhist cosmology, the sphere of existence one level more subtle than our own (the desire realm), where beings, though subtly embodied, are not driven primarily by the urge for sense gratification.

g.41 Formation

'du byed

འདུ་བྱེད།

saṃskāra

Fourth of the five aggregates, second of the twelve links of dependent origination, and in the context of the aggregates sometimes also called “volitions,” “volitional formations,” or “compositional factors,” these are complex propensities that bring about action.

g.42 Formless realm

gzugs med khams

གཟུགས་མེད་ཁམས།

ārūpyadhātu

In Buddhist cosmology, the sphere of existence two levels more subtle than our own (the desire realm), where beings are no longer physically embodied, and thus not subject to the sufferings that physical embodiment brings.

g.43 Four applications of mindfulness

dran pa nye bar bzhag pa bzhi

དྲན་པ་ཉེ་བར་བཞག་པ་བཞི།

catuḥsmṛtyupasthāna

四念處

Four contemplations on: (1) the body, (2) feelings, (3) mind, and (4) mental objects. These four contemplations are part of the thirty-seven factors of awakening.

g.44 Four concentrations

bsam gtan bzhi

བསམ་གཏན་བཞི།

caturdhyāna

四禪

The four levels of mental absorption practiced by the gods in the formless realms: (1) the sphere of infinite space, (2) the sphere of infinite consciousness, (3) the sphere of nothingness, and (4) the sphere of neither perception nor nonperception.

g.45 Four correct exertions

yang dag par spong ba bzhi

ཡང་དག་པར་སློང་བ་བཞི།

catuḥsamyakprahāṇa · catuḥsamyakpradāṇa

Four types of effort consisting in abandoning existing negative mind states, abandoning the production of such states, giving rise to virtuous mind states that are not yet produced, and letting those states continue.

g.46 Four foundations of miracles

rdzu 'phrul gyi rkang pa bzhi

རྩུ་འཕྲུལ་གྱི་རྐང་པ་བཞི།

caturṛddhipāda

The four foundations or bases of miraculous power are: determination, discernment, diligence, and absorption. These are among the thirty-seven factors of awakening.

g.47 Four great elements

chen po bzhi · 'byung ba chen po bzhi

ཆེན་པོ་བཞི། . འབྱུང་བ་ཆེན་པོ་བཞི།

mahābhūta

四大

The four “main” or “great” outer elements of earth, water, fire, air, and (when there is a fifth) space.

g.48 Four types of fearlessness

mi 'jigs pa rnam pa bzhi

མི་འཇིགས་པ་རྣམ་པ་བཞི།

caturvaiśāradya · caturabhaya

This refers to the four confidences or fearlessnesses of the Buddha: confidence in having attained realization, confidence in having attained elimination, confidence in teaching the Dharma, and confidence in teaching the path of aspiration to liberation.

g.49 Gandharva

dri za

དྲི་ཟ།

gandharva

A class of spirits, sometimes described as celestial musicians. In other contexts the term can also refer to beings in the bardo-state.

g.50 Garuḍa

nam mkha' lding

ནམ་མཁའ་ལྗོངས།

garuḍa

Lower class of divine being, described as an eagle-type bird with a gigantic wingspan. They were traditionally enemies of the nāgas. In the Vedas, they were thought to have brought nectar from the heavens to earth.

g.51 God

lha

ལྷ།

deva

One of the five or six classes of sentient beings, specifically engendered and dominated by exaltation, indulgence, and pride. According to Buddhist cosmology, the gods are said to exist in many levels of celestial or divine realms, higher than that of the human realm, within in the desire realm, in the form realm, and in the formless realm.

g.52 Great trichiliocosm

*stong gsum gyi stong chen po'i 'jig rten gyi kham*s

སྟོང་གསུམ་གྱི་སྟོང་ཆེན་པོའི་འཇིག་རྟེན་གྱི་ཁམས།

trisāhasramahāsāhasralokadhātu

The largest universe spoken of in Buddhist cosmology, consisting of one billion smaller world systems.

g.53 Hearer

nyan thos

ཉན་ཐོས།

śrāvaka

It is usually defined as “those who hear the teaching from the Buddha and make it heard to others.” Primarily it refers to those disciples of the Buddha who aspire to attain the state of an arhat by seeking self liberation and nirvāṇa.

g.54 Heaven of Joy

dga' ldan

དགའ་ལྷན།

Tuṣita

兜率天

One of the six heavens of the desire realm, where all future buddhas dwell prior to their awakening.

g.55 Heaven of the Thirty-Three

sum cu rtsa gsum

སུམ་རུ་ཙ་གསུམ།

Trāyastriṃśā

忉利天

One of the six heavens of the desire realm.

g.56 Hell being

sems can dmyal ba

སེམས་ཅན་དམྱལ་བ།

naraka

One of the five or six classes of sentient beings, engendered by anger and powerful negative actions. They are dominated by great suffering and said to dwell in eight different hells with specific characteristics.

g.57 Inferred meaning

bkri ba'i don

བཀྲི་བའི་དོན།

neyārtha

未了義

Meaning which can be logically inferred from a Dharma teaching, though is stated explicitly.

g.58 Insight

shes rab

-

ཤེས་རབ།

prajñā

The sixth of the six perfections, it refers to the profound understanding of the emptiness of all phenomena, the realization of ultimate reality. It is also one of the five powers.

g.59 Jambudvīpa

'dzam bu'i gling

འཛམ་བུ་རྒྱུད།

Jambudvīpa

閻浮提

The southern continent, one the four comprising our world in the Buddhist cosmology.

g.60 Kalandakanivāpa

bya ka lan ta ka

བྱ་ཀ་ལན་ཏ་ཀ

Kalandakanivāpa

迦蘭陀

Literally, “The *kalandaka* Feeding Ground,” a location within the Veṇuvana where the Buddha stayed; it received its name from the many *kalandaka* that lived or were fed there. The Tibetan rendering *bya ka lan da ka* makes it clear that the Tibetans considered the *kalandaka* to be a kind of bird, while Sanskrit and Pali sources generally agree that it is a kind of squirrel—perhaps therefore the Indian flying squirrel, *Petaurista philippensis*.

g.61 King of Immeasurable Stacked Flowers

tshad med pa'i me tog brtsegs pa'i rgyal po

ཚད་མེད་པའི་མེ་ཏོག་བརྗེགས་པའི་རྒྱལ་པོ།

—

無量花積王

A buddha who resides to the east of our world.

g.62 King of Lofty and Immeasurable Power

tshad med pa stobs mtho ba'i rgyal po

ཚད་མེད་པ་སྟོབས་མཐོ་བའི་རྒྱལ་པོ།

—

無量力高王

A buddha from the past.

g.63 King of Lofty Wisdom

ye shes mtho ba'i rgyal po

ཡེ་ཤེས་མཐོ་བའི་རྒྱལ་པོ།

—

智高王

A buddha from the past.

g.64 Kinnara

mi'am ci

མི་འམ་ཅི།

kinnara

A class of semidivine beings known for their musical skills, depicted as half horse and half human, or half bird and half human.

g.65 Limitless Intelligence

tshad med blo gros

ཚད་མེད་སྒྲོ་བློས།

—

無量意

A son of King Bringer of Benefit and a bodhisattva in a story told by the Buddha.

g.66 Limitless Light

tshad med 'od

ཚད་མེད་འོད།

—

無量光

Limitless Power upon his awakening.

g.67 Limitless Power

tshad med stobs

ཚད་མེད་སྒྲོ་བས།

—

無量力

A son of King Bringer of Benefit.

g.68 Limitless Voice

tshad med dbyangs

ཚད་མེད་དབྱངས།

—

無量音

Limitless Intelligence upon his awakening.

g.69 Lokadhara

'jig rten 'dzin

འཇིག་རྟེན་འཛིན།

Lokadhara

持世

A bodhisattva and the main interlocutor of this sūtra.

g.70 Mahoraga

lto 'phye chen po

ལྷོ་འཕྲེ་ཚེན་པོ།

mahoraga

Literally “large serpent.” A subterranean semi-divine being that takes the form of a large serpent, sometimes with a human torso and head.

g.71 Maitreya

byams pa

བྱམས་པ།

Maitreya

彌勒

g.72 Majestic Mount Meru of Gold from the Jambū River

'dzam bu chu klung gi gser gyi ri rab ri'i rgyal po

འཛམ་བུ་ཚུ་ལྷུང་གི་གསེར་གྱི་རི་རབ་རིའི་རྒྱལ་པོ།

—

閻浮檀金須彌山王

A buddha from the past.

g.73 Mind consciousness

yid kyi rnam par shes pa

ཡིད་གྱི་རྣམ་པར་ཤེས་པ།

manovijñāna

This is also known as the sixth consciousness and is the last of the eighteen elements. The Abhidharma speaks of five consciousnesses that grasp physical objects (form, sound, smells, tastes, bodily sensations) and are correlated with their respective physical sense faculties (*indriya, dbang po*), i.e. the eye, ear, etc. The mind consciousness, on the other hand, is said to have as its faculty simply the mind (*manas, yid*). It grasps all that exists, including what is presented by the physical consciousnesses as well as mental and abstract objects. These six consciousnesses, added to the twelve sense sources, constitute the Abhidharma schema of eighteen elements (*dhātu, khams*).

g.74 Motivation

lhag pa'i bsam pa

ལྷག་པའི་བསམ་པ།

adhyāśaya

深心

See “pure motivation.”

g.75 Nāga

klu

ལྷ།

nāga

A semidivine class of beings who live in subterranean aquatic environments and who are known to hoard wealth and esoteric teachings. They are associated with snakes and serpents.

g.76 Non-Buddhist

mu stegs can

མུ་སྟེགས་ཅན།

tīrthika

外道

A follower of one of the non-Buddhist religious systems in India, who from a Buddhist perspective promote extreme views on the nature of reality.

g.77 Obscuration

sgrib pa

སྒྲིབ་པ།

nīvaraṇa

蓋

That which obscurs insight into reality.

g.78 Ornament of Certainty in Any Subject

don thams cad gdon mi za ba'i rgyan

དོན་ཐམས་ཅད་གདོན་མི་བའི་རྒྱན།

—

一切義決定莊嚴

The buddha that Ratnaprabha becomes.

g.79 Parinirvāṇa

yongs su mya ngan las 'das pa

ཡོངས་སུ་སྐྱུ་རྒྱ་ལས་འདས་པ།

parinirvāṇa

Nirvāṇa, the state beyond sorrow, denotes the ultimate attainment of buddhahood, the permanent cessation of all suffering and the afflicted mental states which cause and perpetuate suffering, along with all misapprehension with regard to the nature of emptiness. As such, it is the antithesis of cyclic existence. Three types of nirvāṇa are identified: (1) the residual nirvāṇa where the person is still dependent on conditioned psycho-physical aggregates, (2) the non-residual nirvāṇa where the aggregates have also been consumed within emptiness, and (3) the non-abiding nirvāṇa transcending the extremes of phenomenal existence and quiescence. Parinirvāṇa or final nirvāṇa implies the non-residual attainment.

g.80 Perception

'du shes

འདུ་ཤེས།

saṃjñā

The third of the five aggregates.

g.81 Phenomenon

chos

ཚོས།

dharma

One of the meanings of the Skt. term “dharma.” This applies to “phenomena” or “things” in general, and, more specifically, “mental phenomena” which are the object of the mental faculty (*manas, yid*). See also “worldly phenomena” and “transcendent phenomena.”

g.82 Pure motivation

lhag pa'i bsam pa

ལྷག་པའི་བསམ་པ།

adhyāśaya

深心

A strong sense of determination, often associated with altruism.

g.83 Rājagṛha

rgyal po'i khab

རྒྱལ་པོའི་ཁབ།

Rājagṛha

王舍城

The ancient capital of Magadha; the site where many Great Vehicle sūtras take place.

g.84 Ratnaprabha

rin chen 'od

རིན་ཆེན་འོད།

Ratnaprabha

寶光

A bodhisattva in Majestic Mount Meru of Gold from the Jambū River's assembly.

g.85 Reality

chos nyid

ཚོས་ཉིད།

dharmatā

Lit. the “nature of phenomena,” or “phenomena themselves.” The quality or condition of things as they really are, which cannot be conveyed in conceptual, dualistic terms. Akin to other terms rendered here as thatness (*tattova, de kho na nyid*), true reality (*bhūtata, yang dag pa nyid*), and suchness (*tathatā, de bzhin nyid*).

g.86 Royal Array of Boundless Light

tshad med 'od kyi bkod pa'i rgyal po

ཚད་མེད་འོད་གྱི་བཀོད་པའི་རྒྱལ་པོ།

—

無量光莊嚴王

The buddha that the bodhisattva Limitless Intelligence becomes.

g.87 Royal Light of Limitless Qualities

tshad med yon tan 'od kyi rgyal po

ཚད་མེད་ཡོན་ཏན་འོད་གྱི་རྒྱལ་པོ།

—

無量光德高王

A buddha from the past.

g.88 Royal Mountain of Great Intelligence

blo gros chen po ri'i rgyal po

བློ་བྲོས་ཆེན་པོ་རིའི་རྒྱལ་པོ།

—

大意山王

A buddha from the past.

g.89 Sense source

skye mched

སྐྱེ་མཚན།

āyatana

入

These can be listed as twelve or as six sense sources (sometimes also called sense fields, bases of cognition, or simply āyatanas):

In context of epistemology, it is one way of describing experience and the world in terms of twelve sense sources, which can be divided into inner and outer sense sources, namely: 1-2) eye and form, 3-4) ear and sound, 5-6) nose and odor, 7-8) tongue and taste, 9-10) body and touch, 11-12) mind and mental phenomena. (These are subsumed in the eighteen elements, where to the twelve sense sources, the six consciousnesses are added.)

In the context of the twelve links of dependent origination, only six sense sources are mentioned and they are the inner sense sources (similar to the six faculties) of eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind.

- g.90 Seven aspects of awakening
byang chub kyi yan lag bdun
 བྱང་ཚུབ་ཀྱི་ཡན་ལག་བདུན།
saptabodhyaṅga
 missing from Taishō 482
 The set of seven factors that characteristically manifest on the path of seeing.
- g.91 Seven precious substances
rin po che sna bdun
 རིན་པོ་ཆེ་སྣ་བདུན།
saptaratna
 The list of seven precious materials varies. Either they are: gold, silver, turquoise, coral, pearl, emerald, and sapphire; or else they are: ruby, sapphire, beryl, emerald, diamond, pearls, and coral.
- g.92 Six sense sources
skye mched bcu gnyis
 སྐྱེ་མཆེད་བརྒྱུ་ཉིས།
ṣaḍāyatana
 See sense source.”
- g.93 Solitary buddha
rang sangs rgyas
 རང་སངས་རྒྱས།
pratyekabuddha
 Literally, “buddha for himself,” or “solitary realizer.” Those who attain buddhahood in a time when the Buddha’s doctrine is no longer available in the world, and who remain either in solitude or among peers, without teaching the path to liberation to others. Their attainment is the result of progress in previous lives but, unlike a buddha, they do not have the necessary accumulated merit nor the motivation to teach others.
- g.94 Special insight
lhag mthong
 ལྷག་མཐོང་།
vipaśyanā
 觀

An important form of Buddhist meditation focusing on developing insight into the nature of phenomena. Often presented as part of a pair of meditation techniques, the other being “tranquility.”

g.95 Spiritual friend

dge ba'i bshes gnyen

དགེ་བའི་བཤེས་གཉེན།

kalyāṇamitra

善知識

A personal tutor on spiritual matters; a spritual guide.

g.96 Suchness

de bzhin nyid

དེ་བཞིན་ཉིད།

tathatā

The quality or condition of things as they really are, which cannot be conveyed in conceptual, dualistic terms. Akin to other terms rendered here as thatness (*tattva*, *de kho na nyid*), true reality (*bhūtatā*, *yang dag pa nyid*), and reality (*dharmatā*, *chos nyid*).

g.97 Ten strengths

stobs bcu

སྟོབས་བརྒྱ།

daśabala

A category of the distinctive qualities of a buddha. They are: knowing what is possible and what is impossible; knowing the results of actions or the ripening of karma; knowing the various inclinations of sentient beings; knowing the various elements; knowing the supreme and lesser faculties of sentient beings; knowing the paths that lead to all destinations of rebirth; knowing the concentrations, liberations, absorptions, equilibriums, afflictions, purifications, and abidings; knowing previous lives; knowing the death and rebirth of sentient beings; and knowing the cessation of the defilements.

g.98 Thatness

de kho na nyid

དེ་ལོ་ན་ཉིད།

tattva

The nature of things or their actual state, which cannot be conveyed in conceptual, dualistic terms. Akin to other terms rendered here as suchness (*tathatā, de bzhin nyid*), true reality (*bhūtatā, yang dag pa nyid*), and reality (*dharmatā, chos nyid*).

g.99 Three gateways of liberation

rnam thar sgo gsum

རྣམ་ཐར་སློལ་གསུམ།

trivimokṣadvāra

These are: emptiness as a gateway to liberation, absence of marks of all phenomena as a gateway to liberation, and absence of wishes as a gateway to liberation. Among them, emptiness is characterized as the absence of inherent existence, absence of marks as the absence of mental images, and absence of wishes as the absence of hopes and fears.

g.100 Three realms

kham s gsum

ཁམས་གསུམ།

tridhātu · triloka

三性 · 三界

The formless realm, the form realm, and the desire realm comprising the thirty-one planes of existence in Buddhist cosmology.

g.101 Thus-gone one

de bzhin gshegs pa

དེ་བཞིན་གཤེགས་པ།

tathāgata

A frequently used synonym for a buddha. The expression is interpreted in different ways, but in general it implies one who has arrived at the realization of the ultimate state. Here also used as a specific epithet of the Buddha Śākyamuni.

g.102 Tranquility

zhi gnas

ཞི་གནས།

śamatha

止

One of the basic forms of Buddhist meditation, which focuses on calming the mind. Often presented as part of a pair of meditation techniques, with the other technique being “special insight.”

g.103 Transcendent phenomena

'jig rten las 'das pa'i chos

འཇིག་རྟེན་ལས་འདས་པའི་ཚོས།

lokottaradharmā

Lit. “dharmas beyond the world.” Transcendent or supramundane phenomena are things or factors related to liberation from saṃsāra. These include, for example, the four applications of mindfulness, the four correct exertions, the four foundations of miracles, the five powers, the five strengths, the seven branches of awakening, the eightfold path of the noble ones, the three gateways of liberation, and many other techniques and qualities of attainment. See also “worldly phenomena.”

g.104 True reality

yang dag pa nyid

ཡང་དག་པ་ཉིད།

bhūtatā

Lit. “genuineness” or “authenticity.” The quality or condition of things as they really are, which cannot be conveyed in conceptual, dualistic terms. Akin to other terms rendered here as thatness (*tattva, de kho na nyid*), suchness (*tathatā, de bzhin nyid*), and reality (*dharmatā, chos nyid*).

g.105 Twelve links of dependent origination

rten cing 'brel bar byung ba'i yang lag bcu gnyis

རྟེན་ཅིང་འབྲེལ་བར་བྱུང་བའི་ཡང་ལག་བརྒྱུག་ཉིས།

dvādaśāṅgapratītyasamutpāda

The twelve causal links that perpetuate life in cyclic existence; starting with ignorance and ending with death. Through a deliberate reversal of these twelve links that one can succeed in bringing the whole cycle to an end. The twelve links are (1) ignorance, (2) formation, (3) consciousness, (4) name-and-form, (5) six sense sources, (6) contact, (7) feeling, (8) craving, (9) grasping, (10) becoming, (11) birth, (12) aging and death.

g.106 Twelve sense sources

skye mched bcu gnyis

སྐྱེ་མཚེད་བརྒྱུག་ཉིས།

dvādaśāyatana

See “sense source.”

g.107 **Veṇuvana**

'od ma'i tshal

འོད་མའི་ཚལ།

Veṇuvana

竹園

The famous bamboo grove near Rājagṛha where the Buddha regularly stayed and gave teachings. It was situated on land donated by King Bimbisāra of Magadha and, as such, was the first of several landholdings donated to the Buddhist community during the time of the Buddha.

g.108 **Water of the eight qualities**

yon tan brgyad kyi chu

ཡོན་ཏན་བརྒྱད་ཀྱི་ཚུ།

—

The eight qualities of water: (1) sweet-tasting; (2) cool; (3) soft; (4) light; (5) transparent; (6) clean; (7) not harmful to the throat; and (8) beneficial to the stomach.

g.109 **Wisdom**

ye shes

ཡེ་ཤེས།

jñāna

Also known as “pristine awareness,” “primordial wisdom,” “primordial awareness,” “gnosis,” or the like. Typically refers to nonconceptual or unobscured states of knowledge.

g.110 **World and transcendence**

'jig rten dang 'jig rten las 'das pa

འཇིག་རྟེན་དང་འཇིག་རྟེན་ལས་འདས་པ།

lokalokottara

See “worldly phenomena” and “transcendent phenomena.”

g.111 **Worldly phenomena**

'jig rten gyi chos

འཇིག་རྟེན་གྱི་ཚོས།

lokadharmā

It refers to things or factors that are bound by causality. In some contexts, it is the eight worldly dharmas or concerns. See also “transcendent phenomena.”

g.112 Yakṣa

gnod sbyin

གོད་སྐྱིན།

yakṣa

A class of semidivine beings said to dwell in the north, under the jurisdiction of the Great King Vaiśravaṇa, otherwise known as Kubera.