

PART TEN

The Dharma Cloud Ground

J. THE TENTH GROUND: THE DHARMA CLOUD GROUND

1. THE TENTH GROUND'S INTRODUCTORY VERSES AND DHARMA REQUEST

Having heard of the supreme practices carried out on this ground,
the *nayutas* of Pure Dwelling Heaven devas
who were up in the sky sprang up in delight and then,
united in deep sincerity, presented offerings to the Buddha. (1)

That inconceivably vast assembly of bodhisattvas
that was also there in the sky was immensely delighted.
They all lit the most supremely mind-pleasing incenses
that everywhere permeated that assembly, causing it to be purified. (2)

The Paranirmita Vaśavartin Heaven King with his heavenly host
of countless *koṭis* of devas that were there in the sky scattered
everywhere heavenly raiment as offerings to the Buddha which
floated down in a profusion of a hundred thousand myriad sorts. (3)

Of the heavenly nymphs there in measureless numbers,
none failed to then joyfully present offerings to the Buddha
as they each played all sorts of sublime music and
all together used these phrases in offering their praises: (4)

“Even as this body of the Buddha sits securely in a single land,
he manifests bodies in all worlds, wherein, in stately adornment,
countless *koṭis* of his physical appearances are seen,
entirely filling the Dharma realm in all its vastness. (5)

Within a single hair pore, he emanates light
that everywhere extinguishes the darkness of the world's afflictions.
Though one might be able to know a land's number of atoms,
one could still never measure these light rays' number. (6)

One may see the Tathāgata there replete with all his many signs,
turning the unsurpassable wheel of right Dharma.
One may see him roaming forth to all of the buddha lands,
or one may see him still, at peace, unmoving. (7)

Or he may manifest as dwelling in the Tuṣṭita Heaven Palace,
or may manifest as descending into his mother's womb,
or may appear as dwelling in the womb or emerging from the womb,
in all such cases causing this to be observable in countless lands. (8)

He may manifest as leaving home, cultivating the path in the world, as appearing in the *bodhimaṇḍa*, and as realizing right enlightenment. He may appear as proclaiming the Dharma and as entering nirvāṇa, everywhere causing there to be none in ten directions not seeing this. (9)

Just as a master conjurer skilled in the techniques of conjuration performs his many feats in the midst of a great crowd, so too it is in the case of the Tathāgata's wisdom by which he manifests his bodies everywhere throughout the worlds. (10)

The Buddha dwells within dharmas' extremely profound true nature that is quiescent, signless, and like space even as, from within ultimate truth, he manifests the many different deeds that he performs. (11)

All those endeavors performed for the benefit of beings, come into existence in dependence upon the very nature of dharmas. That possessed of signs and the signless have no differentiation, for, with entry into the ultimate, they are all signless. (12)

If one wishes to acquire the knowledge of the Tathāgata, one should abandon all false discriminations, utterly comprehend existents and non-existents all abide in a state of uniform equality, and thus swiftly become a great guide for humans and devas." (13)

Having offered up these praises with many different phrases, this countless and boundlessly vast assemblage of celestial nymphs fell silent in both body and mind, and, united in their happiness, gazed up at the Tathāgata as they stood there quietly. (14)

Then Liberation Moon Bodhisattva, aware that everyone in the great assembly was now still and silent, straightaway addressed Vajragarbha Bodhisattva, saying: "O, Great Fearless One, True Son of the Buddha." (15)

"We pray that you who possess such intelligence and wisdom will expound here on all the meritorious qualities, aspects of practice, spiritual superknowledges, and transformational deeds involved in advancing from the ninth ground into the tenth ground." (16)

2. VAJRAGARBHA COMMENCES THE TENTH GROUND'S EXPLANATION

{A} At that time, Vajragarbha Bodhisattva Mahāsattva informed Liberation Moon Bodhisattva, saying:

3. THE TEN CATEGORIES OF PRACTICE BEFORE ENTERING THE TENTH GROUND

O Son of the Buddha. From the first ground through the ninth ground, having employed such measureless wisdom as this in meditative contemplation and awakening, the bodhisattva *mahāsattva*:

Engages in thorough meditative contemplation on cultivation;²⁵⁴
 Thoroughly fulfills the pristinely white dharmas;
 Assembles boundlessly many dharmas constituting the provisions for the path;
 Increases his immense stock of merit and wisdom;
 Cultivates the great compassion on a vast scale;
 Comes to know the aspects distinguishing the worlds;
 Penetrates the entangling thickets of the realms of beings;²⁵⁵
 Enters the domain in which the Tathāgata courses;
 Accords with the Tathāgata's quiescence practices;
 And always carries on meditative contemplations focused on
 the Tathāgatas' powers, fearlessnesses, and dharmas exclusive to the Buddhas.

Having done so, he is then said to have reached the station wherein one receives the consecration of imminent acquisition of the knowledge of all modes and the cognition of all-knowledge.

4. THIS BODHISATTVA'S SUBSEQUENT ACQUISITION OF SAMĀDHIS

(B) Son of the Buddha. Once this bodhisattva *mahāsattva* has employed wisdom such as this to enter the ground of consecration, he straightaway acquires:²⁵⁶

The bodhisattva's stainless samādhi;
 The entering the distinctions within the dharma realm samādhi;
 The adornment of the *bodhimaṇḍa* samādhi;
 The radiance of every kind of flower samādhi;
 The oceanic treasury samādhi;
 The oceanic reflection samādhi;
 The vastness of empty space samādhi;
 The contemplation of the nature of all dharmas samādhi;
 The knowledge of the minds and actions of all beings samādhi;
 And the direct manifestation of all buddhas samādhi.

A hundred myriads of *asaṃkhyeyas* of other samādhis such as these also all manifest directly before him. In all of these samādhis, the bodhisattva, whether entering them or arising from them, in all cases achieves a state of consummate skillfulness while also comprehending well the differences in the functional uses to which all of these samādhis are devoted. The very last samādhi to manifest for him is the one known as "the station of the acquisition of the supreme consecration of all-knowledge."²⁵⁷

5. THIS FINAL SAMĀDHI'S MANIFESTATION OF AN IMMENSE RADIANT LOTUS

(C) When this samādhi manifests directly before him, an immense bejeweled lotus flower suddenly emerges, one whose blossom is so immense that it equals in volume the breadth of a hundred myriad great trichiliocosms. It is inlaid and adorned with the many sorts of marvelous precious gems and presents an appearance that surpasses any realm of objective phenomena observed in any world. This is a phenomenon that comes forth from his world-transcending roots of goodness and that is perfected by his many practices utilizing the knowledge that all dharmas are by nature like mere illusions.

It constantly radiates brilliant light that everywhere illuminates the Dharma realm. This is a phenomenon that is not found even in any of the celestial abodes. Its stem is made of beryl and *maṇi* jewels. Its dais consists of *candana* incense. Emeralds compose its floral pistils and its petals are made of *jambunada* gold. Its blossom always emanates countless light rays. The many sorts of precious jewels compose its inner chamber, and it is covered over by a bejeweled net canopy. Lotus blossoms as numerous as the atoms in ten great trichiliocosms make up its retinue.

6. THIS BODHISATTVA SITS ATOP A LOTUS ENCIRCLED BY RETINUE BODHISATTVAS

At this time, as the bodhisattva then sits atop the flower throne, the scale of his physical appearance precisely matches that of the throne itself. Measurelessly many bodhisattvas serve as his retinue, with each of them sitting upon one of the other lotus blossoms completely encircling him. Each and every one of them, having thereupon acquired a hundred myriad samādhis, then single-mindedly gazes up at this great bodhisattva.

(D) Son of the Buddha. When this great bodhisattva together with his retinue are all sitting there on their lotus thrones, all of those light rays as well as the sound of his words then everywhere fill all ten directions of the Dharma realm, those worlds all quake, the wretched destinies become stilled, and all lands then became adorned and purified. Of all the bodhisattvas engaged in the same practices, none of them do not then come and assemble there.

The musical sounds of men and devas then simultaneously resound as all of those beings experience feelings of happiness and then present offerings of inconceivable gifts to all the Buddhas. All of the assemblies of the Buddhas then became visibly manifest.

7. HIS BODY EMANATES LIGHT ILLUMINATING TEN REALMS OF BEINGS

Son of the Buddha. As this bodhisattva sits there atop that immense lotus blossom throne, from the bottom of his two feet, he releases a hundred myriads of *asaṃkhyeyas* of light rays that everywhere illuminate all the great hell realms throughout the ten directions and extinguish the sufferings undergone by the beings dwelling in them.

From his two knee caps, he releases a hundred myriads of *asaṃkhyeyas* of light rays that everywhere illuminate all the ten directions' animal rebirth destinies and extinguish the sufferings of the beings dwelling in them.

From the center of his navel, he releases a hundred myriads of *asaṃkhyeyas* of light rays that everywhere illuminate the ten directions' realms of King Yama and extinguish the sufferings of the beings residing in them.²⁵⁸

From his left and right sides, he releases a hundred myriads of *asaṃkhyeyas* of light rays that everywhere illuminate all the realms of the human destinies throughout the ten directions and extinguish the sufferings of the beings residing in them.

From his two hands, he releases a hundred myriads of *asaṃkhyeyas* of light rays that everywhere illuminate all the palaces of the devas and *asuras* throughout the ten directions.

From atop his two shoulders, he releases a hundred myriads of *asaṃkhyeyas* of light rays that everywhere illuminate all the *śrāvaka*-disciples throughout the ten directions.

From the back of his neck, he releases a hundred myriads of *asaṃkhyeyas* of light rays that everywhere illuminate the bodies of all the *pratyekabuddhas* throughout the ten directions.

From his face, he releases a hundred myriads of *asaṃkhyeyas* of light rays that everywhere illuminate the bodies of all the bodhisattvas throughout the ten directions, inclusive of those who have newly brought forth the initial resolve on up to all those dwelling on the ninth ground.

From between his eyebrows, he releases a hundred myriads of *asaṃkhyeyas* of light rays that everywhere illuminate all the bodhisattvas throughout the ten directions who had received the consecration while also causing the palaces of the *māras* to no longer appear.

From the crown of his head, he then releases light rays as numerous as the atoms in a hundred myriads of *asaṃkhyeyas* of great trichiliocosms that everywhere illuminate the assemblies

attending upon the *bodhimaṇḍas* of all the Buddhas, the Tathāgatas, throughout all worlds of the ten directions.

8. THE LIGHT RAYS FORM A CANOPY THAT MAKES OFFERINGS TO ALL BUDDHAS

Those rays then circle around them ten times in a rightward direction and, having ascended into the midst of space, they dwell there and form a netlike canopy of bright light known as “Flaming Radiance” that then sends forth all sorts of different offerings to the Buddhas.

Those offerings are so numerous that the offerings of all the other bodhisattvas from those who have but newly brought forth the resolve on through to those who dwell on the ninth ground could not compare to even a hundredth part and so forth until we come to their being unable to compare at all even by resort to calculation or analogy.

That canopy of brilliant light rains down offerings before each and every one of the Tathāgatas and their assemblies everywhere throughout the ten directions, raining down the many sorts of marvelous incenses, floral garlands, raiment, banners, bejeweled canopies, various *maṇi* jewels, and other sorts of adornments, all of which are presented there as offerings. In every case, these offerings issue from world-transcending roots of goodness and surpass anything found in any worldly realm. Were there to be any being at all who might observe this occurrence, they would all be those who had already reached the stage of irreversibility with respect to the realization of *anuttarasamyaksaṃbodhi*.

9. THE LIGHT RAYS CIRCLE AROUND ALL BUDDHAS AND ENTER THEIR FEET

Son of the Buddha. Once this immense aggregation of light rays has finished these acts of offering, it then once again circles around each and every one of the *bodhimaṇḍa* assemblies of all buddhas throughout all worlds of the ten directions. After it has finished circling around them ten times, it then enters the bottoms of the feet of all *tathāgatas*.

It is at this time that all buddhas and bodhisattvas realize that, in this particular world system, a particular bodhisattva *mahāsattva* has been able to perform such immensely expansive practices and has thus reached the stage of receiving the consecration.

10. THE 10 REGIONS’ BODHISATTVAS COME, MAKE OFFERINGS & ENTER SAMĀDHI

Son of the Buddha. At this time, the congregation of all the measurelessly and boundlessly many bodhisattvas throughout the ten

directions inclusive of those who have reached the ninth ground then arrives there. They circumambulate him, reverently present offerings, and then enter a state of single-minded meditative contemplation. At the very time when they enter into this state of meditative contemplation, each of these bodhisattvas acquires a myriad samādhis.

11. THEY EMANATE LIGHT FROM THEIR CHESTS THAT ENTERS HIS CHEST

Just at that very time, all the bodhisattvas throughout the ten directions who have already received the consecration emanate from their chests' vajra adornment meritorious-qualities symbol an immense beam of bright light known as "able to destroy Māra's enmity," one attended by a hundred myriads of *asaṃkhyeyas* of light rays that form its retinue. It everywhere illuminates all of the ten directions and manifests incalculably many permutations of the spiritual superknowledges. After it has finished carrying out these actions, it then comes and enters the vajra adornment virtuous-qualities mark on this bodhisattva's chest. After that light has entered, it then causes all of the wisdom and powers of this bodhisattva to increase more than a hundred thousand fold.

12. ALL BUDDHAS SEND FORTH LIGHT THAT ENTERS THIS BODHISATTVA'S CROWN

(E) At that time, all buddhas throughout the ten directions put forth a pure beam of light from between their eyebrows known as "enhancer of all-knowledge's superknowledges," one attended by countless light rays that form its retinue. It everywhere illuminates all worlds throughout the ten directions, circling them ten times in a rightward direction, manifesting the Tathāgatas' vast powers of sovereign mastery and instigating the awakening of a congregation of incalculably many hundreds of thousands of *koṭis* of *nayutas* of bodhisattvas, everywhere causing the quaking of all buddha lands, extinguishing the sufferings in all the wretched destinies, covering over and hiding the palaces of the *māras*, and revealing the adornments and awe-inspiring qualities in all the assemblies at those *bodhimaṇḍas* wherein the Buddhas have achieved realization of bodhi.

After having everywhere illuminated all worlds even to the ends of empty space and throughout the entire Dharma realm, it then comes and, arriving in the assembly of this bodhisattva, circles ten times around in a rightward direction, revealing all of the different sorts of adornments there. After having revealed these phenomena, it then enters into the crown of this great bodhisattva. Its retinue light rays also each enter the crowns of those other bodhisattvas in attendance there.

13. THIS BODHISATTVA ACQUIRES SAMĀDHIS AND ALL BUDDHAS' CONSECRATION

At that very time, this bodhisattva acquires a hundred myriad samādhis he has never before acquired and becomes known²⁵⁹ as one who has reached the station of consecration and has entered the realm of the Buddhas wherein, having completely developed the ten powers, he joins the ranks of the Buddhas.

14. THE SIMILE OF THE CONSECRATION OF THE WHEEL TURNING SAGE KING'S SON

Son of the Buddha. In this circumstance he is comparable to a crown prince born to a wheel-turning sage king whose mother is the chief queen and who is himself completely endowed with the physical marks. That wheel-turning king orders this prince to sit on the throne of marvelous gold atop his white elephant treasure, raises the great canopy, plants the great banner, burns incense, scatters flowers, plays all sorts of music, takes up water from each of the four great seas, and places it into the vase of gold.

The King then takes up this vase and pours the liquid out over the crown of the prince's head. From this very moment on he is known as one who has reached the stage of receiving royal consecration at which point he then joins the ranks of the consecrated *kṣatriyan* kings. He then straightaway becomes able to completely fulfill the ten courses of good karmic action and is then also able to become known as a wheel-turning sage king.

So too it is in the case of this bodhisattva who has received the consecration. Because the waters of all buddhas' knowledge have been poured onto the crown of his head, he is then known as one who has received the consecration. It is on account of his complete development of the Tathāgata's ten powers that he then joins the ranks of the Buddhas.

15. THE CAPACITIES ARISING FROM THIS BODHISATTVA'S CONSECRATION

Son of the Buddha. This is what is what is known as the bodhisattva's great knowledge consecration. It is because of this great knowledge consecration that this bodhisattva is then able to engage in incalculably many hundreds of thousands of myriads of *koṭis* of *nayutas* of difficult-to-practice practices and increase his growth in incalculably many sorts of wisdom and meritorious qualities. So it is that he is then known as one who abides securely on the Dharma Cloud Ground.

16. THIS BODHISATTVA'S KNOWLEDGE OF ATTAINMENTS

(F) Son of the Buddha. The bodhisattva *mahāsattva* dwelling on this Dharma Cloud Ground knows in accordance with reality:

Attainment as it takes place in the desire realm;²⁶⁰
 Attainment as it takes place in the form realm;
 Attainment as it takes place in the formless realm;
 Attainment as it takes place within the worldly realms;
 Attainment as it takes place within the Dharma realm;
 Attainment as it takes place within the conditioned realm;
 Attainment as it takes place within the unconditioned realm;
 Attainment as it takes place within the realms of beings;
 Attainment as it takes place within the realms of consciousness;
 Attainment as it takes place within the realm of empty space;
 And attainment as it takes place within the realm of nirvāṇa.

This bodhisattva also knows in accordance with reality:

The attainment of karmic actions associated with the views and the afflictions;
 Knows attainment as it takes place in the production and destruction of worlds;
 Knows the attainment of *śrāvaka*-disciple practices;
 Knows the attainment of *pratyekabuddha* practices;
 Knows the attainment of bodhisattva practices;
 Knows attainment as it takes place in a *tathāgata*'s powers, fearlessnesses, form bodies, and Dharma body;
 Knows attainment of the knowledge associated with the knowledge of all modes and all-knowledge;
 Knows attainment as it occurs in the manifestation of the appearance of realizing bodhi and turning the Dharma wheel;
 And knows attainment as it takes place in entering the knowledge that is decisive in its distinguishing of all dharmas.

To speak of what is essential in this, he employs all-knowledge to know all processes of attainment.

17. THIS BODHISATTVA'S KNOWLEDGE OF TRANSFORMATION

Son of the Buddha. This bodhisattva *mahāsattva* resorts to just such supremely awakened wisdom to know in accordance with reality:

Transformation as it takes place in beings' karmic actions;
 Transformation as it takes place in the afflictions;
 Transformation as it takes place in the views;
 Transformation as it takes place in the worlds;
 Transformation as it takes place in the Dharma realm;
 Transformation as it takes place among *śrāvaka*-disciples;
 Transformation as it takes place among *pratyekabuddhas*;

Transformation as it takes place among bodhisattvas;
 Transformation as it takes place among *tathāgatas*;
 And transformation as it takes place in the presence and absence
 of differences.

He also knows in accordance with reality all of the other such
 sorts of transformations.

18. THIS BODHISATTVA'S KNOWLEDGE OF SUSTAINING BASES

So too does he know in accordance with reality:

The sustaining bases²⁶¹ of the Buddha.
 The sustaining bases of the Dharma;
 The sustaining bases of the Sangha;
 The sustaining bases of karma;
 The sustaining bases of the afflictions;
 The sustaining bases of time;
 The sustaining bases of vows;
 The sustaining bases of offerings;
 The sustaining bases of practices;
 The sustaining bases of kalpas;
 And the sustaining bases of knowledge.

He also knows in accordance with reality all of the other such
 sorts of phenomena.

19. THIS BODHISATTVA'S KNOWLEDGE OF SUBTLITIES OF PRACTICE

So too does he know in accordance with reality all buddhas', all
tathāgatas', knowledge that enters into all sorts of subtlety, specifi-
 cally knowing:

Their knowledge regarding the subtleties involved in cultiva-
 tion;
 Their knowledge regarding the subtleties involved in the end-
 ing of a lifetime;²⁶²
 Their knowledge regarding the subtleties involved in the taking
 on of birth;
 Their knowledge regarding the subtleties involved in abandon-
 ing the home life;
 Their knowledge regarding the subtleties involved in the mani-
 festing of the spiritual superknowledges;
 Their knowledge regarding the subtleties involved in achieving
 realization of the right enlightenment;
 Their knowledge regarding the subtleties involved in turning
 the wheel of Dharma;

Their knowledge regarding the subtleties involved in abiding throughout a lifespan;
 Their knowledge regarding the subtleties involved in [passing into] *nirvāṇa*;
 And their knowledge regarding the subtleties involved in the endurance of their teaching Dharma.

He also knows all of the other such sorts of phenomena in accordance with reality.

20. THIS BODHISATTVA'S KNOWLEDGE OF THE TATHĀGATAS' SECRETS

So too does he enter into the Tathāgatas' secrets, specifically entering:

Their secrets associated with the body;
 Their secrets associated with speech;
 Their secrets associated with the mind;
 Their secrets associated with the assessment of timeliness and non-timeliness;
 Their secrets associated with the bestowing of predictions upon bodhisattvas;
 Their secrets associated with the attraction of beings;
 Their secrets associated with the many different sorts of vehicles;
 Their secrets associated with the root faculties and practices of all beings;
 Their secrets associated with the functioning of karmic actions;
 And their secrets associated with acquisition of the practices associated with bodhi.

He also knows all other such sorts of phenomena in accordance with reality.

21. THIS BODHISATTVA'S KNOWLEDGE OF THE INTERPENETRATION OF KALPAS

So too does he know all of the knowledge of the Buddhas with regard to the interpenetration of kalpas [and other such measures of time], specifically knowing:

How a single kalpa may enter into an *asaṃkhyeya* kalpa;
 How an *asaṃkhyeya* kalpa may enter into a single kalpa;
 How an enumerated number of kalpas may enter into innumerable kalpas;
 How innumerable kalpas may enter into an enumerated number of kalpas;
 How a single mind-moment may enter into a kalpa;
 How a kalpa may enter into a single mind-moment;

How a kalpa may enter into what does not constitute a kalpa;
 How what does not constitute a kalpa may enter into a kalpa;
 How a kalpa in which there is a buddha may enter into a kalpa
 in which there is no buddha;
 How a kalpa with no buddha may enter into a kalpa in which
 there is a buddha;
 How past and future kalpas may enter into the present kalpa;
 How the present kalpa may enter into past and future kalpas;
 How past kalpas may enter into future kalpas;
 How future kalpas may enter into past kalpas;
 How long kalpas may enter into short kalpas;
 And how short kalpas may enter into long kalpas.

He also knows all the other such sorts of phenomena in accordance with reality.

22. THIS BODHISATTVĀ'S KNOWING OF THE BUDDHA'S PENETRATING KNOWLEDGE

So too does he know all of the types of penetrating knowledge that the Tathāgata possesses, specifically knowing:

The penetrating knowledge²⁶³ that knows the realms of ordinary common people;²⁶⁴
 The penetrating knowledge that knows atoms;
 The rightly enlightened penetrating knowledge that knows [buddha] land bodies;²⁶⁵
 The rightly enlightened penetrating knowledge that knows the beings' bodies;
 The rightly enlightened penetrating knowledge that knows beings' minds;
 The rightly enlightened penetrating knowledge that knows beings' actions;
 The rightly enlightened penetrating knowledge that knows adaptation to all places;
 The penetrating knowledge that knows the manifestation of universally pervasive practices;
 The penetrating knowledge that knows the manifestation of adaptive practices;
 The penetrating knowledge that knows the manifestation of contrary practices;
 The penetrating knowledge that knows the manifestation of conceivable and inconceivable practices and knows the manifestation of practices either completely comprehensible to the world or not completely comprehensible to the world;

And the penetrating knowledge that knows the manifestation of the practices of *śrāvaka*-disciples, *pratyekabuddhas*, bodhisattvas, and *tathāgatas*.

Son of the Buddha. In every case, the bodhisattva dwelling on this ground is able to have penetrating knowledge of all the vast and measureless wisdom possessed by all buddhas.

23. THIS BODHISATTVA'S ACQUISITION OF COUNTLESS LIBERATIONS

{G} Son of the Buddha. The bodhisattva *mahāsattva* dwelling on this ground immediately acquires:

- The bodhisattva's inconceivable liberation;
- The unimpeded liberation;
- The pure contemplation liberation;
- The universal illumination liberation;
- The *tathāgata* treasury liberation;
- The compliance with the unimpeded wheel liberation;
- The penetrating comprehension of the three periods of time liberation;
- The Dharma realm treasury liberation;
- The circle of liberation's light liberation;
- And the realm of remainderless totality liberation.

These ten are those that are chief among them. There are incalculably many hundreds of thousands of *asaṃkhyeyas* of other such gateways to liberation that are all acquired on this tenth ground.

24. THIS BODHISATTVA'S SAMĀDHIS, DHĀRAṆĪS, AND SUPERKNOWLEDGES

In this same way, there are also even as many as measurelessly many hundreds of thousands of *asaṃkhyeyas* of samādhi gateways, measurelessly many hundreds of thousands of *asaṃkhyeyas* of *dhāraṇī* gateways, and measurelessly many hundreds of thousands of *asaṃkhyeyas* of spiritual superknowledge gateways that, in every case, he also succeeds in completely developing.

25. THIS BODHISATTVA'S LIMITLESS MEMORY POWER

{H} Son of the Buddha. This bodhisattva *mahāsattva* develops a penetrating comprehension of wisdom such as this that accords with measureless bodhi. He also develops such powers of skillful memory that, in a single mind-moment, he is in every case able to accommodate, able to take in, able to absorb, and is able to retain all of the measureless great Dharma light, great Dharma illumination, and great Dharma rain of all of the measurelessly many buddhas throughout the ten directions.

26. HIS LIMITLESS MEMORY COMPARED TO THE OCEAN'S LIMITLESS CAPACITY

Just as it is the case that, with the sole exception of the great ocean, all other places are in every case unable to accommodate, unable to take in, unable to absorb, and unable to retain the great rains poured down by Sāgara, the dragon king, so too it is with the great Dharma light, the great Dharma illumination, and the great Dharma rain coming forth from the secret treasury of the Tathāgata. With the sole exception of the tenth ground bodhisattvas, all other beings including *śrāvaka*-disciples, *pratyekabuddhas*, and bodhisattvas up through the ninth ground are all unable to accommodate it, unable to take it in, unable to absorb it, and unable to retain it.

Son of the Buddha. In this, he is comparable to the great ocean that is able to accommodate, able to take in, able to absorb, and able to retain those great rains poured down by one of the great dragon kings, two of them, three of them, and so forth on up to the rains poured down by countless dragon kings. In but a single mind-moment, it is able to accommodate, able to take in, able to absorb, and able to retain all the rain that they all simultaneously pour down. And why is it able to do this? It is because it is a vessel possessed of an immeasurably vast capacity.

So too it is with this bodhisattva who dwells on the Dharma Cloud Ground who is himself able to accommodate, able to take in, able to absorb, and able to retain the Dharma light, the Dharma illumination, and the Dharma rain brought forth by one buddha, two, three, and so forth on up to measurelessly many buddhas, being able to take it all in in this very same manner, even if it were all to be simultaneously expounded to him in but a single mind-moment. It is for this very reason that this ground is known as the Dharma Cloud Ground.

27. VIMUKTICANDRA ASKS ABOUT THE LIMITS OF THIS BODHISATTVA'S MEMORY

Liberation Moon Bodhisattva then asked, "O Son of the Buddha. From how many Tathāgatas' is the bodhisattva dwelling on this ground able in but a single mind-moment to accommodate, take in, absorb, and retain their great Dharma light, their great Dharma illumination, and their great Dharma Rain?"

28. VAJRAGARBHA'S ANALOGY DESCRIBING THIS BODHISATTVA'S MEMORY POWER

Vajragarbha Bodhisattva replied:

O Son of the Buddha. This is something that cannot be known merely by resort to numerical calculations. I shall provide an analogy for you.

Son of the Buddha. Suppose for instance that there existed in each of the ten directions worlds as numerous as the atoms in ten ineffably numerous hundreds of thousands of *koṭis* of *nayutas* of buddha lands, and in each of those worlds each and every one of the beings residing therein had all acquired the “hearing-and-retaining” *dhāraṇī*, had served as a buddha’s attendant, was foremost in learning among everyone within the assembly of *śrāvaka*-disciples, was one comparable to Great Supremacy Bhikshu²⁶⁶ residing in the dwelling place of Vajra Lotus Blossom Supremacy Buddha,²⁶⁷ while the Dharma received by each of these beings was not the same as that received by any of the others.

Son of the Buddha. What do you think? Is all of the Dharma received by all of these beings measurable or immeasurable?

Liberation Moon Bodhisattva replied, “That is an exceedingly great amount, one that is measureless and boundless.”

Vajragarbha Bodhisattva then said:

Son of the Buddha. I will explain this matter for you in a manner that will cause you to comprehend it.

Son of the Buddha. That great Dharma light, great Dharma illumination, and great Dharma rain constituting the Dharma treasury of the three periods of time that this Dharma Cloud Ground bodhisattva is able to accommodate, take in, absorb, and retain from but one single buddha in just a single mind-moment is such that all the Dharma heard and retained by all of those beings in those previously described world systems could not even compare to a hundredth part of it and is such that one could not adequately compare the two even by resort to analogy.

And just as this is the case with the Dharma taken in from but a single Buddha, so too it is for all those other buddhas as numerous as the atoms in all those previously described worlds throughout the ten directions wherein this number is exceeded immeasurably and boundlessly, for this bodhisattva is able in every case to accommodate, able to take in, able to absorb, and able to retain all of their Dharma light, Dharma illumination, and Dharma rain that constitute the Dharma treasury of the three periods of time as it is brought forth by each and every one of those *tathāgatas*. It is for this reason that this is known as the Dharma Cloud Ground.

29. THE DHARMA CLOUD BODHISATTVA’S GREAT DHARMA RAIN

Son of the Buddha. Through the power of his own vows, the bodhisattva dwelling on this ground spreads forth the clouds of the

great compassion, brings on the quaking of the great Dharma thunder, uses his superknowledges, clarities, and fearlessnesses as the flashing of his lightning, and brings forth his merit and wisdom as dense rain clouds. He manifests all different kinds of bodies that circulate everywhere, going forth and returning, and, in but a single mind-moment, they everywhere pervade the ten directions, going forth to a number of lands as numerous as the atoms in hundreds of thousands of *koṭis* of *nayutas* of worlds wherein they expound the great Dharma and utterly defeat Māra's hordes.

In yet greater numbers than these, in lands as numerous as the atoms in measurelessly many hundreds of thousands of *koṭis* of *nayutas* of worlds, he adapts to the dispositions of the beings therein and pours down the rain of sweet-dew *amṛta*, thus extinguishing the smoke and flames of beings' afflictions. It is for this reason that this is known as the Dharma Cloud Ground.

Son of the Buddha. From the time he descends from a particular world's Tuṣita Heaven on through to the time he enters nirvāṇa, the bodhisattva dwelling on this ground adapts to the minds of the beings he should bring to liberation and then manifests the works of a buddha. So too does he carry this out in the same way in two worlds, three worlds, and so forth on up to his doing so in lands as numerous as the above-described atoms, even doing so in a number of lands beyond even these, in even up to lands as numerous as the atoms in measurelessly many hundreds of thousands of *koṭis* of *nayutas* of worlds. It is for this reason that this ground is known as the Dharma Cloud Ground.

30. THIS BODHISATTVA'S USE OF SPIRITUAL POWERS IN TRANSFORMING WORLDS

(1) Son of the Buddha. The bodhisattva dwelling on this ground is possessed of such brightly penetrating wisdom and sovereign mastery of the spiritual superknowledges that he is able in accordance with whatever he wishes to transform a narrow world into a broad world, transform a broad world into a narrow world, transform a defiled world into a pure world, transform a pure world into a defiled world, and is able, too, to mutually transform every type of world into the other, including those that are chaotically arranged, those that are arranged in an orderly fashion, those that are upside down, those that are right-side up, and those that are of countless other different varieties.

Or it may also be that, in accordance with whatever he wishes, he may also place within a single atom an entire world with its

Mount Sumerus as well as all of its other mountains and rivers, doing so even while keeping the appearance of an atom just as it was before and while also ensuring that world is not reduced in scale.

Or then again, it may also be that, within but a single atom, he may place two, place three, or place even up to an ineffably great number of worlds with their Mount Sumerus and other such mountains and rivers, doing so even while the physical appearance of that atom remains just as it originally was and doing so even while the world system within it is able to remain entirely and clearly manifest.

Or it may also be that, in accordance with whatever he wishes, he may manifest in a but a single world the adornments of two worlds, and so forth until we come to his placing the adornments of an ineffably great number²⁶⁸ of worlds into the adornments of but a single world.

Or it may also be that, in the adornment of a single world, he may manifest two worlds and so forth on up to an ineffably great number of worlds.

Or it may also be that, in accordance with whatever he wishes, he may place the beings from an ineffably great number of worlds into but a single world.

Or it may also be that, in accordance with whatever he wishes, he places the beings from a single world into an ineffably great number of worlds and yet does so without disturbing or harming any of those beings in any way.

Or it may also be that, in accordance with whatever he wishes, he manifests in a single hair pore all the adornments associated with the realms of all buddhas.

31. HIS USE OF POWERS IN MANIFESTING BODIES & SUPERNATURAL PHENOMENA

Or it may also be that, in accordance with whatever he wishes, in but a single mind-moment, he manifests bodies as numerous as the atoms in an ineffably great number of worlds, each and every one of those bodies then manifests hands as numerous as that same number of atoms, and each and every one of those hands holds a Ganges' sands number of trays of flowers, cases of incense, floral garlands, canopies, flags, and banners that are then presented as offerings to the Buddhas everywhere throughout the ten directions.

Additionally, each and every one of those bodies may manifest with a number of heads matching this same number of atoms as

each and every one of those heads manifests a number of tongues matching this same number of atoms and, in each and every mind-moment, their utterances reach everywhere throughout the ten directions with praises of the Buddhas' meritorious qualities.

Or it may also be that, in accordance with whatever he wishes, in but a single mind-moment, he thus manifests everywhere throughout the ten directions the appearances of realizing the right enlightenment and the other associated events on through to the nirvāṇa along with the associated lands and their adornments.

Or it may be that he manifests bodies everywhere throughout the three periods of time while revealing within each of his bodies an incalculably great number of buddhas as well as their buddha lands, their adornments, and the creation and destruction of worlds, revealing all of these things in a manner whereby none of these phenomena fail to completely manifest therein.

Or it may also be that, from a single hair pore in his own body, he sends forth every variety of wind that, even so, does no harm to any being.

Or it may also be that, in accordance with whatever he wishes, he transformationally manifests therein boundlessly many worlds forming a single great sea and then manifests in the middle of this sea's waters a great lotus blossom that, with its radiance and graceful adornment, everywhere covers measurelessly and boundlessly many worlds as he manifests therein a great bodhi tree with all its adornments, and so forth on through to his manifestation of the realization of the knowledge of all modes.

Or it may also be that, even within his own body, he manifests every sort of light, including that of precious *maṇi* pearls, the sun, the moon, the stars, lightning in the clouds, and so forth, so that there are none that do not manifest therein.

Or it may also be that, employing the breath from his mouth, he is able to move the incalculably many worlds throughout the ten directions and yet still not cause any of the beings therein to give rise to thoughts of terror.

Or it may also be that he manifests the appearance of the wind disasters, fire disasters, and water disasters throughout the ten directions.

Or it may also be that, adapting to beings' predilections, he manifests form bodies that are entirely replete in their adornment.

Or it may also be that, even within his own body, he manifests the body of a buddha or else manifests his own body within the

body of a buddha. Or it may also be that, within the body of a buddha, he manifests his own land, or else, within his own land, manifests the body of a buddha.

Son of the Buddha. This bodhisattva dwelling on the Dharma Cloud Ground is able to manifest such phenomena as these as well as measurelessly many other hundreds of thousands of *koṭis* of *nayutas* of such appearances produced through his sovereign mastery of the spiritual powers.

32. THE CONGREGANTS WONDER: "WHAT MORE COULD EVEN A BUDDHA DO?"

(j) At that time, the bodhisattvas within the assembly as well as the devas, dragons, *yakṣas*, *gandarvas*, *asuras*, the Four World-Protecting kings, Śakra Devānām Indra, the Brahma Heaven devas, and the devas' sons of the Pure Dwelling Heavens and Maheśvara Heavens all had this same thought: "If a bodhisattva is able to employ the power of spiritual superknowledges and the power of his knowledge in ways such as this, what more in addition to that could be done even by a buddha?"

33. LIBERATION MOON ASKS VAJRAGARBHA FOR AN EXPLANATION

At that time, Liberation Moon Bodhisattva, aware of the thoughts in the minds of everyone within that assembly, then addressed Vajragarbha Bodhisattva, saying: "O Son of the Buddha. Having heard of this bodhisattva's power of spiritual superknowledges and wisdom, the members of this great assembly have now fallen into a net of doubts. It would be good indeed, O Humane One, if, for the sake of cutting off their doubts, one were to briefly reveal those phenomena associated with the spiritual powers and adornments of the bodhisattva."

34. VAJRAGARBHA ENTERS "THE NATURE OF ALL BUDDHA LANDS' SAMĀDHI"

At this time, Vajragarbha Bodhisattva immediately entered "the nature of the physical form of all buddha lands samādhi."²⁶⁹ When he entered this samādhi, the bodhisattvas as well as the entire great assembly all viewed their own bodies residing within the body of Vajragarbha Bodhisattva and, within it, they observed all the many different sorts of adornments within the great trichiliocosm that were such that, even were one to attempt to describe them for an entire *koṭi* of kalpas, one would never be able to come to the end of them.

They also observed therein a bodhi tree, the trunk of which had the circumference of ten myriads of great trichiliocosms and

a height that reached to a hundred myriads of great trichiliocosms. The span of the shade cast by its branches and leaves was of the same scale, matching the shape and size of the tree.

There was a lion throne there upon which sat a buddha named King of Omniscience and Superknowledges.²⁷⁰ The entire great assembly observed that buddha sitting there beneath the bodhi tree on a lion throne adorned with many different characteristics that were such that, even in a *koṭi* of kalpas, one could never completely describe them.

Having manifested such great powers of spiritual superknowledges as these, Vajragarbha Bodhisattva caused each individual in the assembly to return to his original place. At that time, that great assembly, having experienced what it never experienced before, brought forth thoughts of amazement at the rarity of what they had experienced and then remained there quietly, single-mindedly gazing up at Vajragarbha Bodhisattva.

35. LIBERATION MOON ASKS ABOUT THIS SAMĀDHI'S NAME AND CAPACITY

At that time, Liberation Moon Bodhisattva said, "O Son of the Buddha. This samādhi is extremely rare and possessed of immense power. What is its name?"

Vajragarbha Bodhisattva replied, "This samādhi is known as "the nature of the physical form of all buddha lands samādhi."

He also asked, "What is the range of this samādhi's objective domain?"

Vajragarbha Bodhisattva then replied:

Son of the Buddha. If a bodhisattva were to cultivate this samādhi, then in accordance with whatever he wishes, he would be able to manifest within his own body a number of buddha lands as numerous as the atoms in a Ganges' sands number of worlds or even a number yet greater than this extending up to a measurelessly and boundlessly great number.

Son of the Buddha. The bodhisattva dwelling on the Dharma Cloud Ground acquires measurelessly many hundreds of thousands of other great samādhis such as these. Consequently this bodhisattva's body and his physical deeds are impossible to completely fathom. So too, his speech, his verbal deeds, his mind, his mental deeds, his sovereign mastery of the spiritual superknowledges, his contemplation of the three periods of time, the objective domains of his samādhis, the objective domains of his wisdom, his wandering and sporting in all the gates to liberation, the

transformations he performs, what he accomplishes through the use of spiritual powers, the works his rays of light perform and, to state it briefly, everything he does up to and including every raising up and setting down of his feet—absolutely everything he does all the way along cannot be known by any bodhisattva up to and including those who have reached the Ground of Excellent Intelligence who dwell therein at the station of the Dharma Prince.

Son of the Buddha. To state it briefly, all of the objective domains of this bodhisattva dwelling on the Dharma Cloud Ground are of this very sort. If one were to attempt an extensive explanation of it, one would still be unable to finish it even in measurelessly many hundreds of thousands of *asamkhyeyas* of kalpas.

36. HE ASKS: “WHAT MORE MIGHT A BUDDHA’S POWERS ACCOMPLISH?”

Liberation Moon Bodhisattva said, “O Son of the Buddha. If the objective domains of this bodhisattva’s spiritual superknowledges are of this sort, then what additional factors must characterize the powers of a buddha’s spiritual superknowledges?”

37. VAJRAGARBHA CONTRASTS A FEW CLUMPS OF EARTH TO ALL WORLDS

Vajragarbha Bodhisattva replied:

O Son of the Buddha. By way of comparison, suppose there was someone who picked up a clump of soil from somewhere on the four continents and asked, ‘Which is of greater volume? Is it all of that soil that comprises all the great earths in the boundlessly many worlds, or is it instead this clump of earth that I am holding here?’ I see this question you have asked as of this very sort. The Tathāgata’s wisdom is boundless and unequalled by anyone. How then could it possibly be compared to that of a bodhisattva?

Additionally, Son of the Buddha, it is just as when one picks up a small clump of earth from somewhere on the four continents and what remains is incalculable in volume. Were one to attempt to describe the spiritual superknowledges and wisdom of this bodhisattva on the Dharma Cloud Ground, even if one were to attempt to describe them for measurelessly many kalpas, one could only succeed in describing a minor portion of them. How much the more so then would this be the case if one were to attempt to describe them as they relate to one who abides on the ground of the Tathāgata?

38. VAJRAGARBHA COMPARES MANY BODHISATTVAS’ WISDOM TO ONE BUDDHA’S

Son of the Buddha. I will now bring forth a circumstance for you that will attest to the truth of this matter and thereby cause you

to be able to understand the realm of the Tathāgata. Son of the Buddha. Suppose that in each and every one of the ten directions there were buddha lands as numerous as the atoms in boundlessly many worlds, and suppose too that each and every one of those lands was so completely filled with bodhisattvas abiding on this ground that they could be compared to dense thickets of sugar cane stalks, bamboo, reeds, paddy rice, or hemp. Even all the wisdom arising from the bodhisattva practices cultivated by all of those bodhisattvas across the course of hundreds of thousands of *koṭis* of *nayutas* of kalpas could not compare to even a hundredth part of that possessed by a single *tathāgata*, and so forth until we come to its inability to equal even the smallest fraction of an *upaniṣad* when compared with the wisdom possessed by a single *tathāgata*.

39. THE NATURE OF THIS BODHISATTVA'S PRACTICE AND WISDOM LIGHT

Son of the Buddha. Abiding in wisdom of this sort, this bodhisattva is no different from the Tathāgata in his actions of body, speech, and mind. He never relinquishes the power of any of the bodhisattva samādhis. Across the course of countless kalpas, he renders service to and makes offering to all buddhas and, in each and every kalpa, he presents every sort of gift to them as offerings. He is aided by the spiritual powers of all buddhas. The light of his wisdom becomes ever more supremely bright. Hence he is able to skillfully resolve all the difficult challenging questions throughout the Dharma realm, becoming one over whom no one can prevail even if they were to challenge him for a hundred thousand *koṭis* of kalpas.

40. THE LIGHT OF HIS WISDOM COMPARED TO THAT OF REAL GOLD

Son of the Buddha. It is as if there was a goldsmith who, using the most supremely fine real gold, created articles of physical adornment to be personally worn by the Vaśavartin Heaven King,²⁷¹ adornments in which he inlaid large *maṇi* jewels, thereby creating adornments that could not be rivaled by those worn by any of the other devas.

So too it is in the case of the bodhisattva dwelling on this ground. His wisdom is such that it cannot be rivaled by all of the wisdom-based conduct of all bodhisattvas dwelling on the first ground through the ninth ground. The wisdom light of the bodhisattva dwelling on this ground is even able to cause beings to reach all the way through to the point of entering the cognition of

all-knowledge. None of the wisdom light of those others is able to compare to this.

41. THIS BODHISATTVA'S WISDOM LIGHT COMPARED TO MAHEŚVARA'S LIGHT

Son of the Buddha. This is analogous to the light of the Maheśvara Heaven King²⁷² that is able to cause the bodies and minds of beings to become clear and cool and, as such, is of a sort that cannot be rivaled by the light of any other beings.

So too it is with the wisdom light of the bodhisattva dwelling on this ground. It is able to cause all beings to acquire clarity and coolness and progress on through to the point where they themselves dwell in the cognition of all-knowledge. As such, it is of a sort that it cannot be rivaled by the wisdom light of any *śrāvaka*-disciple, *pratyekabuddha*, or bodhisattva on any ground up to and including the ninth ground.

42. THE BUDDHAS' ONGOING TEACHING OF THIS BODHISATTVA

Son of the Buddha. Though this bodhisattva *mahāsattva* already possesses the ability to be established in wisdom such as this, the Buddhas, the Bhagavats, additionally expound for his sake on the "the knowledge of the three periods of time," "the knowledge of the Dharma realm's distinctions," the knowledge that extends to all worlds," the knowledge that illuminates all worlds," "the knowledge that bears all beings in mind with kindness," and, to speak of what is essential, they expound for his sake on all the types of knowledge up to and including that culminates in gaining the cognition of all-knowledge.

43. THE TENTH GROUND BODHISATTVA'S FOCUS ON THE KNOWLEDGES PĀRAMITĀ

Among the ten *pāramitās*, this bodhisattva has become most especially superior in his perfection of the *pāramitā* of knowledges, though it is not the case that he does not cultivate the others.

44. VAJRAGARBHĀ'S FINAL STATEMENTS ABOUT THE 10TH GROUND BODHISATTVA

Son of the Buddha. This has been a summary explanation of the bodhisattva *mahāsattva's*, tenth ground, the Ground of the Dharma Cloud. Were one to discourse on it extensively, even if one were to do so for measurelessly many *asaṃkhyeyas* of kalpas, one would still be unable to come to the end of it.

45. THE BODHISATTVA'S STATION AND DHARMA PRACTICE

Son of the Buddha. The bodhisattva *mahāsattva* dwelling on this ground often becomes a Maheśvara Heaven King who possesses sovereign mastery of the Dharma and who is able to transmit on

to beings the practices of *śrāvaka*-disciples and *pratyekabuddhas* as well as the practice of the bodhisattvas' *pāramitās*. Even if challenged with all the difficult questions from throughout the entire Dharma realm, there would still be no one able to prevail over him.

46. THE BODHISATTVA'S MINDFULNESS

In his practice of giving, pleasing words, beneficial actions, joint endeavors, and all other such karmic works he pursues, he never departs from mindfulness of the Buddha, and so forth until we come to his never departing from mindfulness of his quest to achieve complete fulfillment of the knowledge of all modes and the cognition of all-knowledge.

47. THE BODHISATTVA'S ASPIRATION TO SERVE BEINGS

He also has this thought: "I should become one who serves these beings as a leader, as one who is supreme," and so forth until we come to "as one who relies on the cognition of all-knowledge."

48. THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE BODHISATTVA'S VIGOR AND VOWS

If he applies himself diligently to the practice of vigor, then, in but the instant of a single mind-moment, he succeeds in acquiring *samādhis* as numerous as the atoms in ineffably many hundreds of thousands of *koṭis* of *nayutas* of buddha lands. And so it goes on up to his then being able to manifest the acquisition of a following of bodhisattvas serving in his retinues as numerous as just that many atoms.

If this bodhisattva chooses to avail himself of the power of his especially supreme vows, he becomes able then to freely manifest such phenomena in numbers well beyond these, even to the point that, whether we speak of his cultivation, the adornments he creates, his resolute faith, what he accomplishes through physical or verbal actions, his light, his faculties, his spiritual transformations, his voice, or the domain of his practices, one would still be unable to enumerate them even if one were to attempt to do so for a hundred thousand *koṭis* of *nayutas* of kalpas.

III. THE FINAL SUMMARIZING DISCUSSION OF THE TEN GROUNDS²⁷³

A. HIS EVENTUAL ALL-KNOWLEDGE LIKENED TO RIVERS' FLOW INTO THE SEA

{A} Son of the Buddha. This bodhisattva *mahāsattva's* aspects of practice on the ten grounds are such that, so long as he causes them to become directly and sequentially manifest, he will thereby become able to progress into the cognition of all-knowledge.

This circumstance is analogous to Lake Anavatapta that sends forth the four great rivers, the flowing waters of which circulate throughout the continent of Jambudvīpa. Because these waters are never exhausted, they ever increase in volume until they enter the ocean and cause it to become full.

Son of the Buddha. So too it is with this bodhisattva. From the point of his initial resolve to realize bodhi, he continually streams forth the waters of his roots of goodness and great vows, employing the four means of attraction to completely fulfill the needs of beings. Not only are these waters inexhaustible, they are moreover ever increasing until they ultimately pour forth into the ocean of all-knowledge and cause it to become full.

B. THE 10 GROUNDS' DIFFERENCES LIKENED TO THOSE OF 10 MOUNTAIN KINGS

(B) Son of the Buddha. Due to the Buddha's knowledge, the ten grounds of the bodhisattva have distinct differences. This is just as when, due to the great earth, there exist the ten kings of mountains. What then are those ten? They are: the Snow Mountain King, the Fragrance Mountain King, the Vaidharī Mountain King, the Rishi Mountain King, the Yugaṃdhara Mountain King, the Horse Ear Mountain King, the Nimindhara Mountain King, the Cakravāḍa Mountain King, the Ketumat Mountain King, and the Sumeru Mountain King.

1. THE FIRST GROUND COMPARED TO THE SNOW MOUNTAIN KING

Son of the Buddha. Just as on the Snow Mountain King, every sort of herb grows there so abundantly that one could never harvest them all, so too it is on the bodhisattva's Ground of Joyfulness, for all the world's classical texts, skills and arts, literature, verses, mantras and other occult techniques—these are all so completely present therein that one could never exhaustively describe them all.

2. THE SECOND GROUND COMPARED TO THE FRAGRANCE MOUNTAIN KING

Son of the Buddha. Just as on the Fragrance Mountain King, every sort of incense is all accumulated there and is so abundantly present there that one could never harvest it all, so too it is on the bodhisattva's Ground of Stainlessness, for the bodhisattva's moral precept practices and standards of awesome deportment are all so completely present therein that one could never exhaustively describe them all.

3. THE THIRD GROUND COMPARED TO THE VAIDHARĪ MOUNTAIN KING

Son of the Buddha. Just as the Vaidharī Mountain King is so entirely composed of jewels that all the many different kinds of

precious jewels are so abundantly present therein that one could never extract them all, so too it is on the bodhisattva's Ground of Shining Light, for the world's *dhyāna* absorptions, spiritual super-knowledges, liberations, *samādhis*, and *samāpattis* are all so completely present therein that one could never exhaustively describe them all.

4. THE FOURTH GROUND COMPARED TO THE RISHI MOUNTAIN KING

Son of the Buddha. Just as the Rishi Mountain King composed entirely of jewels has rishis possessed of the five spiritual super-knowledges in such abundance that they are endlessly numerous, so too it is with the bodhisattva's Ground of Blazing Brilliance, for the forms of especially supreme wisdom from all paths are so completely present therein that one could never exhaustively describe them all.

5. THE FIFTH GROUND COMPARED TO THE YUGAMDHARA MOUNTAIN KING

Son of the Buddha. Just as on the Yugamdhara Mountain King composed entirely of jewels, the *yakṣas*, those great spirits, live there in such abundance that one could never come to the end of them, so too it is on the bodhisattva's Difficult-to-Conquer Ground, for all types of sovereign masteries and psychic powers, and spiritual penetrations are so completely present therein that one could never exhaustively describe them all.

6. THE SIXTH GROUND COMPARED TO THE HORSE EAR MOUNTAIN KING

Son of the Buddha. Just as on the Horse Ear Mountain King composed entirely of jewels, all the various fruits are so abundantly present there that one could never harvest them all, so too it is on the bodhisattva's Ground of Direct Presence, for those who have penetrated the principle of conditioned arising corresponding to the realizations of *śrāvaka* disciples' fruits of the path are all so completely present therein that one could never exhaustively describe them all.

7. THE SEVENTH GROUND COMPARED TO THE NIMINDHARA MOUNTAIN KING

Just as on the Nimindhara Mountain King composed entirely of jewels, all the greatly powerful dragon spirits are so abundantly present there that one could never come to the end of them, so too it is on the bodhisattva's Far-Reaching Ground, for the skillful means, wisdom, and realizations corresponding to the fruits of a *pratyekabuddha's* path are all so completely present therein that one could never exhaustively describe them all.

8. THE EIGHTH GROUND COMPARED TO THE CAKRAVĀDA MOUNTAIN KING

Just as on the Cakravāda Mountain King composed entirely of jewels, the congregation of those possessed of sovereign mastery is so abundantly present that one could never come to the end of them, so too it is on the bodhisattva's Ground of Immovability, for all bodhisattvas' sovereign masteries in traveling to different worlds are all so completely present therein that one could never exhaustively describe them all.

9. THE NINTH GROUND COMPARED TO THE KETUMAT MOUNTAIN KING

Just as on the Ketumat Mountain King composed entirely of jewels, all the *asura* kings possessed of great awe-inspiring virtue who dwell there are so abundantly present that one could never come to the end of them, so too it is on the bodhisattva's Ground of Excellent Intelligence, for all forms of knowledge and practice pertaining to the creation and destruction of worlds are all so completely present therein that one could never exhaustively describe them all.

10. THE TENTH GROUND COMPARED TO THE SUMERU MOUNTAIN KING

Just as on the Sumeru Mountain King that is entirely composed of precious jewels, the devas possessed of greatly awe-inspiring virtue are so abundantly present there that one could never come to the end of them, so too it is on the bodhisattva's Dharma Cloud Ground, for the Tathāgata's powers, fearlessnesses, exclusive dharmas, and matters pertaining to buddhahood are all so completely present therein along with their abundantly present facility in questions, answers, and proclamations that one could never come to the end of them all.

11. THE TEN GROUNDS IN ALL-KNOWLEDGE LIKENED TO MOUNTAINS IN THE SEA

Son of the Buddha. These ten jeweled mountain kings all identically reside within the great ocean and achieve their names based on their differences. So too it is with the bodhisattva's ten grounds. They all identically reside within all-knowledge and acquire their names based on their differences.

C. THE TEN GROUNDS COMPARED TO TEN ASPECTS OF THE GREAT OCEAN

{C} Son of the Buddha. [These ten bodhisattva grounds] are comparable to the great ocean that, on the basis of ten characteristic features, acquires the inalterably exclusive designation "great ocean."²⁷⁴ What then are those ten? They are:

- First, it progresses gradually from its shallows to its depths;
- Second, it refuses to accept dead bodies;

Third, upon flowing into it, all other waters thereby lose their original names;
 Fourth, it is everywhere of the same singular flavor;
 Fifth, it holds incalculably many truly precious jewels;
 Sixth, nobody is able to go all the way down to its bottom;
 Seventh, it is incalculably vast;
 Eighth, it is a place in which beings with huge bodies reside;
 Ninth, its tides do not reach beyond its shoreline;
 Tenth, it everywhere takes in the great rains without overflowing.

So too it is with the practices of the bodhisattva that on the basis of ten characteristic features acquire the inalterably exclusive designation “bodhisattva practices.” What then are those ten? They are:

On the Ground of Joyfulness this is because it is therein that the production of great vows gradually and sequentially deepens;

On the Ground of Stainlessness this is because it refuses to accept the dead bodies of those who break the precepts;

On the Ground of Shining Light this is because that is where one relinquishes the world’s false designations;

On the Ground of Blazing Brilliance this is because it is of the same singular flavor as the Buddha’s meritorious qualities;

On the Difficult-to-Conquer Ground this is because this is where one produces incalculably many skillful means and spiritual superknowledges whereby what one does in the world constitutes a multitude of precious jewels;

On the Ground of Direct Presence this is because that is where one contemplates the extremely profound principles of conditioned arising;

On the Far-Reaching Ground this is because that is where one employs vast enlightened intelligence in skillful investigative contemplation;

On the Ground of Immovability this is because that is where one manifests vast works of adornment;

On the Ground of Excellent Intelligence this is because that is where one acquires profound liberation and, in one’s practice within the world, one’s awareness accords with reality and never extends beyond boundaries;

And on the Dharma Cloud Ground this is because that is where one becomes able to insatiably take on all the rain of the Buddha’s, the Tathāgata’s, great Dharma light.

D. THE TEN GROUNDS COMPARED TO A LARGE MAṆI JEWEL

(D) Son of the Buddha. This circumstance is analogous to that of a large *maṇi* jewel that by virtue of possessing ten characteristic qualities surpasses all the many other sorts of jewels. What then are those ten? They are:

- First, it comes forth from the great ocean;
- Second, it is enhanced by the refinements of a skilled artisan;
- Third, it is perfect and entirely free of flaws;
- Fourth, it is possessed of stainless purity;
- Fifth, its brightly penetrating brilliance shines both inwardly and outwardly;
- Sixth, it has been skillfully drilled through;
- Seventh, it is strung with precious thread;
- Eighth, it is mounted at the very tip of a tall flagpole made of lapis lazuli;
- Ninth, it shines forth everywhere with all the many different kinds of light;
- Tenth, it is able to rain down the many sorts of precious things in response to the wishes of the King and is able to fulfill the wishes arising in beings' minds.

Son of the Buddha. So too it is with the bodhisattva who, in this same manner, by virtue of possessing ten characteristic features, surpasses the qualities of the many other *āryas*. What then are these ten?

- First, he has brought forth the resolve to gain all-knowledge;
- Second, in his observance of the moral precepts and his cultivation of the *dhūta* practices, he is possessed of radiantly pure right practice;
- Third, he is possessed of perfectly full and flawless practice of all the *dhyāna* samādhis;
- Fourth, his path practices are pure white and free from all stains and defilements;
- Fifth, his skillful means and spiritual superknowledges are possessed of a penetrating brilliance that shines both inwardly and outwardly;
- Sixth, his wisdom with respect to the process of conditioned arising has the capacity to be skillfully penetrating;
- Seventh, [his practice] is strung through with the thread of the many different applications of skillful means and wisdom;
- Eighth, he is placed high atop the pillar of the sovereign masteries;

Ninth, he contemplates beings' actions and emanates the light of learning and retention;

Tenth, having received the Buddhas' consecration of his knowledge, he then falls in among those counted as buddhas and thus becomes able, for the sake of beings, to carry out on a vast scale the works of the Buddhas.

E. THE PREREQUISITE CONDITIONS FOR HEARING THE TEN GROUNDS TEACHINGS

(E) Son of the Buddha. As for this chapter on the bodhisattva practice gateways by which one accumulates the meritorious qualities associated with the knowledge of all modes and all-knowledge, if any being had not himself already planted roots of goodness, he would be unable to even obtain a hearing of it.

F. LIBERATION MOON ASKS: "HOW MUCH MERIT BY HEARING THIS TEACHING?"

Liberation Moon Bodhisattva then asked, "How much merit might one acquire due to having heard [this chapter that describes] these Dharma gateways?"

G. VAJRAGARBHA EXPLAINS MERIT AND IMPORTANCE TEN GROUNDS TEACHING

Vajragarbha Bodhisattva replied:

The merit associated with simply hearing these Dharma gateways is of the same sort as the merit of all-knowledge. How could that be? It could not be that one might have resolute faith in, accept, uphold, study and recite these Dharma gateways to the meritorious qualities if one had not heard them. How much the less might one then proceed to vigorously pursue their cultivation in accordance with the way they were explained. Therefore, one should realize that it is essential that one gain a hearing of these Dharma gateways to the accumulation of the meritorious qualities associated with all-knowledge in order to then be able to have resolute faith in them, accept them, uphold them in practice, and thus later succeed in reaching the ground of all-knowledge.

H. THE AUSPICIOUS SIGNS OCCURRING WHEN THIS SUTRA'S TEACHING ENDED

At that time, because of the spiritual powers of the Buddha and because of the very nature of the Dharma, in each of the ten directions, worlds as numerous as the atoms in ten *koṭis* of buddha lands underwent the six types and eighteen varieties of characteristic movements, namely: movement, universal movement, equal-and-universal movement, rising, universal rising, equal-and-universal rising, upward thrusting, universal upward thrusting, equal-and-universal upward thrusting, shaking, universal shaking,

equal-and-universal shaking, roaring, universal roaring, equal-and-universal roaring, striking, universal striking, and equal-and-universal striking. This was accompanied by the raining down of the many sorts of heavenly flower blossoms, heavenly floral garlands, heavenly raiment, and also heavenly jewels, articles of adornment, flags, banners, silken canopies, the playing of heavenly instruments and singing in which the sounds were harmonious and refined and accompanied by the simultaneous sounding of voices in praise of all the meritorious qualities of the ground of all-knowledge.

I. THE 10 DIRECTIONS' BODHISATTVAS ATTEST TO THE TEACHING'S UNIVERSALITY

Just as this proclamation of this Dharma was taking place in the palace of this world's Paranirmita Vaśavartin Heaven, so too was it also taking place in this very fashion in all worlds of the ten directions.

Additionally, at that time, again on account of the spiritual powers of the Buddha, there came to this assembly from beyond worlds as numerous as the atoms in ten *koṭis* of buddha lands bodhisattvas as numerous as the atoms in ten *koṭis* of buddha lands who then spoke these words:

It is good indeed, good indeed, O Vajragarbha, that you have discoursed so directly on this dharma. We too carry the name "Vajragarbha" and the worlds in which we dwell with all their differences, are all named, "Vajra Qualities." Our buddha is called "Vajra Banner." All of us, receiving the benefit of the spiritual powers of the Tathāgata, proclaim this very Dharma in those worlds in which we dwell and from which we come. Our assemblies are all also entirely identical. The language, the phrases, and the meanings are also neither enhanced nor reduced in comparison to what is set forth here.

That all of us have come to this assembly is entirely because of the Buddha's spiritual powers through which we have come to offer this certifying corroboration. Just as we have now come and entered this world, so too is it the case that, in this same manner, we go forth to all the worlds of the ten directions to offer just such certifying corroboration there as well.

J. VAJRAGARBHA'S SUMMARIZING VERSES AUGMENTED BY THE BUDDHA'S POWERS

At that time, Vajragarbha Bodhisattva regarded that entire congregation that had assembled from the ten directions throughout the entire Dharma realm and, wishing to praise the generation of the resolve to gain realization of the cognition of all-knowledge,

wishing to reveal the realms of the bodhisattvas, wishing to reveal the purification of the practices and powers of the bodhisattva, wishing to discourse on the acquisition of the path to the knowledge of all modes, wishing to discourse on the extinguishing of all forms of worldly defilement, wishing to bestow all-knowledge, wishing to reveal the adornments associated with inconceivable knowledge, wishing to reveal all the meritorious qualities of all bodhisattvas, and wishing to cause such meanings associated with the grounds to become yet more clearly revealed, he availed himself of the spiritual power of the Buddha and then proceeded to utter verses, saying:

With a mind abiding in quiescence, forever tamed,
and as uniformly the same and unobstructed as space itself,
he abandons the turbidity of all defilements and abides in the path.
You should listen to such especially supreme practices as these. ⁽¹⁷⁾

For a hundred thousand *koṭis* of kalpas, he cultivates every good,
presents offerings to incalculably and boundlessly many buddhas,
and to *śrāvaka*-disciples and *pratyekabuddhas* as well
and, in order to benefit beings, brings forth the great resolve. ⁽¹⁸⁾

He diligently upholds moral precepts, is always pliantly patient,
is replete in senses of shame and blame and merit and knowledge,
resolutely seeks Buddha's knowledge, cultivates vast intelligence,
and, vowing to acquire the ten powers, brings forth the great resolve.
⁽¹⁹⁾

He makes offerings to all Buddhas of the three periods of time,
adorns and purifies all lands,
utterly realizes all dharmas' uniform equality,
and, for the sake of benefiting beings, brings forth the great resolve.²⁷⁵
⁽²⁰⁾

Dwelling on the first ground, he brings forth this resolve,
forever abandons the many evils, and always abides in joyfulness.
Through the power of vows, he vastly cultivates all good dharmas,
and, through compassionate empathy, enters the next station.

Entirely replete in precepts and learning and mindful of beings,
he washes away defilements, his mind becomes radiantly pristine,
he contemplates the world's fires of the three poisons,
and, with vast comprehension, proceeds on to the third ground.

Seeing the three realms of existence as entirely impermanent,
as ablaze with sufferings akin to when an arrow is shot into the body,
he renounces all that is conditioned, pursues the Buddha's Dharma,
and, as one with great wisdom, enters the Blazing Ground.

Fully replete in mindfulness and wisdom, he gains path knowledge, makes hundreds of thousands of offerings to countless buddhas, and always contemplates all of the most supreme qualities, whereupon this person then enters the Difficult-to-Conquer Ground.

Employing wisdom and skillful means, he skillfully contemplates, brings forth all different sorts of manifestations to rescue beings, again makes offerings to the unexcelled Honored One of ten powers, and enters the unproduced and the Direct Presence Ground.

He becomes able to know what is difficult for a worldling to know, does not accept any self, transcends existence and non-existence, knows dharmas' basic stillness, adapts to conditions' transformations, and, having gained these sublime states, enters the seventh ground.

With wisdom, skillful means, and a vast mind, [he masters] what is hard to practice, hard to overcome, and hard to entirely know. Though he has realized quiescent cessation, he cultivates diligently and is able to enter the space-like Ground of Immovability.

Encouraged by Buddha, he is caused to rise from quiescent cessation, takes up vast cultivation of many different deeds rooted in wisdom. Equipped with ten sovereign masteries, he contemplates the world, and, due to this, ascends to the Ground of Excellent Intelligence.

With subtle and marvelous wisdom, he contemplates beings' thickets of mental actions, karmic actions, afflictions, and such, and, wishing to teach them and cause them to enter the path, he then expounds on all Buddhas' treasury of the supreme meaning.

He sequentially cultivates to completion the many forms of goodness, accumulates merit and wisdom up through the ninth ground, always pursues all buddhas' most supreme dharmas, and gains the consecration with Buddha's wisdom waters poured on his crown.

He acquires measurelessly many samādhis and also thoroughly and completely understands their functions. The very last samādhi is known as "Receiving the Consecration" wherein he dwells in a vast realm, forever unmoving.

When this bodhisattva acquires this samādhi, an immense bejeweled lotus blossom suddenly appears, whereupon, with a body of matching size, he sits down in its middle, surrounded by those buddha's sons, all in the same contemplation.

He emanates a hundred thousand *koṭis* of great light beams that extinguish the sufferings of all beings and also emanates beams of light from his crown that everywhere enter the assemblies of the buddhas of the ten directions.

They all remain there in space, forming a net-like canopy of light that, after making offerings to the Buddhas, then enters their feet. The Buddhas all then immediately know,
 “This Buddha’s son has now ascended to the consecration stage.”

The bodhisattvas from the ten directions come to observe this great consecration-receiving eminence pour forth illumination. The Buddhas then also release light from between their eyebrows that, after producing illumination everywhere, then enter his crown.

All worlds of the ten directions are then beset with tremors and all the sufferings experienced in the hells are extinguished. It is at this very time that the Buddhas confer their consecration just as a wheel-turning king confers a consecration on his eldest son.

When one receives this anointing of the crown by the Buddhas, then this is what is known as ascending to the Dharma Cloud Ground. His wisdom continues to grow boundlessly to include [the means of] awakening everyone in all worlds.

The desire realm, the form realm, the formless realm, the Dharma realm, the worldly realms, and the realms of beings. Whether calculable, incalculable, or in the realms of empty space, he acquires a penetrating comprehension of all such things as these.

In all his transformations, he employs greatly awe-inspiring powers and receives the Buddhas’ augmenting support in subtle knowledge. As for the esoteric, kalpa enumerations, ordinary beings, and such, he can contemplate them all in accordance with reality.

He takes on birth, leaves the home life, realizes right enlightenment, turns the wheel of the wondrous Dharma, and enters nirvāṇa. Everything up to the dharma of quiescent liberation as well as what has not yet been taught—he is able to completely fathom it all.

The bodhisattva dwelling on this Dharma Cloud Ground, entirely perfect in mindfulness power, retains the Buddha’s Dharma. Just as the great ocean takes in the dragon’s rains, so too is his ability to take in and retain the Dharma on this ground.

Compared to all buddha dharmas countless beings in ten directions who had the hearing-and-retaining [samādhi] could retain, the Dharma that he hears [and retains] in the place of a single buddha exceeds that number by a measurelessly great amount.

Using the power of wisdom, past vows, and awesome spiritual might, in but a single mind-moment, he pervades the ten directions’ lands, pours down the rain of sweet-dew elixir, and extinguishes afflictions. Hence the Buddha referred to this as “the Dharma Cloud.”

What his superknowledges manifest throughout the ten directions so surpasses matters in the worldly sphere of humans and devas, exceeding their number so incalculably many *koṭis* of times, assessing them with worldly knowledge, one is sure to become bewildered.

Even everyone up through the ninth ground cannot know how much knowledge and merit is involved in his merely raising his foot. How much less might this be known by any ordinary being or even by any *śrāvaka*-disciple or *pratyekabuddha*.

The bodhisattva dwelling on this ground makes offerings to buddhas in the lands throughout the ten directions while also making offerings to all present-era assemblies of *āryas* and completely fulfilling his adornment with a buddha's qualities.

As he dwells on this ground, they additionally discourse for him on unimpeded knowledge of the three times, the Dharma realm, and in the same manner, on beings, on lands, and so forth on up to all of the Buddha's meritorious qualities.

The wisdom light of the bodhisattva dwelling on this ground is able to reveal to beings the road of right Dharma.

As the Maheśvara Heaven King's light dispels worldly darkness, so too this light of his dispels darkness in just that same manner.

Dwelling herein, one often becomes a king within the three realms well able to expound on Dharma according to the Three Vehicles. Incalculably many *samādhis* are acquired in but a mind-moment and the number of buddhas he sees is of that same order.

I have now concluded a summary explanation of this ground. If one wished to discourse on it extensively, it would be endless. Just so, the grounds exist in reliance on the Buddha's wisdom just as the ten mountain kings, towering, abide [in reliance on the earth].

Culturally supportive works done on the first ground are endless, comparable to the density of the many herbs on Snow Mountain. Second ground precepts and learning are like Incense Mountain. The third is like the fine flowers that come forth on Vaidharī.

The jewels of the path on the "Blazing Brilliance" ground are endless, comparable to the worthies skillfully dwelling on Rishi Mountain. The spiritual powers on the fifth ground are like on Yugaṃdhara. The many fruits on the sixth are like on Horse Ear Mountain.

The seventh ground's great wisdom is analogous to Nimindhara. The sovereign masteries on the eighth ground are like Cakravāda. The ninth is like Ketumat in its gathering of unimpeded knowledge. The tenth is like Sumeru in its repletion with the manifold virtues.

The first ground is chief in vows, the second in upholding precepts,
the third ground in virtues, the fourth in singular focus,
the fifth ground in sublimity, the sixth in extreme profundity,
the seventh in vast wisdom, and the eighth in adornment.

The ninth is foremost in the contemplation of sublime meanings
in a manner that surpasses that of all the world's paths.

On the tenth ground, one takes on and preserves Buddha dharmas.
It is in this way that the ocean of practices is inexhaustible.

Ten practices overstep the worldly, the first is generating the resolve,
upholding precepts is second, *dhyāna* is third,

purification of practices is fourth, fulfillment is fifth, conditioned
arising is sixth, his threading of [means and wisdom] is seventh,

the eighth is placement atop the vajra pillar,

the ninth is contemplation of the beings' thickets,

the tenth is the anointing of the crown according to the King's intent.

It is in this way that the jewel of virtue gradually becomes purified.

Even if, having crushed the ten directions' lands to dust,

one could know in but a single mind-moment their number of dusts,

and, even if one could measure the size of space with a hair tip, still,

one could not finish describing [the grounds] even in a *koṭi* of kalpas.