

CHAPTER 30

[Distinctions Pertaining to] the Great Vehicle

XXX. CHAPTER 30: [DISTINCTIONS PERTAINING TO] THE GREAT VEHICLE

A. Q: WHICH BEINGS CAN USE THE TEN COURSES TO BECOME BUDDHAS?

Question: As you have already explained, the ten courses of good karmic action enable one to reach the grounds of the *śrāvaka* disciples and *pratyekabuddhas*. Which sorts of beings can the ten courses of good karmic action also cause to reach the ground of buddhahood?

B. A: THE TEN COURSES ENABLE BUDDHAHOOD FOR BEINGS OF THIS SORT (VERSE)

Response:

The way they practice the ten courses of good karmic action is superior to that of the two other classes of practitioners, for they engage in measureless extraordinary cultivation superior to that of anyone else in the world.

They bring forth vows that are both solid and good,⁴⁹⁰ perfect the great compassion that cannot be impeded, thoroughly take on the practice of skillful means, and patiently endure every sort of pain and anguish.

They do not abandon any being, deeply cherish the wisdom of the Buddhas, and delight in those who completely and thoroughly practice the Buddhas' powers and sovereign masteries.

They are able to refute all ideas involving wrong views and accept and protect the Buddhas' right Dharma. They are valiant, able to endure, and vigorous, and are possessed of solid resolve in teaching beings.

They do not covet or become attached to their own happiness or to living a measurelessly long life.

They are supreme in all their endeavors and free of fault in all the works they do.

They possess every kind of purity and come forth through the practice of all the supreme bases. The courses of good karmic action enable these persons to reach the ground of the Bhagavats who possess the ten powers.

C. AN EXTENSIVE LINE-BY-LINE EXPLANATION OF THE VERSE'S DEEP MEANING

1. "SUPERIORITY OF THE BODHISATTVA'S CULTIVATION OF THE TEN COURSES"

As for "the way they practice the ten courses of good karmic action is superior to that of the two other classes of practitioners,"⁴⁹¹ this refers to the fact that the bodhisattvas have become superior to the *śrāvaka* disciple and *pratyekabuddha* aspirants in the quality of their cultivation of the ten courses of good karmic action. "Becoming superior," [in their cultivation of the ten courses of good karmic action] means that the bodhisattvas cultivate them with single-minded focus, that they always cultivate them, that they cultivate them to benefit themselves, that they cultivate them to benefit others, and that they cultivate them purely.

"Cultivating them with single-minded focus" means that they employ full mental intention in their cultivation.

"Always cultivate them" means that they never rest in their cultivation of them.

"Cultivating them to benefit themselves" means that they do this to establish the causes and conditions for birth among humans and devas and to establish the causes and conditions for the attainment of nirvāṇa.

"Cultivating them to benefit others" means that, as the bodhisattvas cultivate the ten courses of good karmic action, they dedicate the merit to the benefit and peace of all beings. It is for this reason that they can liberate an incalculable number of beings.

"Cultivating them purely" means theirs is undamaged practice, unmixed practice, unsullied practice, practice in which one has sovereign mastery, perfectly complete practice, practice free of covetousness and attachment, and practice that is praised by the wise.

"Damaged" practice refers here to that in which some aspects of the practice are cultivated whereas others are left aside and not practiced. Practice that is opposite to this is "undamaged" practice.

"Mixed" practice refers here to that wherein one encourages others to practice what one does not practice oneself. Practice that is opposite to this is "unmixed" practice.

"Sullied" practice is practice that occurs in conjunction with afflictions and karmic offenses. Practice that is opposite to this is "unsullied" practice.

As for "sovereign mastery," because they are tied down by agricultural work, wives, children, or material possessions, those who are prone to breaking the precepts are unable to achieve a state of sovereign mastery [in their practice]. Having no such [encumbering] circumstances, those who uphold the precepts may freely achieve a state

of sovereign mastery in which they are not tied down by anything at all.

“Perfectly complete” practice refers to exhaustively complete observance of all the major and minor moral precepts that blocks off the afflictions, that involves constant mindfulness of the need to preserve them and guard against transgression, that serves as a cause and condition for the *dhyāna* absorptions, that is dedicated to realization of buddhahood, and that enables one to unite with ultimate reality and the nature of dharmas. This is what is meant by “perfectly complete” in this context.

Practice “free of covetousness and attachment” does not direct its focus toward worldly priorities, does not seize on merely superficial aspects of the moral precepts, and remains free of any tendency to elevate oneself and disparage others.

As for practice “praised by the wise,” in the Dharma of *śrāvaka* disciples, it is because it does not follow the cycle of births and deaths and is implemented solely for the sake of nirvāṇa that it is referred to as “praised by the wise.”

In this Dharma of the Great Vehicle, its practitioners do not even dedicate their practice to success in the Śrāvaka Disciple Vehicle or the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle, how much the less could their practice be dedicated to *saṃsāra*? Rather, it is dedicated solely to the realization of *anuttarasamyaksaṃbodhi*. This is what is meant by practice of the ten courses of good karmic action that is “praised by the wise.”

Question: What are the marks of cultivation that qualify it as “good” cultivation?

Response: It is that which incorporates countless extraordinary qualities into cultivation of the ten courses of good karmic action in a manner superior to the cultivation practiced by anyone else in the world. This is what is meant by “good” cultivation.

a. FIVE WAYS IN WHICH THE BODHISATTVA’S PRACTICE IS SUPERIOR

Question: How do the bodhisattvas, employing this sort of cultivation, cultivate in a manner “superior to anyone else in the entire world”?

Response: It is on the basis of five aspects of their cultivation that the bodhisattvas’ cultivation is “superior to that of anyone else in the world”.⁴⁹²

First, their vows;

Second, their solid resolve;

Third, their resolute intentions;

Fourth, their thoroughgoing purity;⁴⁹³

And fifth, their use of skillful means.

1) SUPERIORITY OF VOWS

As for "their vows," the vows implemented by the bodhisattvas do not even exist among all common people, *śrāvaka* disciple practitioners, or *pratyekabuddha* practitioners. It is for this reason that the vows implemented by the bodhisattvas are superior to those of anyone else in the world. This is as described in the questions of the woman Vimaladattā in the *Mahāprajñāpāramitā Sūtra* in which the Buddha, because of Maudgalyāyana, said, "From the point of his initial generation of the vow all the way on forward to his arrival at the *bodhimaṇḍa*, the bodhisattva is able to serve the entire world's devas and humans as a field of merit, doing so in a manner that is superior to all *śrāvaka* disciples or *pratyekabuddhas*."

This is also as set forth in the *Pure Vinaya Sutra* wherein Mahākāśyapa said in the Buddha's presence, "The Bhagavat has here so well described this rarity, that is to say, the bodhisattva's initial generation of the vow which is superior to that of all *śrāvaka* disciples and *pratyekabuddhas*."

This also accords with a verse in which it is proclaimed that:

As for the bodhisattva's initial generation of his resolve
conjoined to the great kindness and great compassion
for the sake of the unsurpassable path,
it is just this very resolve that is supreme.
It is therefore the case that, because of this vow,
he abides in a position superior to those in the world.

2) SUPERIORITY OF SOLID RESOLVE

As for his "solid resolve," the bodhisattva maintains it even in the midst of every sort of pain and torment, that is to say he maintains it even in the Living Hells, Black-line Hells, Unification Hells, Lesser Screaming Hells, Great Screaming Hells, Lesser Roasting Hells, Great Roasting Hells, Avīci Hells, Boiling Excrement Hells, Sword Forest Hells, River of Coals Hells, Abhuta Hells, Nirarbuda Hells, Aṭaṭa Hells, Apalāla Hells, Huhuva Hells, Utpala Hells, Kumuda Hells, Sumanā Hells, Puṇḍarīka Hells, and the Padma Hells. He maintains it even when tortured and whipped in these various cold and hot hells.

He maintains it even in the midst of the anguish and torment in the animal realms, the hungry ghost realms, the asura realms, and the realms of humans and devas in which beings devour each other, exist in a state of mutual fearfulness, and go hungry when food has become too expensive.

And he maintains it when he falls back from and loses celestial realm rebirth and when he then encounters jealousy, the torment of

hatred, separation from those one loves, association with those one detests, birth, aging, sickness, death, sorrow, lamentation, misery, and the like.

Thus he maintains his resolve even in the midst of all these sufferings in the six destinies of rebirth. Whether observing them, whether hearing them occur, or whether actually undergoing them himself, the bodhisattva still continues to cultivate the ten courses of good karmic action for the sake of realizing *anuttarasamyaksambodhi*. During that entire time, his resolve continues on and never deteriorates.

It is on these bases that this bodhisattva, by cultivating the ten courses of good karmic action with solid resolve, thereby surpasses everyone else in the entire world. This is as described here:

Even when in the hells, among the animals,
the hungry ghosts, the asuras,
the devas, or the humans, the sufferings of these six destinies,
are still incapable of shaking their resolve.

Therefore the bodhisattvas,
through such solid resolve as this,
are superior to the entire world
in their cultivation of the ten courses of good karmic action.

3) SUPERIORITY OF RESOLUTE INTENTIONS

Regarding their “resolute intentions,” they also possess great intentions, useful intentions, affectionate intentions, and mindful intentions. The bodhisattvas rely on such types of intentions as these in their cultivation of the ten courses of good karmic action and, in this, they are superior to everyone in the entire world with the exception of the Buddhas, the Bhagavats, and those bodhisattvas of long-enduring practice. This is as described here:

They possess resolute intentions, useful intentions,
and intentions that strive to benefit the world,
it is through their use of these types of intentions
that the bodhisattvas surpass the entire world.

4) SUPERIORITY OF THOROUGHGOING PURITY

As for “their thoroughgoing purity,”⁴⁹⁴ in cultivating the courses of good karmic action, the bodhisattvas maintain the three types of karmic purity to a degree not found in such cultivation as carried on by anyone else.⁴⁹⁵ Consequently, they are superior in this to everyone else in the entire world. This is as described here:

The bodhisattvas are treasures of the human realm
completely possessed of resolute intentions and pure intentions.
It is because of the power of these good dharmas
that they are unequaled by anyone in the world.

5) SUPERIORITY IN THE USE OF SKILLFUL MEANS

As for "their use of skillful means," the bodhisattvas use the power of skillful means to cultivate good dharmas that others do not possess. Consequently, they are superior in this to everyone else in the entire world.

2. THE BODHISATTVA'S "MEASURELESS CULTIVATION"

Regarding their "measureless" cultivation,⁴⁹⁶ it is on the basis of five types of causes and conditions that the cultivation of the bodhisattva qualifies as "measureless," namely:

- First, immeasurability of time;
- Second, immeasurability of roots of goodness;
- Third, immeasurability of objective conditions;
- Fourth, immeasurability of ultimate ends;
- And fifth, immeasurability of dedication of merit.

a. IMMEASURABILITY OF TIME

As for "immeasurability of time," the cultivation of the courses of good karmic action as practiced by the bodhisattvas exceeds the very bounds of time. Because it exceeds the bounds of time, their cultivation of the courses of good karmic action is itself measureless. Therefore, in this, they are superior to everyone else in the entire world. This is as described here:

As for the cultivation of the courses of good karmic action as practiced by the bodhisattvas, those lions among men, because its duration surpasses the bounds of calculable time, their cultivation of goodness is the most superior of all.

b. IMMEASURABILITY OF ROOTS OF GOODNESS

As for "immeasurability of roots of goodness," bodhisattvas cultivate measureless and boundless roots of goodness. Because the courses of good karmic action they cultivate in reliance upon these roots of goodness are also immeasurable, the bodhisattvas are in this respect superior to everyone else in the world.

As stated in the Great Vehicle Dharma's *Pure Vinaya Sutra*: "The Buddha told Kāśyapa, 'It is as if the four great seas were filled to the brim with buttermilk. Just so extensive are the bodhisattva's conditioned roots of goodness and provisions for the path.'" Because this merit is dedicated to the knowledge that cognizes the unconditioned, it is able to provide immense benefit to all beings. Therefore, even though the bodhisattva abides in the midst of conditioned existence, he is able to surpass everyone else in the world in this respect. This is as described here:

[Accumulated] for the sake of all beings
 as well as for the sake of buddhahood,
 their roots of goodness are immeasurable.
 Because of this, they are superior to all others in the world.

c. IMMEASURABILITY OF OBJECTIVE CONDITIONS

As for the “immeasurability of objective conditions,” in his accumulation of roots of goodness, the bodhisattva does not take as his objective condition a merely measurable number of beings. He does not say that the roots of goodness he has cultivated are for benefiting some particular number of beings. Rather, the bodhisattva simply takes all beings as the objective condition for his accumulation of roots of goodness. Therefore, since the bodhisattva takes a measureless number of beings as the objective condition on which he focuses, the courses of good karmic action that he cultivates are also measureless. Consequently, he is superior in this respect to everyone else in the world. As stated in the *Pure Vinaya Sutra*:

The Buddha told the *devaputras*, “This is just as in the case of the great bodhisattva possessed of the mind of kindness and compassion who strives to benefit others. This resolve of his is able to cause countless beings to receive benefit and happiness. So too it is with the bodhisattva who is deeply earnest in bringing forth his resolve. Being like this in his diligent application of vigor, he can thereby teach measurelessly many *asaṃkhyeyas* of beings, enabling them to gain the bliss of nirvāṇa.”

This is as described here:

The bodhisattva adorns himself
 with measurelessly many fine meritorious qualities,
 all for the purpose of liberating beings
 from their measureless great suffering.

d. IMMEASURABILITY OF ULTIMATE ENDS

As for “immeasurability of ultimate ends,” “the ten ultimate ends” were already discussed during the explanation of the first ground when discussing the making of [the ten bodhisattva] vows.⁴⁹⁷ It is because of this immeasurability of ultimate ends that the courses of good karmic action as cultivated by the bodhisattva are measureless. He is therefore superior in this respect to anyone in the world. This is as described here:

The bodhisattva’s cultivation of the courses of good karmic action comes forth from the ten ultimate ends.
 Therefore it is superior to that of everyone else
 and such that no one is able to ruin it.

e. IMMEASURABILITY OF DEDICATION OF MERIT

"Immeasurability of dedication of merit" is as described earlier in the explanation of the first ground. The karmic fruits of the bodhisattva's dedication of merit are measureless. Because the karmic fruits of dedication of merit are measureless, the courses of good karmic action he cultivates are also measureless. He is therefore superior in this respect to anyone in the world. This is as described here:

On the basis of measureless causes and conditions,
they cultivate the courses of good karmic action.

Because they dedicate this to [the realization of] the Buddha Vehicle,
they are therefore the most superior of all.

3. THE BODHISATTVA'S "EXTRAORDINARY CULTIVATION"

As for the "extraordinary" nature of their cultivation,⁴⁹⁸ it is because of five causes and conditions that the bodhisattvas' cultivation of the courses of good karmic action is said to be "extraordinary":

First, because of their capacity to endure;

Second, because of their vigor;

Third, because of the solidity of their resolve;

Fourth, because of their wisdom;

Fifth, because of the karmic fruits.

a. HIS EXTRAORDINARY CAPACITY TO ENDURE

As for [the extraordinary nature of] their capacity to endure, [they reflect], "I ought to become one who is the most revered among all devas and humans, one who is possessed of all-knowledge." If one is able to have a capacity such as this, this is extraordinary. Were someone to use his finger to lift a great trichilocosm's worlds and hold them aloft in space for a hundred thousand myriads of kalpas, even this might be considered possible to do and not worthy of being deemed truly difficult. Yet if one makes the vow: "I shall become a buddha," it is this that is extraordinary and extremely difficult. This is as described here:

As for he who, for the sake of a buddha's measureless dharmas,
would make the vow: "I shall become a buddha,"
this person is one who is beyond compare,
how much the less could there be anyone who might surpass him?

b. HIS EXTRAORDINARY VIGOR

Regarding [the extraordinary nature of] their vigor, there are many people who can bring forth the resolve to attain *anuttarasamyakṣaṃbodhi* but who are then unable to vigorously practice the six *pāramitās*. If someone can bring forth the resolve to attain *anuttarasamyakṣaṃbodhi*

and then also be able to vigorously practice the six *pāramitās*, this is what is meant by truly having the capacity to take on the attainment of the measureless meritorious qualities. It is because of the extraordinary nature of their vigor that the courses of good karmic action they cultivate are also extraordinary in nature. This is as described here:

Their practice of great vigor is so extraordinary that,
having merely contemplated it, the common man is frightened.
The bodhisattva actually practices it.
How could this not be regarded as extraordinary?

c. HIS SOLIDITY OF RESOLVE

As for [the extraordinary nature of] their solidity of resolve, there are those who bring forth vigorous resolve to cultivate the path to buddhahood. However, if upon encountering obstacles, their resolve is not solid, they will be unable to succeed. Therefore, if they bring forth vigor and become securely established in extraordinarily solid resolve, they will succeed in their endeavors and demolish all obstacles. It is this that is the most extraordinary accomplishment in bodhisattvas' cultivation of the courses of good karmic action. This is as described here:

If one has no solidity of resolve,
he will be unable to succeed in even minor endeavors.
How much the less could one attain buddhahood
and become the one unsurpassed by anyone in the world?

d. HIS EXTRAORDINARY WISDOM

As for [the extraordinary nature of] their wisdom, this capacity to endure, this vigor, and this solidity of resolve all take wisdom as their foundation. Therefore it is the wisdom of the bodhisattva that is the most extraordinary. Because it is able to produce this capacity to endure, this vigor, and this solidity of resolve, wisdom is itself deemed to be extraordinary. It is because this wisdom is extraordinary that the courses of good karmic action that are cultivated are also extraordinary. This is as described here:

If someone has the capacity to endure
in pursuing his aspiration to realize the Buddha's Dharma,
and if he possesses vigor and has achieved solidity of resolve,
all of these capacities take wisdom as their foundation.

e. HIS EXTRAORDINARY KARMIC FRUITS

As for [the extraordinary nature of] the karmic fruits they achieve, due to their cultivation of the courses of good karmic actions, they gain all the measureless and boundless dharmas of the Buddhas. Therefore

[the karmic fruits] are extraordinary in nature. This is as described here:

By practicing this goodness, one realizes buddhahood,
acquires the power of its measureless meritorious qualities,
and then serves as the teacher of all beings.

Who, on hearing this, could fail to practice them?

4. THE BODHISATTVA'S VOWS

a. THE "SOLIDITY" OF HIS VOWS

Regarding their "solid" vows,⁴⁹⁹ it is for five reasons that the bodhisattva is deemed to have made solid vows, namely:

First, his resolve does not turn back toward the Śrāvaka Disciple Vehicle;

Second, his resolve does not turn back toward the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle;

Third, his resolve does not turn back in favor of the endeavors of the followers of non-Buddhist paths;

Fourth, his resolve does not turn back due to any of the works of Māra;

And fifth, his resolve does not turn back due to an absence of [conducive] causes and conditions.

This is as described here:

One might hear of the liberations won through the Two Vehicles and think, "Why not take up these paths instead?"

If one has not yet entered the station [of irreversibility],⁵⁰⁰ then one might fall away from the bodhisattva path.

Or one might covet the endeavors of followers of non-Buddhist paths, or one might be destroyed by the works of Māra, or else, due to an absence of conducive causes and conditions, one might voluntarily abandon the bodhisattva path.

b. THE "GOODNESS" OF HIS VOWS

As for the "goodness" of their vows,⁵⁰¹ it is for five reasons that the bodhisattva's vows are said to be "good" vows, namely:

First, they reflect a prior assessment of gains or losses;

Second, they are based on a knowledge of the path;

Third, they reflect a knowledge of the fruits of the path;

Fourth, they reflect an absence of any selfish attachment to one's own pleasure;

Fifth, they reflect the wish to extinguish the immense sufferings endured by all beings.

Vows made in this manner are deemed to be good vows. This is as described here:

One first observes the faults and misery of the world
and the immense benefit bestowed by the path to buddhahood.
One knows and practices the unsurpassable path
as well as its measureless fruits.

One relinquishes the bliss of entering one's own quiescent cessation,
and wishes to rid beings of their sufferings.

One who brings forth such peerless vows as these
is someone who is praised by all buddhas.

5. THE BODHISATTVA'S "GREAT COMPASSION"

Regarding "the great compassion" that cannot be impeded,⁵⁰² there are five grounds for knowing a bodhisattva is possessed of the great compassion, namely:

First, because he is devoted to benefiting and conferring happiness
on countless beings, he does not covet or selfishly cherish any of
the life-sustaining requisites;

Second, he does not selfishly cherish his own physical well-being;

Third, he does not selfishly cherish his own life-span;

Fourth, he is not concerned with the extensively long period of time
involved;

Fifth, he maintains a mind of equal regard and motivation to benefit
both adversaries and friends.

This is as described here:

He has no covetous attachment for any of those things
that people cherish, whether personal or external.

In order to be of benefit to beings,
he would even sacrifice his body and life.

The countless kalpas spent amidst *samsāra*
are for him like the mere blinking of an eye.

He acts with uniformly equal regard for both enemy and friend.

These are the factors defining a bodhisattva's great compassion.

6. THE "UNIMPEDED" NATURE OF THE BODHISATTVA'S COMPASSION

As for [their compassion's] being "unimpeded,"⁵⁰³ there are five reasons why a bodhisattva's compassion might [otherwise] become impeded, namely:

First, by the sufferings of the hell realms;

Second, by the sufferings of the animal realms;

Third, by the sufferings of the hungry ghost realms;

Fourth, by evil people's ingratitude [for kindnesses bestowed on them];

Fifth, by the faults and evils encountered amidst *saṃsāra*.

If even these five circumstances fail to impede his resolve, then he qualifies as possessing the unimpeded great compassion. This is as described here:

If even the foremost sufferings encountered in the hell realms,
the sufferings met in the animal realms or hungry ghost realms,
[the ingratitude of] evil people, and *saṃsāra*
still fail to impede him, he is one possessed of the great compassion.
The bodhisattva who is able to be one who is like this
has been declared by the Buddha to possess unimpeded compassion.

7. THE BODHISATTVA'S "THOROUGH PRACTICE OF SKILLFUL MEANS"

Regarding "thoroughly taking on the practice of skillful means,"⁵⁰⁴ there are five bases for a bodhisattva's qualification as "thoroughly taking on the practice of skillful means," namely:

First, he knows the correct place and time;

Second, he knows what delights the minds of others;

Third, he knows what will cause others to turn and enter the path;

Fourth, he knows what constitutes the correct sequence of events;

Fifth, he knows how to lead and guide beings.

a. HIS KNOWLEDGE OF "THE CORRECT PLACE AND TIME"

As for "knowing the correct place and time," he knows that, in this particular place, one should explain Dharma in this particular way and knows that, at this particular time, one should explain the Dharma in this other way. He knows that, in this particular place, one should employ these specific causes and conditions to bring about the liberation of these particular beings. And he knows that, at this particular time, one should employ just these particular causes and conditions to bring about the liberation of these other beings. Having assessed these specific factors in advance, the bodhisattva then proceeds to act accordingly. This is as described here:

If one takes up the intent of the Bhagavat
wishing then to explain it for others,
one should first know these two factors,
and then speak in accordance with the correct time and place.

Should one fail to know the correct time and place
and yet wish to proclaim the intent of the Buddhas,
he will [not only] fail to accomplish the intended benefit,
but moreover may thus commit a blameworthy error.

b. HIS KNOWLEDGE OF “WHAT DELIGHTS THE MINDS OF OTHERS”

As for “knowing what delights the minds of others,” this involves knowing, due to their mental dispositions, which endeavors and which experiences will cause them to be pleased. Having known this in advance, the bodhisattva acquires a penetrating understanding of what beings know and delight in and then brings forth the appropriate skillful means to facilitate their liberation. If one acts in this way, then his efforts will not be in vain. This is as described here:

The bodhisattva knows with respect to beings
the difficult-to-assess intentions present in their mental dispositions,
and, having already first known the character of their intentions,
he gradually influences them to dwell in the Buddha’s intent.

Through thoroughly knowing the affairs of the world,
he benefits himself while also benefiting others.

One who is able to proceed in this manner
is said to be adept in the practice of skillful means.

c. HIS KNOWLEDGE OF “WHAT CAUSES OTHERS TO TURN & ENTER THE PATH”

As for their “knowing what will cause others to turn and enter the path,” this refers to knowing whatever may induce the minds of common persons following non-Buddhist paths to turn away from them and instead enter the path of the Buddha. It also refers to knowing whatever will induce beings to turn away from evil deeds and instead engage in good deeds. And it also refers to knowing whatever will induce followers of the *śrāvaka* disciple and *pratyekabuddha* paths to turn away from them and instead enter into the Great Vehicle.

This refers as well to knowing with respect to those already abiding within the Buddha’s Dharma, just what will prevent them from entering into non-Buddhist paths. Having first come to know these matters, one then implements the practice accordingly. This is as described here:

If one is able to induce beings
to abandon non-Buddhist paths
while also inducing those devoted to what is bad
to enter the Buddha’s way to the supreme quiescent cessation,

and if one knows with respect to beings
the superior, middling or inferior character of their minds,
and, having known this, one is then able to lead and guide them,
this is what is meant by being adept in the practice of skillful means.

d. HIS KNOWLEDGE OF “WHAT CONSTITUTES THE CORRECT SEQUENCE”

As for “knowing what constitutes the correct sequence,” take for instance the priorities in the Śrāvaka Disciple Vehicle wherein they

first speak of giving, then of upholding the moral precepts, then of being reborn in the heavens, then of the faults and misery in pursuing the five kinds of sensual pleasures, then of the suffering and distress of the household life, and then of the benefits and bliss of abandoning the home life [in favor of the monastic path]. Following this, they explain the truth of suffering, then the truth of its origination, then the truth of its cessation, and then the truth of the path. After this, they speak of the stream enterer's fruit of the path, the fruit of the *sakṛdāgāmin*, the fruit of the *ānāgāmin*, and the fruit of arhatship. They next speak of the indestructible liberation and then speak of those that are unimpeded.

Beyond that, within the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle, they also speak of the faults and misery inherent in the self and everything deemed to be possessed by the self and speak as well of the immense benefit in the abandonment of such faults and misery. They then speak of the life of the householder as possessed of serious faults and of leaving behind the household life as beneficial.

They next explain that the many sorts of disputation and conceptual elaboration involve serious faults, that solitary practice bestows wholesome benefits, that village life involves serious faults, that abiding in a forest hermitage brings wholesome benefits, that one should renounce the many desires and the many sorts of [worldly] endeavors and instead delight in having but few wants and but few endeavors. [They teach that] one is to carefully guard the sense faculties, know moderation in drink and food, maintain vigilance at all times throughout the first watch and the last watch of the night,⁵⁰⁵ contemplate an object, focus on its characteristics, and take delight in dwelling in an empty hut.

They esteem the upholding of the moral precepts, the cultivation of *dhyāna* absorptions, and the development of wisdom. They refrain from displaying idiosyncratic or strange personal appearances. Although they do inspire happiness in others [who observe them on the daily alms round], they are only concerned with benefiting themselves. They delight in profound dharmas and acquire wisdom that does not rely on [teachings provided by] others.

According to the Great Vehicle's priorities regarding the correct sequencing of events, one first speaks of the perfection of giving, then the perfection of moral virtue, then the perfection of patience, then the perfection of vigor, then the perfection of meditative concentration, and then the perfection of wisdom.⁵⁰⁶

[The Great Vehicle also] first speaks of the truthfulness supreme basis [for the generation of meritorious qualities], then the relinquishment basis, then the quiescence basis, and then the wisdom basis.

Then again, they also first praise the generation of the resolve to attain bodhi, then the ten vows, and then the ten ultimate ends. They then praise the renunciation of whatsoever dharma might conduce to retreat from the resolve to attain bodhi, then they praise cultivation of those dharmas that prevent retreat from the resolve to attain bodhi, followed by promoting vigor buttressed by solid resolve, solidly established capacity for endurance, and then solidity in sustaining one's vows.

Yet again, [the Great Vehicle]:

First speaks of the dharmas that enable acquisition of all the [bodhisattva] grounds;
 Next speaks of the dharmas that enable dwelling on the grounds;
 Next speaks of the dharmas that enable acquisition of the deepest aspects of the grounds;
 Next speaks of the dharmas by which one abandons defilements on the grounds;
 Next speaks of the dharmas enabling purification of the grounds;
 Next speaks of the dharmas conducive to abiding for a long time on the grounds;
 Next speaks of the dharmas enabling one to reach the most extreme limits of each of the grounds;
 Next speaks of the dharmas enabling non-regression from the grounds;
 Next speaks of the fruits associated with each of the grounds;
 And then speaks of the powers associated with the fruits of each of the grounds.

Then again, it may be that [the Great Vehicle]:

First speaks of the Ground of Joyfulness;
 Next speaks of the Ground of Stainlessness;
 Next speaks of the Ground of Shining Light;
 Next speaks of the Ground of Blazing Brilliance;
 Next speaks of the Difficult-to-Conquer Ground;
 Next speaks of the Ground of Direct Presence;
 Next speaks of the Far-Reaching Ground;
 Next speaks of the Ground of Immovability;
 Next speaks of the Ground of Excellent Intelligence;
 And then speaks of the Ground of the Dharma Cloud.

These [various Three-Vehicle sequences] are as described below:

[Śrāvakas] first speak of giving, next of upholding moral precepts, and then their karmic fruition in gaining rebirth in the heavens.

Next, impermanence, the faults of the household life,
and then the immense benefits achieved by leaving the home life.

Next, they speak of the unsurpassed dharma of the four truths,
the severance of the fetters, and attaining the four fruits [of the path].

This sequence of skillful means

induces people to abide in the first of the [Three] Vehicles.

[*Pratyekabuddhas*] first speak of the faults in *saṃsāra*

and then speak of the benefits associated with *nirvāṇa*,

guarding and restraining the sense faculties,

maintaining the moral precepts, the *dhyāna* absorptions,

the wisdom not reliant on [the teachings] of others,

the excellent qualities associated with delighting in dwelling alone,

relying upon oneself, not relying on others,

delighting in striving for one's own benefit and happiness

while still not abandoning others,

and deeply cultivating the dharmas of the *dhūta* austerities.

In the case of those who cultivate this mid-level vehicle,

such are the features of the dharmas they teach.

[The Great Vehicle] refers to the forty exclusive dharmas

in describing the measureless qualities of the Buddha,

speaks as well of all of the dharmas that he practiced

when he was a bodhisattva

in order to be of benefit to beings,

speaking of these dharmas according to their correct sequence,

describing self-benefit as well as the benefiting of others,

explaining all of his different sorts of meritorious qualities,

explaining also with regard to all the Buddha's sons

the ten grounds in which they delight.

Those who seek Dharma as set forth in the Great Vehicle

achieve liberation in accordance with just such a sequence as this.

e. HIS KNOWLEDGE OF "HOW TO LEAD AND GUIDE BEINGS"

"Leading and guiding beings" involves adapting to whatever subjects beings delight in, and then, having understood precisely what those subjects are, using those very subjects as the means by which one leads and guides them. By adapting to whatever they delight in, allowing for their individual strengths, one influences them toward the achievement of liberation. This is as described here:

There may be cases where there are beings

amenable [to being led and guided] through profound classics,

through recondite subjects, through trades or artisanal skills,

through techniques involving mantras, through pleasing words,

through skillful discourse, through resources or wealth,
or through giving, moral virtue, meditation, or wisdom.
After [the bodhisattva] has assessed such factors,
he leads them to enter into the Great Vehicle.

He might manifest in a woman's body
to lead and guide men,
or he might manifest in the body of a man
to lead and guide women,

first showing the many pleasures of the five types of sensual desire,
and, afterward, speaking of the faults inherent in those desires,
thereby leading every sort of person
to then abandon the five types of sensual desire.

It is just such a skillful implementation of [his awareness of] these five matters that constitutes the bodhisattva's "adeptly taking on the practice of skillful means."

8. THE BODHISATTVA'S "PATIENT ENDURANCE OF PAIN AND ANGUISH"

Regarding "patiently enduring every sort of pain and anguish,"⁵⁰⁷ this refers to the case of a person who, through an incalculable number of kalpas in the cycle of births and deaths, can endure all sorts pain and anguish as he cultivates the ten courses of good karmic action that enable this person to eventually abide in *anuttarasamyaksambodhi*.

Question: Every person delights in happiness and detests suffering. How then could such a person be able to endure [such an immense amount of] pain and anguish?

Response: There are five reasons for his ability to accomplish this:

- First, delight in non-self;
- Second, resolute belief in emptiness;
- Third, assessment of the nature of worldly dharmas;
- Fourth, contemplation of retributions resulting from karmic actions;
- Fifth, mindfulness of an incalculable number of kalpas already spent fruitlessly undergoing pain and anguish.

These are as described here:

He delights in the dharmas of non-self and emptiness,
and also understands the retributions resulting from karmic actions
as well as gain, loss, and the rest of the eight worldly dharmas
that one must certainly endure while dwelling in the world.

He is also mindful of his past lives
wherein he endured in vain a measureless amount of suffering,
[thinking]: "How much the more so should I be willing to undergo it
when this would be for the sake of realizing buddhahood?"

9. THE BODHISATTVA'S "NEVER ABANDONING ANY BEING"

As for "They do not abandon any being,"⁵⁰⁸ sometimes there are beings who engage in the most extreme sorts of pernicious evil, who are utterly devoid of meritorious qualities, and whom it is impossible to benefit. Nonetheless, the bodhisattva still never thinks to abandon such beings.

Question: If these sorts of evil people cannot be brought to liberation, why should one not simply abandon them?

Response: There are five reasons, namely:

- First, because of disdain for the dharmas of petty people;
- Second, because of esteem for the dharmas of the great men;
- Third, because of fear of cheating the Buddhas;
- Fourth, because of gratitude for the kindnesses one has received;
- Fifth, it is because of these works within the world that one transcends the world.

These are as described here:

Because of one's aspiration to liberate beings,
one brings forth the resolve to carry a heavy burden.
Thus, even in the midst of evil adversaries,
one's mind should never be inclined to abandon them.

To disdain petty people and esteem those who are great⁵⁰⁹
is [to conceive of] some difference between the petty and the great.
When in the midst of beings, one should not allow
one's mind of kindly sympathy to withdraw or cease.

In the midst of [others'] urgent difficulties
wherein one has no personal interests, one still provides help.
When it is the time to bear a heavy burden,
one does not shrink from or diminish one's efforts in that work.

In a case where one has brought forth the unsurpassable resolve,
but may still have instances in which one abandons beings,
either due to mental weariness or anguish
or because of being harmed by evil men,
those are instances of cheating and deceiving
all buddhas of the ten directions and three periods of time.

The Buddhas, the honored ones within the world,
for the sake of bestowing benefit on beings,
engaged in all manner of austerities
in their cultivation of the path to buddhahood.
For kalpas in number as the sands of the Ganges, the Buddhas
sacrificed happiness as they performed meritorious karmic deeds.

Were one to abandon even a single evil person,
that would be to turn one's back on the kindness of the Buddhas.
Therefore one must not abandon in mid-course
even those beings who are evil.

In an instance where someone,
throughout countless *asaṃkhyeyas* of kalpas,
cultivates the path to buddhahood,
the great compassion is the very root of that endeavor.

If due to thoughts rooted in desire
or thoughts founded on hatred or fear,
one were to abandon even one being who could attain liberation,
this would be to sever the root of the Buddha path.

Therefore [one should realize that] the courses of good karmic action
can enable one who does not abandon [any beings] to eventually reach
anuttarasamyaksambodhi.

10. THE BODHISATTVA'S "DEEP DELIGHT IN THE BUDDHAS' WISDOM"

As for "deeply delighting in the wisdom of the Buddhas,"⁵¹⁰ if one
deeply delights in the wisdom of the Buddhas, then he will thereby
swiftly attain *anuttarasamyaksambodhi*. There are five reasons why [the
bodhisattva] feels deep delight in the wisdom of the Buddhas, namely:

- First, the wisdom of the Buddhas is unequaled by any other;
- Second, the wisdom of the Buddhas is able to cause someone to
become one who is honored throughout the world;
- Third, the Buddhas use the wisdom of the Buddhas to bring about
their own liberation;
- Fourth, the wisdom of the Buddhas also enables the liberation of oth-
ers;
- Fifth, the wisdom of the Buddhas is the abode of all meritorious
qualities.

These are as described below:

As for this wisdom of all the Buddhas,
no matter whether it be up in the heavens or in the world,
there is no wisdom anywhere that can even equal it,
how much the less might there be any superior to it.

It is because of this very wisdom that all buddhas
receive deep respect and reverential obeisance
from the devas, from the *asuras*,
and from all the world's humans.

The Buddhas use this wisdom to liberate themselves
and also use it to liberate other people.

If one acquires this wisdom of the Buddhas,
this is someone who is a treasury of meritorious qualities.

11. "DELIGHT IN THOSE WHO PRACTICE THE BUDDHAS' POWERS & MASTRIES"

Regarding "delight in those who completely and thoroughly practice the Buddhas' powers and the sovereign masteries,"⁵¹¹ "thorough practice" refers to long-enduring practice of all the practices. "The powers" refers to the ten wisdom powers. "Sovereign masteries" refers to the ability to do precisely as one wishes in whatever one does. If one feels profound delight in the complete and thorough practice of the dharmas of the Buddhas' ten powers and sovereign masteries, such a person will be able before long to swiftly attain *anuttarasamyakṣambodhi*.

There are five reasons for delighting in the complete and thorough practice [of the powers and sovereign masteries], namely:

- First, due to reverential esteem for the teachings and directives of all buddhas;
- Second, due to the fact that all buddhas have such great disciples;
- Third, due to their personal realization of all dharmas;
- Fourth, due to their ability to draw in those who have fallen away;
- Fifth, due to their ability to then rescue those who have fallen away.

These are as described below:

[They delight] due to revering the Buddhas' incomparable teachings,
due to the existence of the fourfold and eightfold classes
of the Buddha's sons of six and threefold types,
due to their capacity to become the teachers even of the devas,
due to the Buddhas' wisdom eye
with which they see all dharmas manifest directly before them,
and due to their ability to draw in and rescue, bringing to liberation
even those people who have fallen away such as
those who, by heinous evil deeds, have severed roots of goodness,
those who have broken the moral precepts, and other such beings.

If there be a person who [delights] in those who thoroughly practice
the Buddhas' powers and sovereign masteries,
then nirvāṇa as well as the merit of the heavens
will always be as if resting in the palm of his hand.

12. THE BUDDHAS' "PRACTICE OF THE POWERS"

[Regarding the "Buddhas' powers"],⁵¹² in circumstances such as these, the Buddhas are able to use a buddha's powers to accomplish five types of endeavors, namely:

- First, they may induce beings to train in the Śrāvaka Disciple Vehicle;

Second, they may induce beings to train in the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle;

Third, they may induce beings to train in the Dharma of the Great Vehicle;

Fourth, in the case of those whose powers have become perfectly complete, they may enable their attainment of liberation;

Fifth, in the case of those whose powers are as yet inferior, they may enable them to abide in worldly happiness.

These are as described below:

The Buddhas use their spiritual powers to influence beings who have developed renunciation, perhaps influencing them to train either in the Small Vehicle, or in the Intermediate Vehicle, or in the Great Vehicle.

In the case of those whose powers are completely fulfilled, they enable them to attain liberation.

For those whose powers are still incomplete, they assist their celestial rebirth or their happiness within the world.

13. THE BUDDHAS' "PRACTICE OF THE SOVEREIGN MASTRIES"

As for "their sovereign masteries,"⁵¹³ there are five matters in which the Buddhas possess sovereign mastery, namely:

First, sovereign mastery in the spiritual superknowledges;

Second, the attainment of sovereign mastery over their own minds;

Third, the attainment of sovereign mastery in complete cessation;

Fourth, the attainment of sovereign mastery in the psychic powers of the Āryas;⁵¹⁴

Fifth, sovereign mastery in determining their own lifespans.

These are as described below:

They have sovereign mastery in flying and other [superknowledges] and they have sovereign mastery over their own minds as well as in the *dhyāna* absorption of complete cessation that for them is [as easy] as entering and exiting their own abodes.

They can transform all things, whether pure or impure, in accordance with their own minds.⁵¹⁵

Their lifespans cannot be diminished by others, for, so long as they sustain the conditions, their lives will be endless.

Just as it is for such sovereign masteries as these, so too it is with respect to all dharmas.

It is for these reasons that [the Buddhas], the lions among men, are known as those who possess the sovereign masteries.

14. THE BODHISATTVA'S "ABILITY TO REFUTE ALL WRONG VIEWS"

Regarding being "able to refute all ideas involving wrong views,"⁵¹⁶ this is a reference to whatever strays far from the right path such as the ninety-six kinds of non-Buddhist paths favored by common people, and other such wrong views. A general characterization of such wrong ideas would include the claim that the five aggregates constitute a self, that there is a self that possesses the five aggregates, that there is a self contained within the five aggregates, that the five aggregates are contained within a self, or that there exists a self apart from the five aggregates. These ideas are as described below:

If [one posits that] the five aggregates constitute a self,
thereby falling into the annihilationist [fallacy],
one thus dispenses with the efficacy of karmic causes and conditions
and posits liberation in the absence of the requisite efforts.

As for the rest [of the wrong views], they are of four types.
As for those positing a signless self distinct from the aggregates,
whatsoever is signless is necessarily a non-existent dharma.

All [of the other fallacies] should be refuted in this same way.

Then again, it is the five erroneous views that constitute wrong ideas, namely: wrong views, the view of [the five-aggregate] "person" as constituting a self, extreme views, seizing upon views, and views that seize on precept observance [alone as constituting the path]. These are as described below:

One demolishes the wrong views about cause and effect,
the twenty kinds of views referencing a "person,"
views positing the ultimacy of existence or non-existence,
[views esteeming] inferior endeavors as supreme,
and [the view that] it is solely by the power of precept observance
that one succeeds in achieving liberation.

As with the earlier refutation [of a self] identical to or distinct
[from the five aggregates], these views are refuted in just such a way.
Using right thought and the eightfold path to refute them,
one explains that these are the bases for attaining liberation.

15. THE BODHISATTVA'S "PRESERVATION AND PROTECTION OF RIGHT DHARMA"

Regarding "preserving and protecting the Buddhas' right Dharma,"⁵¹⁷ this refers to someone who is able to preserve and protect the Dharma as taught by all buddhas, namely the twelve categories of scriptural text. Because his mind is able to believe and accept them, the ten courses of good karmic action can cause this person to succeed in reaching *anuttarasamyaksambodhi*.

There are five reasons why one should accept and protect right Dharma, namely:

- First, because one realizes the obligation to repay the kindness of all buddhas;
- Second, in order to cause the Dharma to abide for a long time;
- Third, in order to perform the most supreme form of offering, thus making an offering to the Buddhas themselves;
- Fourth, in order to be of benefit to an incalculable number of beings;
- Fifth, because right Dharma is the rarest of all things.

These are as described below:

If a person wishes to devote himself to those endeavors bequeathed by all buddhas and also wishes to cause the Dharma to remain for a long time by presenting the most supreme offering to the Buddhas, then, because he wishes to heal the serious diseases that afflict beings, because he has realized that all the Bhagavats obtained this Dharma through having to undergo suffering, and because, understanding these conditions of its origination, he realizes that the Dharma is a rarity difficult to come by— [for all these reasons], he who is wise should therefore cherish and protect the Dharma.

In this connection, there are five bases by which one's actions might qualify as "cherishing and protecting right Dharma," namely:

- First, one cultivates [the path] according to the way it was taught;
- Second, one influences others to practice in accordance with the Dharma;
- Third, one extricates any thorns that might destroy the Buddha's Dharma;
- Fourth, one abandons the four seals of darkness;
- Fifth, one practices [in accordance with] the four seals of greatness.⁵¹⁸

These are as described below:

In one's own relationship with the Dharma of the Buddhas, one abides in accordance with how the Buddha taught it. One retains a mind of compassion, is not miserly with Dharma, and also influences others to abide within it.

Moreover, one crushes the armies of Māra and also refutes the claims of the non-Buddhist treatise masters. On encountering those who detest the Dharma of the Buddhas, with a mind free of hatred, one refutes their claims.

One departs from the four seals of blackness
 while taking on the practice of the four seals of greatness.
 One who is able to act in such a way is deemed to be
 someone who cherishes and protects right Dharma.

16. THE BODHISATTVA'S "VALOR"

As for their being "valiant,"⁵¹⁹ there are five bases because of which the bodhisattva is deemed to be valiant, namely:

First, because he crushes Māra's thieves;
 Second, because he crushes the non-Buddhist partisan thieves;
 Third, because he crushes the thieves of the afflictions;
 Fourth, because he crushes the thieves of the sense faculties;
 Fifth, because he crushes the thieves of the five aggregates.

These are as described below:

Māra the Evil One marshalled his armies
 and, at the bodhi tree, sought to harm the Buddha.
 Always seeking opportunities to take advantage of the Buddha
 and disturb the minds of his audience.

Once the Buddha sun had arisen and shone upon the world,
 Māra made the request intended to cause him to enter nirvāṇa.

He is forever confusing those who take on the training,
 attempting to destroy their paths to liberation,
 even to the point that, to this very day,
 his determination to accomplish this still never ceases.

These who detest nirvāṇa
 are the great thieves of good people.

One must use moral virtue, *dhyaṇa* concentration, and wisdom
 to crush adversaries possessed of Māra's powers.

There are those who, of the opinion that they are wise,
 always slight the Buddhas out of arrogance
 and use all different sorts of tactics
 to destroy the Buddha's Dharma, manifesting for that very reason.

They always detest the Buddha's disciples
 and, having become failures themselves, they teach others to fail.
 These various classes of non-Buddhists
 are the great thieves in the world.

One ought to use a mind free of hatred
 and one should use the wisdom based on extensive learning.
 Then, availing oneself of the power of the great resolve,
 one should utterly demolish these non-Buddhist adversaries.

The power of the afflictions brings forth karmic actions,
cyclic existence, and descent into the wretched destinies.
It is because of obstacles caused by the power of the afflictions
that one remains unable to practice the great path.

It is because of the power of the afflictions
that one falls into all sorts of wrong views.
It is because of the power of the afflictions
that one does not practice the path to the elixir of immortality.

It is because of all these reasons
that the afflictions are the worst of all the great thieves.
Through right mindfulness, concentration, and wisdom,
one becomes able to crush the thieves of the afflictions.

If one is dragged along by the thieves of the sense faculties,
they cause a person to descend into the wretched destinies
and also cause one to fall into celestial and human realms
wherein one does not succeed in reaching nirvāṇa.

Now, given [the plight caused by] these sense-faculty thieves,
how could one fail to use a sense of shame, dread of blame,
and right mindfulness as well as wisdom
to utterly crush the thieves of the sense faculties.

These are analogous to [the stratagems of] people of the world
who may resort to gently persuasive words, or to deception,
or to wealth and valuables, or even to swords and lances,
using these four means to drive away the thieves.

It is because of these five aggregates
that one undergoes birth, aging, sickness, and death,
also falls into the realms of immense terror,
and becomes subject to undergoing intense suffering and anguish.

It because of the five aggregates
that one is plunged into grief and then sobs and weeps.
It is also because of the five aggregates
that one undergoes all the different sorts of sufferings.

Therefore you should realize
the need to use the dharmas of knowledge and vision
to utterly crush [the ruinous power of] the five aggregates
just as one would defeat adversaries or thieves.

17. THE BODHISATTVA'S "ABILITY TO ENDURE"

As for [the bodhisattva's] being "able to endure,"⁵²⁰ he is one whose
resolve is strong, who is possessed of the marks of a great man, and

who is possessed of a profound and distant vision. There are five grounds for his being deemed "able to endure," namely:

- First, when he succeeds in the endeavors he has vowed to achieve, his mind does not become elated;
- Second, when he does not succeed in the endeavors he has vowed to achieve, his mind does not become dejected;
- Third, when pain and anguish cut close, his mind remains unmoved;
- Fourth, when his body is beset by pleasurable experiences, his mind still remains unchanged;
- Fifth, his state of mind runs deep and sees far. Thus whether he has been given cause for anger or cause for joy, his mind remains inscrutable.

These are as described below:

When his body or mind experience some new suffering,
his mind still remains unmoved.
No matter what sort of pleasurable experience comes,
his greatly wise mind does not change.
Even where he is given cause for anger, joy, or fear,
no one else can fathom [his state of mind].
Wherever one possesses marks of resolute intentions such as these,
this person is said to be one who is "able to endure."

18. THE BODHISATTVA'S "VIGOR"

Regarding [the bodhisattva's] diligent "vigor,"⁵²¹ there are five circumstances in which he is diligent in his practice of vigor, namely:

- First, he is diligently vigorous in preventing the arising of bad dharmas that have not yet arisen;
- Second, he is diligently vigorous in cutting off and destroying bad dharmas that may already have arisen;
- Third, he is diligently vigorous in causing the arising of good dharmas that have not yet arisen;
- Fourth, he is diligently vigorous in increasing any good dharmas that have already arisen;
- Fifth, he is diligently vigorous in ensuring that nothing can obstruct whatever endeavors he has taken up in the world.

These are as described below:

He cuts off evil dharmas that have already arisen
just as one might get rid of a venomous snake.
He cuts off any evil dharmas that have not yet arisen
just as one might block off the waters of a flood.

He brings about the growth of [already arisen] good dharmas
just as one might water a sweet fruit's seedling.

He strives to bring forth goodness that has not yet arisen
just as one might use a wooden friction drill to light a fire.

In pursuing his good endeavors in the world,
he acts with such diligent vigor as permits no obstruction.
All buddhas say of a person such as this
that he is to be known as one who is diligently vigorous.

19. THE BODHISATTVA'S "SOLID RESOLVE IN TEACHING BEINGS"

As for "solid resolve in the teaching of beings,"⁵²² if, during all that time in which he teaches beings in the five vehicles, the bodhisattva's mind remains unturned even as he experiences at the hands of others the giving of offerings, slighting, arrogance, detestation, love, terror, suffering, bliss, extreme exhaustion, and other such situations, he thereby qualifies as one who "proceeds with solid resolve in the teaching of beings."

As for the five vehicles, they are:

- First, the Buddha Vehicle;
- Second, the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle;
- Third, the Śrāvaka Disciple Vehicle;
- Fourth, the Deva Vehicle;
- Fifth, the Human Vehicle.

These are as described below:

You should use single-minded focus⁵²³
and all your powers,
while relying on many different sorts of skillful means
and abandoning any thoughts of hate or love
as you proceed to teach every sort of being,
doing so with a pure mind that has abandoned defilement,
thereby influencing them to gain what in countless lifetimes
is a rarity: the unsurpassable [Buddha] Vehicle.

If one enters among those who have no such strength
and thus have no capacity to abide in the Great Vehicle,
one may in sequence teach either the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle,
the Śrāvaka Disciple Vehicle, or the vehicles of devas or humans.

20. THE BODHISATTVA'S "NOT COVETING HIS OWN HAPPINESS"

As for "not coveting their own happiness,"⁵²⁴ this refers to not being attached to any sort of bliss. There are five reasons why the bodhisattva does covet his own happiness, namely:

First, all pleasures are just as ephemeral as a bubble on the water;
 Second, worldly pleasures transform into suffering;
 Third, they are a product of the conjunction of many conditions;
 Fourth, they are a product of cravings;
 Fifth, they are but a minor bliss like that of a mere drop of honey.

These are as described below:

Pleasures abide for but a short time, like a bubble
 and they transform into suffering like food laced with poison.
 Relying on a three-part conjunction, they exist through contact
 and arise because of the ulcerous boil of desire.

If one abandons desire and craving,
 then there is no pleasure that exists apart from them.
 [Pleasures] are like a dry well or a drop of honey,
 for there is but little bliss and an abundance of suffering.

Whosoever aims to be of benefit to beings
 should not have any sort of covetous attachment.

21. THE BODHISATTVA'S "NOT COVETING A MEASURELESSLY LONG LIFE"

Regarding [their refraining from covetous attachment] "to living a measurelessly long life,"⁵²⁵ there are five reasons why the bodhisattva does not covet or selfishly cherish his own body, namely:

First, the body did not come forth from previous lives;
 Second, it shall not go on to future lives;
 Third, it is not a durable entity;
 Fourth, it is devoid of any self;
 Fifth, there is nothing in it qualifying as the property of a self.

These are as described below:

Your body is but a collection of many sorts of filth
 entirely filled up with impurities.

It did not come forth to the present from previous lives,
 and it will not be taken forth to one's future lives.

Even though one might provide for and serve it well for a long time,
 it will still break its obligation to repay great kindness.

This body is not a durable entity,
 for, like a foam bubble, it will be destroyed before long.

Whatsoever is the product of conditions has no fixed nature.
 Having no fixed nature, it is therefore not a self-existent entity.

Therefore, one should realize that [the body]
 is not a self and is not the possession of a self.

This body is possessed of countless faults.
 Thus one should not selfishly cherish it.

There are five reasons why the bodhisattva does not selfishly cherish a long lifespan, namely:

- First, because he delights in the life of wisdom;
- Second, because he is frightened at the prospect of committing any karmic transgression [in order to preserve it];
- Third, because he is mindful of the countless deaths one has undergone throughout the course of beginningless *saṃsāra*;
- Fourth, because [death] is an experience jointly shared by all beings;
- Fifth, because [death] is unavoidable.

These are as described below:

Because, through abundant learning and right discourse about it, one comes to prize one's life of wisdom, because one fears that, when [trying to avoid] losing one's life, one might produce the evil of karmic transgressions, and also, because one observes that no one can escape [the clutches of] the king of death and hence it cannot be avoided through the power of expedients dependent on wealth or knowledge—

How then could anyone devoted to cultivating good dharmas still continue to cherish this life?

22. THE BODHISATTVA'S "SUPREMACY IN ALL ENDEAVORS"

As for "They are supreme in all their endeavors,"⁵²⁶ if one absolutely must be able to complete whatever endeavor he begins, this is the mark of a superior person. There are five endeavors that, once the bodhisattva has begun them, he absolutely must bring to completion, namely:

- First, [the accumulation of] wealth;
- Second, giving;
- Third, the observance of the moral precepts;
- Fourth, the cultivation of meditative concentration;
- Fifth, [the cultivation of] the virtues associated with the path.

These are as described below:

One strives diligently to accumulate wealth and, with utmost sincerity, [uses it] to engage in giving. In their sequence, he purifies his observance of the moral precepts and then vigorously strives to acquire the *dhyaṇa* absorptions.

He implements many different skillful means for bringing forth liberation through the eight-fold path. This is how, in all the endeavors that one takes up, one comes to be known as a superior person.

23. THE BODHISATTVA'S "FREEDOM FROM FAULT IN ALL THE WORKS THEY DO"

Regarding being "free of fault in all the works they do,"⁵²⁷ whatever endeavors this bodhisattva engages in is of the sort that is not criticized by the wise. There are five reasons that whatever he does is free of fault and is not criticized by the wise, namely:

- First, he engages in works that he is capable of accomplishing;
- Second, they produce a greatly beneficial result;
- Third, they do no damage to the Dharma;
- Fourth, they are free of any subsequently resulting faults;
- Fifth, they result in an immensely fine reputation.

These are as described below:

He first makes all different sorts of assessments regarding matters of his own ability and the ease of accomplishment, ensuring that what is gained by this endeavor will constitute an immeasurably great resulting benefit, that it will not interfere with the good Dharma, that, once it has been accomplished, nothing bad will follow from it, that it will be of a sort that is praised by good people, and that it will cause a fine reputation to spread widely.

Whichever works are initiated by the wise are of a sort that they are free of any fault. Issues of feasibility and ease of accomplishment are matters for which one is individually responsible. Those possessed of measureless great qualities, will swiftly bring about a resulting benefit.

It is in this manner that the wise come to know that there will be no subsequent fault arising from this, and that they should devote diligent vigor to this task, whereupon they then engage in endeavors such as these.

24. THE BODHISATTVA'S "COMPLETE PURITY" & "SUCCESS IN SUPREME BASES"

Regarding "They abide in purity of every kind and come forth through the practice of all the supreme bases [of meritorious qualities],"⁵²⁸ there are five causal bases for [the bodhisattva's coming forth through] all the supreme bases and for his possessing every kind of purity, namely:

- First, he has resolute intentions that are pure;
- Second, his dedications of merit are pure;
- Third, his own practice of the supreme bases [of meritorious qualities] accords with the way he explains them to others;
- Fourth, he influences others to practice them;

Fifth, he abandons all dharmas contrary to the supreme bases [of meritorious qualities], namely false speech, miserliness, covetousness, frivolous restlessness, and delusion.

These are as described below:

The bodhisattva possesses profound and pure intentions,
abandons flattery and deviousness,
always relies upon the four supreme bases,
and dedicates his merit to the realization of buddhahood.

He first cultivates good dharmas himself
and thereafter influences others to practice them.

The bodhisattva who proceeds in this manner
is one for whom the four supreme bases are pure.

25. HOW THE TEN COURSES ENABLE THE ATTAINMENT OF BUDDHAHOOD

As for “The ten courses of good karmic action enable these persons to reach the station of the Bhagavats who possess the ten powers,”⁵²⁹ if one cultivates the ten courses of good karmic action in this manner, they enable a person to reach that state wherein he is possessed of the ten powers. “The ten powers” refer to the possession of right and universal knowledge. One who acquires right and universal knowledge is then himself a buddha. There are five causal bases for one’s being referred to as “*bhagavat*,”⁵³⁰ namely:

First, [through his right and universal knowledge], he has severed all doubts with respect to the past;

Second, he has severed all doubts with respect to the future;

Third, he has severed all doubts with respect to the present;

Fourth, he has severed all doubts with respect to dharmas that transcend the three periods of time;

Fifth, he has severed all doubts regarding the ineffable dharmas.

These are as described below:

With regard to the beginningless past,
they have an utterly penetrating comprehension free of doubts.

With regard to the boundless future,
they know it with a penetrating comprehension free of doubts.

All of the boundless worlds
throughout the ten directions of the present
as well as what transcends the three periods of time,
including the sublime dharmas of the unconditioned

and also the fourteen ineffable dharmas—⁵³¹

they know those too with a comprehension free of doubts.

They are therefore treasuries of meritorious qualities,
the Buddhas, those renowned as the World Honored Ones.

The ten courses of good karmic action are able to cause bodhisattvas who perfect such meritorious qualities as these to reach *anuttarasamyakṣaṃbodhi*. Therefore whoever seeks to attain buddhahood should cultivate the ten courses of good karmic action in this manner.