

CHAPTER 3

The Characteristics of the Ground

III. CHAPTER THREE: THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE GROUND

A. Q: WHAT ARE THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE FIRST GROUND BODHISATTVA?

Question: What are the characteristics of the bodhisattva who has gained the first ground?

B. A: HE IMMEDIATELY ACQUIRES SEVEN QUALITIES (VERSE)

Response:

The bodhisattva who abides on the first ground
has much that he is able to endure,
He is not fond of struggle or disputation,
and, for the most part, his mind is joyous and pleased.

He always delights in purity.
He has a compassionate mind and feels pity for beings.
He has no thoughts of hatred or anger,
and, for the most part, practices these seven things.

If a bodhisattva reaches the first ground, he immediately acquires these seven characteristics. "Having much that he is able to endure," refers to his ability to cultivate and accumulate measureless merit and roots of goodness in order to accomplishing a difficult endeavor. He comes and goes in *samsāra* for countless kalpas as numerous as the sands of the Ganges as he instructs evil beings who are obdurate-minded and difficult to transform. Still, his mind does not retreat or withdraw. It is because he is able to bear taking on such endeavors as these that he is said to be "able to endure."

As for his being "free of struggle and disputation," although he is able to achieve great works, he still refrains from struggling with or opposing others as he does so.

As for his being "joyous," this is a function of his ability to bring about both physical pliancy and a peaceful, stable of mind. As for his being "pleased," his mind becomes buoyantly exultant when encountering ever more superior dharmas.

As for his "purity," he abandons all forms of defilement associated with the afflictions. There are those who explain that it is his resolute conviction that qualifies him as "pure." There are others who explain that it is solid faith that makes him pure.

This pure mind is in regard to the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha Jewels, is in regard to the truths of suffering, origination, cessation, and the path, is in regard to the six *pāramitās*, is in regard to the ten grounds of the bodhisattva, and is in regard to the dharmas of emptiness, signlessness, and wishlessness. In short, in every case, his mind abides in pure faith with regard to all of the profound scriptures, with regard to the bodhisattvas, and with regard to all buddha dharmas that they practice.

As for "compassion" with regard to beings, he feels pity for them and strives to rescue and protect them. This compassion gradually increases and develops, thus transforming into the great compassion. There are those who explain that, in its presence within the mind of the bodhisattva, it may be referred to simply as "compassion," whereas, when this compassion actually reaches to other beings, it then qualifies as "the great compassion."

The great compassion is born in reliance upon ten types of causes and conditions. This is as extensively discussed in relation to the third ground.

As for "not hating," because this bodhisattva has not yet completely severed the fetters, it is said of him that, for the most part,⁴⁷ he practices goodness and his mind is seldom beset by animosity.

When a bodhisattva such as this abides on the first ground, because his mind is not prone to fearfulness or discouragement, he is therefore said to be able to have patience. It is because he is fond of quiescence that he is said "to not be fond of struggle or disputation."

It is because he is able to accord with [the path to] *anuttara-samyak-sambodhi* and the great compassion that it states "for the most part, his mind is joyous."

It is because he has abandoned the turbidity of all affliction-caused defilements that his mind is always pure in its relationship with the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha Jewels, as well as with bodhisattvas.

Because his mind abides in peace and security and remains untroubled, it states here that "his mind is pleased."

It is because he feels profound pity for beings that he is said to be "compassionate."

It is because his mind always delights in practicing kindness that it is said to be "free of hatred."

These are the characteristics of the bodhisattva who dwells on the first ground.

1. Q: WHY ONLY SAY, “FOR THE MOST PART” HE HAS THESE SEVEN TRAITS?

Question: Why not say of the bodhisattva on the first ground that he “possesses” these seven traits rather than say of him that he has them “for the most part”?

2. A: BECAUSE HE STILL HASN’T DONE AWAY WITH THE CONTAMINANTS

Response: Because this bodhisattva has not yet completely done away with the contaminants,⁴⁸ there are times when he may be somewhat indolent and thus have temporary lapses in demonstrating these traits. It is because, for the most part, he *does* implement them that the text states “for the most part.” On the first ground, he has already acquired these dharmas. On the subsequent grounds, they develop and increase.

3. Q: IS HIS JOYFULNESS ACQUIRED BY HIM OR IS IT A FEATURE OF THIS GROUND?

Question: On the first ground, the Ground of Joyfulness, this bodhisattva for the most part experiences joyfulness. Is it because he has acquired meritorious qualities that he experiences joyfulness or is it rather because of it simply being an inherent dharma of this ground that one should experience joyfulness? Why is it that he experiences joyfulness here?

4. A: IT IS DUE TO MINDFULNESS OF BUDDHAS & THE STAGE OF CERTAINTY

Response:

He is always mindful of the Buddhas,
of the great dharmas of the Buddhas,
of those at the station of certain success, and of their rare practices.
It is because of this that he is for the most part joyful.

It is due to reasons for joyfulness such as these that, on the first ground, the bodhisattva’s mind is mostly joyful.

As for his “being mindful of the Buddhas,” he is mindful of Burning Lamp and the other buddhas of the past, is mindful of Amitābha and the other buddhas of the present, and is mindful of Maitreya and the other buddhas of the future. He “is always mindful” of them just as if they were appearing directly in front of him and realizes that, throughout the three realms of existence, there is no one able to be superior to them. It is for this reason that he is mostly joyful.

As for his being mindful of “the great dharmas of the Buddhas,” to state it briefly, this refers to the forty dharmas exclusive to the Buddha.⁴⁹ The first is sovereign mastery in the ability to fly wherever one wishes. The second is sovereign mastery in the ability to perform boundless transformations. The third is sovereign mastery of the unimpeded faculty of hearing. The fourth is sovereign mastery in knowing in countless ways the minds of all beings. Dharmas of these sorts will be extensively discussed later in this work.

In his mindfulness of those bodhisattvas on “the station of certainty,” he is aware that, once the bodhisattva receives his prediction of eventual realization of *anuttarasamyaksambodhi*, he enters “the Dharma position,” (*dharmā-niyāma*) and acquires the unproduced-dharmas patience whereupon not even armies of thousands of myriads of *koṭis* of *māras* would be able to destroy or interfere with him. When one acquires the mind of great compassion and develops the dharmas of a great man, one does not stint even in sacrificing one’s own body and life for, in order to realize bodhi, one is persistently diligent in practicing vigor. It is in this way that he is mindful of the bodhisattvas who have gained the stage of certainty.

As for his being mindful of “their rare practices,” when he brings to mind the supremely rare practices of the bodhisattvas who have gained the stage of certainty, this causes his mind to be filled with joy. They are of a sort that no common person can match them and no *śrāvaka* disciple or *pratyekabuddhas* can practice them. They open forth and demonstrate the Buddha Dharma’s unimpeded liberation and wisdom of all-knowledge. He is also mindful of all dharmas practiced on the ten grounds.

This is what is meant when it is said that, “for the most part, his mind is joyful.” It is for these reasons that the bodhisattva who has succeeded in entering the first ground is said to be “joyful.”

a. Q: WHAT IS UNIQUE ABOUT THE FIRST GROUND BODHISATTVA’S JOYFULNESS?

Question: There are common persons not yet resolved on realizing the unsurpassable path and there may also be those who have already brought forth the resolve but have not yet reached the Ground of Joyfulness. When these persons are mindful of the Buddhas and the great dharmas of the Buddhas and also when they are mindful of the bodhisattvas who have gained the stage of certainty and their rare practices—these people, too, experience joyfulness. What differences are there between the joyfulness of the bodhisattva who has reached the first ground and the joyfulness experienced by these other people?

b. A: HE REALIZES HE WILL DEFINITELY BECOME A BUDDHA

Response:

When the bodhisattva reaches the first ground

His mind is, for the most part, joyful.

Regarding the countless qualities of the Buddhas,
he realizes, “I too shall definitely attain them.”

When the first-ground bodhisattva at the stage of certainty brings to mind the countless meritorious qualities of the Buddhas, he thinks,

“I shall definitely gain qualities such as these. Why? Because I have already⁵⁰ reached this first ground and have entered the stage of certainty.”

Those others do not have this thought. It is for this reason that the bodhisattva on the first ground for the most part experiences joyfulness whereas this is not the case for the others. Why? Although the others are mindful of the Buddhas, they cannot think, “I will definitely become a buddha.”

This circumstance is analogous to that of a wheel-turning prince born into the family of a wheel-turning king who completely manifests the signs of a wheel-turning king. When he brings to mind the meritorious qualities and venerable nobility of the wheel-turning kings of the past, he thinks, “Now I too have these signs and I too shall acquire just such power, wealth, and venerable nobility as theirs.” His mind is then filled with great joy. If one does not have these signs of a wheel-turning king, he does not experience such joyfulness as this.

When the bodhisattva at the stage of certainty brings to mind the Buddhas and the great meritorious qualities, awesome deportment, and venerable nobility of the Buddhas, he thinks, “I have these qualities. I shall certainly become a buddha.” He is then immediately filled with great joyfulness. The others have no such experience as this.

One whose mind has reached the stage of certainty has so deeply entered the Dharma of the Buddha that his resolve is unshakable. Additionally, when the bodhisattva on the first ground brings to mind the Buddhas, he reflects, “Before long, I too shall become one who benefits the entire world.”

When he brings to mind the Dharma of the Buddha, he thinks, “I too shall acquire the body adorned with the major marks and minor characteristics, shall perfect the dharmas exclusive to the Buddha, and shall teach the Dharma in a manner adapted to the roots of goodness planted by beings and to the relative strength of their minds. Moreover, I have already acquired the flavor of good dharmas. Before long, just like the bodhisattva at the stage of certainty, I shall be able to roam about with the power of the spiritual superknowledges.”

He also brings to mind the path practiced by the bodhisattva at the stage of certainty that is of a sort that no ordinary worldly being could believe. He then thinks, “I too shall practice it.” Having reflected in this way, his mind is then filled with abundant joyfulness. This is not the case with those others. Why? Because this bodhisattva has entered the first ground, his resolve has become definitely fixed, his vows remain unshakable, and he seeks what should be sought.

This is analogous to the case of an elephant in musth which does what only an elephant in musth is able to do and other beasts are unable to do.⁵¹ Therefore the idea that you implied [in the above question] is incorrect.

Additionally, it is because the bodhisattva who has reached the first ground has no fear that his mind experiences abundant joyfulness. If one is beset by fear, one is not joyful.

c. FROM WHICH TYPES OF FEAR HAS THIS BODHISATTVA BEEN FREED?

Question: From which types of fear has this bodhisattva been freed?

d. FEAR OF NOT SURVIVING, DEATH, THE WRETCHED DESTINIES, ETC. (VERSE)

Response:

He is free of the fear of not surviving,
the fear of death, the fear of the wretched destinies,
the fear of the Great Assembly's awesome virtue,
the fear of ill repute, and the fear of being disparaged.⁵²

As for fear of imprisonment, shackles, and manacles,
and the fear of beatings or capital punishment,
given that he is free of a self or any possessions of self,
how then could he have any such fears as these?

1) FEAR OF NOT SURVIVING

a) WHY DOES THIS BODHISATTVA NOT FEAR FAILING TO SURVIVE?

Question: Why is it that a bodhisattva dwelling on the first ground is free of the fear of not surviving?

b) DUE TO GREAT MERIT, ENDURANCE, WISDOM, AND EASY SATISFACTION

Response: It is because he possesses great awesome virtue, because he has the ability to endure whatever comes, because he possesses great wisdom, and because he is easily satisfied.

He thinks to himself, "I have engaged in much cultivation of merit. The clothes, food and drink, and other requisites of a person possessed of merit naturally and immediately come to him."

This is comparable to the circumstance at the beginning of previous kalpas when great men were requested to serve as kings by the government officials and the people. In the case of those who possessed only scant merit, even though they might have been born into the household of a king, they had to rely on their own personal strengths to sustain themselves. If they could not even provide sufficient clothing and food for themselves, how much the less might they be able to provide for the country?

The bodhisattva thinks to himself, "I have engaged in much cultivation of merit. Just as in the beginning of the kalpa when the king

was able to naturally ascend to his position, so too shall it be with me, for I too shall be bound to once again acquire such circumstances. Hence I should not have any fear of not surviving.”

Additionally, even though a person might have only scant merit, still, if he possesses the power to endure whatever comes, then he will diligently cultivate the means to be able to produce clothing and food for himself.

This is as set forth in the scriptures where it states, “There are three causes for acquiring material wealth. The first consists of the skillful means one has utilized in the present lifetime. The second consists of the power that others possess to bestow such things. The third consists of the causes and conditions relating to one’s own merit.”

He thinks: “I am able to endure difficult circumstances. Because I also have the power of skillful means in this present life, I should not have any fear of not surviving.”

He thinks: “A wise person is able to ensure his own survival merely through instituting a few skillful means. I already possess a measure of wisdom adequate to enable pursuit of the Buddha path. Through the benefits arising from this wisdom I shall be able to survive. Therefore I should not have any fear of not surviving.”

Moreover, the bodhisattva has this thought: “I dwell within the world. The world is characterized by the presence of gain and loss, slander and prestige, praise and blame, suffering and happiness. How could it be that these eight circumstances might ever not exist? I should not fear failing to survive simply because I do not acquire something.”

Furthermore, it is because the bodhisattva is easily satisfied that he adapts to whatever comes his way, remaining at peace whether the circumstances be fine or foul, excellent or deplorable. Thus he realizes that he should not have any fear of not surviving. If one is not easily satisfied, even if he were to acquire enough material possessions to fill up the entire world, his mind would still be unsatisfied. This is as described here:

When a person is poverty-stricken,
he only seeks clothing and food.
Once he has obtained clothing and food,
he then also seeks to obtain what is fine.

Having gotten what is fine,
he then also seeks honor and nobility.
Once he has acquired honor and nobility,
he then strives to rule all lands.

If he gains complete dominion over all lands,
 he then also seeks to become king of the devas.
 The desires of those in the world
 cannot be satisfied by wealth.

In the case of someone who is easily satisfied, if he obtains a little in the way of wealth or possessions, then he is able to provide for his own benefit in both the present and future lives. Because this bodhisattva delights in giving and because he is fully possessed of wisdom, he is abundantly able to generate the roots of goodness arising from non-covetousness.

If one does not delight in giving or if one engages in a multitude of evil actions, due to the causes and conditions of miserliness and delusion, one increases the roots of non-goodness produced by miserliness. The dharma of insatiability exists because of covetousness. Hence, because the bodhisattva has extensively developed roots of goodness associated with not being covetous, he is therefore easily satisfied. Because he is easily satisfied, he has no fear of not surviving.

2) FEAR OF DEATH

Also, as for "having no fear of dying," this comes from extensive creation of merit, from realizing one dies in each successive mind-moment,⁵³ from realizing it is unavoidable, from realizing that, throughout beginningless time, one has already practiced experiencing dying in the world, and from extensive cultivation of emptiness.

The bodhisattva reflects in this manner: "If a person has failed to cultivate merit, then he will fear death due to personally dreading descent into the wretched destinies in future lives. However, I have extensively cultivated all manner of merit. Hence, when I die, I will be reborn in a superior place. Therefore I should not fear death." This is as described here:

One awaits his death as if it were a dearly beloved guest
 and then takes his leave as if going to a grand assembly.
 Having accumulated an abundance of merit,
 when one relinquishes this life, one has no fear.

He also has this thought:

Death refers to that circumstance where, in whichever body one has taken on, one's very last thought is extinguished. That is what defines death. Since this extinguishing of thought is what constitutes death, then, because thoughts are ceasing in every successive mind-moment, every one of these circumstances should itself qualify as "death."

If one fears death, then one should fear every single instance of this moment-after-moment extinguishing of thought. It is not the case that one should only fear the extinction of that very last thought.

One should then also experience fearfulness with respect to the complete cessation of the immediately previous thought. Why? This is because there is no distinction between the immediately previous thought and one's very last thought as regards their vulnerability to being extinguished.

If one were to say that it is because he fears falling into the wretched destinies that he dreads the perishing of the very last thought—a person possessed of merit should not fear falling into the wretched destinies. This is as mentioned earlier. I should simply accept this process of perishing that occurs with each successive mind-moment and hence should not have any fear of the death that is just the perishing of the very last thought.

He also has this additional thought:

Throughout the course of beginningless existences in the world, I have come and gone in *samsāra*, undergoing death in measurelessly and boundlessly many *asamkhyeyas*⁵⁴ of ways. There is no place in which one is able to avoid dying.

The Buddha declared that *samsāra* is beginningless. If a person were to stack up all of his bones left in death from but a single kalpa of his existences, they would exceed the height of the Himalaya Mountains. All of the deaths of this sort have not brought about any benefit for oneself, nor have they benefited others.

Now, however, I have made the vow to follow the unsurpassable path. I have done this wishing to benefit myself while also benefiting others and also because practicing the path with a diligent mind brings immense benefits. Why then should I be frightened?

It is in this fashion that the bodhisattva is able to immediately relinquish the fear of death. Additionally, the bodhisattva has this thought:

This dharma of death is one which I must now definitely accept. There is no one who is able to avoid it. How is this so? Even though all the great kings at the beginning of the kalpa such as King "Crown-Born," King "Joy-to-Behold," and King "Radiant Brilliance" all had the thirty-two marks of a great man as physical adornments, were led and followed by their "seven treasures,"⁵⁵ were revered and loved by both devas and men, were ruling over the four continents, and were practicing the ten good courses of karmic action. Still, in each and every case, all of these great kings finally succumbed to death.

Furthermore, the lesser *kṣatriya*⁵⁶ wheel-turning kings who use their own awesome power to rule over Jambudvīpa, whose physical

bodies are so handsome as to be comparable to devas, who enjoy unrestrained and unlimited enjoyment of sights, sounds, fragrances, flavors, and touchables, who cause everyone everywhere to submit to them, who do not retreat from anything, and who are so consummately skilled in archery—even all such kings as these who rule as kings over an entire continent—even they as well as all their citizens and retainers—none of them are able to avoid death.

Additionally, all of the rishis, *āryas*, Kāśyapa, *jiaojumo*,⁵⁷ and all of the others who have practiced the ascetic practices and gained the five types of spiritual superknowledges—these as well as those who created all of the classic scriptures—none of them are able to avoid death.

Additionally, all buddhas, *pratyekabuddhas*, and arhats, those whose minds have achieved sovereign mastery, who have abandoned the defilements, and who have realized [the fruits of] the path—all of them have been destroyed by the dharma of death. There are no beings at all who have been able to get past it.

Having brought forth the resolve to succeed in following the unsurpassable path, I should not fear death.

Then again, in order to destroy the fear of death, one brings forth the resolve and proceeds vigorously to dispel the fear of death in oneself while also assisting others in dispelling it. One therefore brings forth the resolve to cultivate the path. How then could one feel alarm and fearfulness regarding death?

The bodhisattva reflects upon impermanence in this way and thus immediately dispels the fear of death.

Additionally, the bodhisattva always cultivates the practice of the dharma of emptiness. Thus he should not fear death. This is as described in the following verse:

Apart from one who dies, there is no death.

Apart from death, there is no one who dies.⁵⁸

It is because of death that one who dies is held to exist.

It is because of one who dies that death is held to exist.

As for it being death's occurrence that establishes "one who dies," prior to death, before it has occurred, they have no fixed characteristics.

Hence there is neither any death nor anyone in whom it occurs.

If there were someone who dies apart from death itself, then "the one who dies" ought to be self-established.

However, in truth, apart from the dying itself, there is no "one who dies" [whose existence] is established.

Nonetheless, those in the world engage in discriminations, saying:
 “This is death and this is the one who dies.”

Hence they do not understand death or how one comes or goes.
 Consequently, they can never avoid undergoing it.

For reasons such as these,
 one who contemplates the [true] character of dharmas
 is one whose mind remains unvarying
 and who is never fearful of death.

3) FEAR OF THE WRETCHED DESTINIES

As for “having no fear of the wretched destinies,” because the bodhisattva always cultivates merit, he does not fear falling into the wretched destinies. He reflects to himself, “It is those persons who engage in karmic offenses who fall into the wretched destinies. This does not happen to those who cultivate merit. I do not allow any evil influences to enter even for the space of a single mind-moment and thus I am always bringing forth pure actions of body, speech, and mind. Therefore I have acquired a measureless and boundless number of meritorious qualities. Having developed such a great accumulation of meritorious qualities as this, how could I fear falling into the wretched destinies?”

Additionally, from the very time when the bodhisattva brings forth the resolve, because he does so for the sake of benefiting and bringing peace to all beings and because he is protected by his great kindness and compassion, he abides in the four foundations of meritorious qualities, gains a measureless number of meritorious qualities, and crosses beyond all the wretched destinies.

How is it that this is so? This resolve of his is superior to that of any *śrāvaka* disciple or *pratyekabuddha*. This is as stated in the *Pure Vinaya Sutra* in which Kāśyapa addressed the Buddha, saying, “It is rare indeed, O Bhagavat. You have so well explained how it is that, because of his resolve to realize all-knowledge, the bodhisattva is able to surpass all *śrāvaka* disciples and *pratyekabuddhas*.”

One reflects, “Given that I have produced such a great amount of merit and have come to abide in such great dharmas as these, why should I have any fear of falling into the wretched destinies?”

One also thinks:

Throughout the course of beginningless time on up to the very present, I have been going and coming in *saṃsāra*, have fallen into all the wretched destinies, and have undergone measureless suffering and in doing so, it has not been to benefit myself or to benefit others. I now bring forth the unsurpassable great vow in order to fulfill the

wish to benefit myself while also benefiting others. Throughout the past on forward to the very present, I have fallen into the wretched destinies without deriving any benefit from it. Now, even if I were to fall into the wretched destinies while striving to benefit other beings, that should not cause me to be fearful.

Moreover, the bodhisattva whose practice is genuine has this thought:

Even if I was caused to fall into the Avīci Hells and undergo suffering for an entire kalpa after which I only then succeeded in getting out again, yet, by doing this, I was thus able to cause but a single person to produce a single good thought [and even if I had to continue in this way to cause him] to accumulate an immeasurable number of such good thoughts so that he eventually developed the capacity to undergo teaching influencing him to set forth in the Three Vehicles—and if in this same way, I was thereby able to instruct beings as numerous as the Ganges' sands to set forth in the Śrāvaka Disciple Vehicle, beings as numerous as the Ganges' sands to set forth in the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle, and beings as numerous as the Ganges' sands to set forth in the Great Vehicle, after which I only then was able to realize *anuttarasamyaksambodhi*—even if this had to be the case, I should still not retreat and fall away from pursuing this course of action. How much the less should I [retreat from this] in the present circumstance wherein, by accumulating a measureless and boundless number of meritorious qualities, I am thereby able to leave the wretched destinies far behind?

When the bodhisattva ponders the matter in this way, how could he have any fear of falling into the wretched destinies?

Then again, this is as illustrated in the *Sutra on the Screaming Hells* wherein a bodhisattva replies to Māra, saying:

If on account of giving,
I were to fall into the Screaming Hells,
yet all who received my gifts
were thereby able to be reborn in the heavens—

Even if this were to be the case, I should still
always practice such giving
if it results in beings dwelling in the heavens
and in my enduring the sufferings of the Screaming Hells.

Through many different rationales such as these, the bodhisattva is able to deflect the fear of the wretched destinies.

4) FEAR OF GREAT ASSEMBLIES

As for “not having any fear in great assemblies,” because he perfects the wisdom gained through learning, the wisdom gained through

contemplative thought, and the wisdom gained through cultivation, and also because he abandons the faults involved in mere theorizing, when this bodhisattva establishes points of discourse, whatever he says is free of error. He is able to use reasoning, analogies, and conclusions that are neither excessive nor deficient, and that leave no room for doubt.

His words have nothing in them that contradicts what is meaningful and nothing in them that tends toward flattery or deception. They are direct, suffused with pliancy, and graced with all manner of adorning phrases. They are easy to understand, conducive to ease in retaining their meaning, and orderly in the sequence of their exposition. They are able to reveal the contents of his own case while refuting the theories of others. His speech is free of the four erroneous types of reasoning and is equipped with the four major types of correct reasoning. Using well-adorned types of discourse such as these, he is fearless when speaking before a great assembly.

5) FEAR OF ILL REPUTE AND FEAR OF BEING DISPARAGED

As for “having no fear of ill repute” and “having no fear of cursing and scolding,” these are a consequence of having no craving for gain and offerings and due to maintaining pure physical, verbal, and mental conduct.

6) FEAR OF IMPRISONMENT, SHACKLES, MANACLES, OR BEATINGS

As for “freedom from fear of imprisonment, shackles, manacles, or beatings,” this is because one remains free of karmic offenses, because one feels kindness and sympathy for all beings, because one is able to endure all the many different sorts of sufferings and afflictions, and because one relies on karmic actions entailing their results and retributions. [Hence one reflects], “Because it is I who previously performed this act, I am now bound to undergo such retribution in return.”

It is for reasons such as these that this bodhisattva has no fear of not surviving, nor does he have any of the other such sorts of fear.

e. REALIZING NONEXISTENCE OF SELF AS THE BASIS OF FEARLESSNESS

Then again, he delights in contemplating all dharmas as having nothing constituting a self. Therefore he remains free of all fear, for all types of fear are born from the view that assumes the existence of a self. The view that assumes the existence of a self is in every case the root of all sufferings associated with worry about loss. Because this bodhisattva possesses sharp wisdom and because he penetrates deeply into the true character of all dharmas doing so in a manner that accords with

reality, he remains free of any concept of a self. Since he has no self, how could he continue to be fearful?

1) Q: WHY DOES THIS BODHISATTVA HAVE NO CONCEPTION OF A SELF?

Question: How is it that this bodhisattva has no thoughts of a self?

2) A: HE DELIGHTS IN EMPTINESS AND SEES THE BODY AS NOT SELF (VERSE)

Response: This is because he delights in the dharma of emptiness and because the bodhisattva contemplates the body as apart from any "self" or anything belonging to a self. This is as explained here:

The thought of "self" is caused by that of "mine."
That of "mine" is produced from that of "self."
Therefore, as for "self" and "mine,"
the nature of both of these is complete emptiness.

As for "self," it has the meaning of "subject."
As for "mine," this refers to whatever belongs to that subject.
If no "subject" exists,
whatever belongs to a subject is also nonexistent [as such].

If there is nothing that belongs to a subject,
then there is no subject, either.

As for "self," it is just the view imputing existence of a "self."
As for "a self's possessions," it is just the view imputing "mine."
Contemplating in accordance with reality, there is no "self."
In the absence of a self, there is no "non-self."

Because of "experiencing," "one who experiences" is produced.
In the absence of experiencing, there is no "one who experiences."
Apart from "one who experiences," there is no experiencing.
How then could it be established based on "experiencing"?

If it were so that "one who experiences" established "experiencing,"
then experiencing could not be established.

Because experiencing is thus not established,
then one cannot establish "one who experiences."

Because an "one who experiences" is empty [of inherent existence],
one cannot speak of it as constituting a self.

Because "experiencing" is empty [of inherent existence],
One cannot speak of it as something belonging to a self.

Therefore "self," "non-self,"
"both self and non-self,"
and "neither self nor non-self"—
These are all fallacious concepts.

“Mine,” “not mine,”
“both mine and not mine,”
and “neither mine nor not mine”—
These too are fallacious concepts.

It is because the bodhisattva always delights in this way in the cultivation of emptiness and nonexistence of self that he abandons all types of fear. And why is this so? This is because the dharmas of emptiness and nonexistence of self are able to cause one to abandon all types of fear.

The bodhisattva who dwells on the Ground of Joyfulness is possessed of characteristics such as these.